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**A Phenomenological Study: Factors Affecting Organizational  
Commitment**

Robert G. Logsdon II

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: FACTORS AFFECTING ORGANIZATIONAL  
COMMITMENT

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

Leadership and Education in

the Adrian Dominican School of Education of

Barry University

by

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\* \* \* \* \*

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Area of Specialization: Human Resource Development

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: FACTORS AFFECTING ORGANIZATIONAL  
COMMITMENT

DISSERTATION

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2008

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## Dedication

To my wife Betsy and our four children; Kerri, Robbie, Michael, and Amber for their sacrifice, support, and love. Also, to my mother Roben and my father Robert for their encouragement, devoted love, and support. And finally to Dr. Madeline Doran for challenging, inspiring, and encouraging me to seek this Ph.D.

## ABSTRACT

### A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: FACTORS AFFECTING ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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Barry University, 2008

Dissertation Chairperson: Dr. Madeleine Doran

Purpose. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the factors that affect organizational commitment in a healthcare organization. The primary research question was: What factors contribute to organizational commitment? Secondary questions answered were: Does the gender, age, tenure, job satisfaction, and supervision of employees affect their level of organizational commitment?

Method. The framework of this study was based on the earlier research of Mowday (2005). A qualitative approach, specifically a phenomenological study, was chosen for this study. The primary method for gathering data was individual face-to-face interviews with six participants chosen. The criteria used to select the participants was; (1) each participant must be eighteen years or older, (2) participants must be employed in the healthcare field, and (3) the first six to contact the researcher that met the criteria were chosen to participate. Data were analyzed through phenomenological processes including epoche, phenomenological reduction and imaginative variation. Common themes were identified and reported in the narrative format.

Major Findings. The emerging themes and sub-themes were consistent with Mowday's (2005) theory of organizational commitment with two exceptions. The first exception was that gender was not a significant factor when determining organizational

commitment . The second exception identified three new structures not previously identified by Mowday (2005). The three exceptions were (1) flexibility in scheduling, (2) an access to training, and (3) a compassion for patient care. A modification of Mowday's (2005) theory based upon the findings of this study was discussed and the findings were presented in accordance of the modified framework. Recommendations for human resource practitioners include continuing research into the phenomenon of employee, more specifically, nurses' perceptions of organizational commitment in larger healthcare organizations. The findings of this study supported the need for human resource practitioners to further research by (1) exploring the impact of gender on organizational commitment in a larger healthcare population, (2) exploring the differences of employee perceptions related to organizational commitment and job satisfaction depending upon the specific healthcare unit they work for, and (3) exploring the perceptions of new healthcare workers to determine why they would commit to a long term relationship with an organization. After further exploration it was recommended that human resource development practitioners develop training programs for supervisors to enhance their skills related to organizational commitment.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Chapter I describes the impact that employee commitment can have on organizations and how human resource development practitioners can add value to an organization by understanding and developing employee commitment. The relevance of Human Resource Development (HRD) will be discussed as part of the background for the study. This chapter will further delineate the purpose of the study, theoretical background, and proposed research questions.

#### Human Resource Development Perspective

According to Herrera (2001) unwanted turnover is a significant problem for most worldwide corporations. Roca-Puig, Beltran-Martin, Escrig-Tenna (2007) state that human resource development (HRD) practitioners need to understand and develop organizational commitment in an effort to curb turnover within the workplace. They found that organizations lose money when employees are not committed to the organization's mission. According to Cho and Lee (2007), the role of HRD is to foster and maintain organizational commitment among employees. During their study, organizational commitment was affected by the age, tenure, and gender of an organization's employees. Managing turnover and fostering organizational commitment in highly skilled fields such as medicine, administration, and nursing is a major challenge in today's society (Kochanski & Ledford, 2001). During their study, the researchers determined that HRD professionals need to understand the root causes of turnover such as tenure, age, and gender from an employee's point of view.

Demers (2001) explored the variables that cause employees to remain tenured to their organization. The findings indicated that women and men varied differently in their perspectives

of organizational commitment and determined that money was not a major factor in increasing employee commitment. Waldrop and Butler (2000) theorized that the phenomenon of employee commitment was governed by HRD practitioners during the elements of attracting, retaining, and maximizing the working relationship of employees. Without a thorough understanding of organizational commitment, companies are destined to fail (Powell, 2002). HRD practitioners can reduce turnover and create a stable workforce by focusing on organizational commitment (Carrant, 2002).

### Background of the Problem

Organizations operating within the United States are faced with several issues associated with downsizing and controlling costs due to dwindling revenues (Casper & Harris, 2007). Healthcare organizations are poised on the cutting edge of controlling costs, flattening their organizations, and maintaining safe staffing levels, while revenue sources are dwindling (Pitts and Mays, 2002). Many organizations are forced by a slowing economy to downsize and flatten their organizations (Sennett, 2005). The initial monetary savings associated with these cost saving strategies might look good on a financial spreadsheet. However, this simple accounting strategy could lead to a costlier organizational impact that erodes the loyalty and commitment of key personnel, and its' employees (Fulmer, 2005).

As a result of downsizing and cost saving strategies, employees may perceive a threat that their organization is not committed to their long-term employment, causing the employees to leave their respective organizations (Monks & Pizer, 2005). According to Mars and Firth (2004), male and female employees need to have a feeling that they are working for organizations that are committed to their long term and individual needs, or they will seek different employment

within two years. The cost of replacing and training a professional healthcare worker is estimated to be from \$25,000 to \$225,000 depending on the position (Foster, 2008).

### Purpose of the Study

According to Wajeman and Martin (2001), young entry level employees are moving away from company loyalty and appear to be concerned with building their own portfolios in an effort to seek better employment opportunities. This became apparent during their time-series study of employees within five major organizations. Their research was further validated in a separate study where it was determined that organizations are experiencing voluntary turnover within their management teams due to their employees' perceived feelings associated with controlling costs commitment (Tanskey & Cohen, 2001). This research indicated a need for organizations to minimize employee concerns in an effort to build organizational commitment. An increase in organizational commitment should diminish employee turnover and reduce perceived job satisfaction threats, thereby allowing organizations to retain quality employees (Burke, 2005).

Understanding the underlying factors that affect organizational commitment will give human resource development practitioners the ability to promote and expand the key components that create a sense of organizational commitment among their employees, thereby reducing the voluntary turnover rate of their key personnel (Ferreira & Manuela, 2007). The purpose of this study was to identify what motivates employees to maintain a long-term commitment to their respective organizations and whether there are differences in commitment based on their gender, age, tenure, job satisfaction, and supervision.

### Primary Research Questions and Related Questions

The primary research question was: What factors contribute to organizational commitment?

Secondary questions to be answered were: Does the gender, age, tenure, job satisfaction, and supervision of employees affect their level of organizational commitment?

### Theoretical Framework for the Study

This study was guided by Mowday's (2005) theory of organizational commitment. Mowday (2005) maintains that male and female employees have significantly different perceptions of organizational commitment; during these studies it was determined that gender, age, tenure, and supervision were all factors in determining an employees' level of organizational commitment. This study was further validated and developed by several other researchers. According to Fiorito, J., Bozeman, D., Young, A., & Meurers, J. (2007), the factors that affect male and female employees' perceptions of job satisfaction and organizational commitment can differ. According to Ferreira and Manuela (2007), understanding what factors affect job satisfaction and organizational commitment will enable human resource development practitioners to determine if their male and female employees feel a sense of commitment to their organization. This understanding could help organizations reduce the voluntary turnover rate of healthcare professionals, thus, saving organizations the time and money it takes to replace these valuable employees (Dvir, Kass, & Shamir, 2005).

Jaussi (2007) studied male and female employees and determined that gender played a significant role in the affective work behaviors of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and the propensity for employees to remain working for the same employer. This theory was validated by other researchers throughout the years (Foote, Seipel, Johnson, & Duffy, 2005; Li-Ping, Kim, and Tang, 2003; Skitka, 2003; Van Dijk, 2003). Organizational commitment was



further linked to the age of an employee and employee tenure (Buchanan, 2004; Yoon & Thye, 2002). Research conducted by Mie (2004) determined that more studies need to be conducted with employees sampled from a wide variety of organizations to better understand organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and the reasons for leaving an organization.

### Significance of the Study

According to the United States Department of Labor (2006), Florida leads the nation in the employment of healthcare workers. Their statistics indicate that an estimated 2,064,220 (not including self-employed) people are employed nationally in the healthcare field, and an estimated 334,080 are employed as healthcare workers in Florida. A further investigation of the statistics reveals that healthcare is a rapidly growing field in the State of Florida (38% of job base).

The American Management Association (2003) surveyed healthcare executives across the nation and determined that 31% of the respondents felt that the job market did not contain an adequate supply of professional employees. Therefore, Florida organizations and human resource development practitioners need to be concerned with the recruitment and, most importantly, the retention of qualified employees in this competitive job market. One strategy that can help Florida healthcare organizations retain their employees is to understand and develop a plan that encourages organizational commitment among their employees (Dvir, Kass, & Shamir, 2004). In the past decade, the concept of organizational commitment has grown in popularity in the literature of industrial/organizational psychology and organizational behavior (Mie, 2004). However, a greater number of studies need to be conducted with employees sampled from a wide variety of organizations to better understand organizational commitment (Mie, 2004).

The theory of organizational commitment has been studied and tested for many years (Buchanan, 2003; Fuller, 2003; Pearce & Herbik, 2004). Mowday, Steers, and Porter (2005) determined that organizational commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification and involvement in a particular organization. According to Lee and Mowday (2000), organizational commitment represents a useful criterion for a number of organizational interventions designed to improve employees' attitudes and behaviors. One of the challenges for today's human resource development practitioners is to develop a diverse workforce comprised of men and women that might have different motivators (Bar-Haim, 2007). Organizations should value commitment among their employees because this valuation is typically assumed to reduce withdrawal behaviors such as voluntary turnover (Marquardt, 2002). Lowering the voluntary turnover rate within an organization may be considered to be a strategic cost-savings strategy for an organization (McAlearney, 2006).

Another benefit that organizations can reap from fostering committed employees is the strategic management strategy of tapping into the full intellect (self-actualization) of their employees (Maslow, 1943). Committed employees are more likely to engage in extra-role behaviors such as creativeness or innovativeness, which are often the keys to keeping an organization competitive (Katz & Kahn, 1978). This early theory was later validated in a study performed by Oi-Ling (2003). Additional factors such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, the employee's gender, age, tenure, and supervision have been linked to organizational commitment (Machiori & Henkin, 2004).

#### Boundary of the Study

The scope of this study encompassed one healthcare organization in South Florida that employed approximately 150 employees. The organization chosen for the study was one of the

leading healthcare employers in South Florida. The study used information gathered from peer reviewed literature in the disciplines of human resources, business, psychology, and organizational development in an attempt to better understand the factors associated with organizational commitment. The application phase of this study included interviews with employees in one of the leading healthcare organizations in South Florida and explored the factors that affected organizational commitment and determined if there were any differences based on gender, age, tenure, and supervision.

Organizational commitment was explored in relation to the gender, age, tenure, and supervision of the participating employees. This study attempted to capture the most relevant and critical criteria that affect organizational commitment among employees.

Time limitations and budget constraints dictated a small sample size. Purposeful sampling was used in selecting participants and any generalizations in regards to the findings of the study must be handled with caution. This study included a sampling of six employees that varied in age and tenure.

### Definition of Terms

In order to understand the central issues involved in this study, a brief description and definition of four terms was presented.

#### *Organization*

An organization is a group of two or more people, each aware of his/her membership to the organization, each aware of the others who belong to the organization, and each aware of positive interdependence as they strive to achieve mutual goals (Johnson & Johnson, 2003). Organizations of all types and sizes include healthcare, schools, retail stores, government agencies, restaurants, manufacturers, and non-profit businesses (DeSimone & Harris, 2005).

### *Employee*

According to Robbins and Coulter (2004), employees are organizational members that perform work within an organization. Organizations use the process of management to keep a complicated system of people and technology running smoothly through the processes of planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling, and problem solving for the organization (Kotter, 2002). For the purposes of this study, the term employee will apply to employees who do not perform supervisory functions within an organization.

### *Organizational Commitment*

Organizational commitment, as defined by Pearce and Herbig (2004), has three major components: (1) a strong belief in and an acceptance of the organization's goals and mission, (2) a willingness to exert considerable personal effort on behalf of the organization, and (3) a definite desire to maintain membership in the organization. Buchanan (2004) defines organizational commitment as a partisan affective attachment to the goals and values, and to the organization for its own sake, apart from its purely instrumental worth. According to Mowday, Steers, and Porter (2005), organizational commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. For the purposes of this study, organizational commitment will be defined as the desire of an employee to remain attached to and identified with an organization.

### *Job Satisfaction*

According to Chen (2004), job satisfaction can be defined as an employee's propensity to stay with the organization or seek another source of employment. For the purposes of this study, job satisfaction will be defined as a measurement of how well an organization is meeting the needs

of its employees, thus causing the employee to remain committed and employed by the organization.

### Summary

Organizational commitment may be affected by the age, tenure, gender, job satisfaction, and supervision of an employee. As human resource development practitioners seek to hold onto valuable employees, it is important to understand the factors that affect an employee's level of organizational commitment. In Chapter I, the background and context of organizational commitment was introduced. The purpose of the study was presented with the research questions that guided the study. The chapter was completed by identifying the significance of the study in relation to human resource development practitioners and employers.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

According to Herrera (2001) unwanted turnover is a significant problem for most worldwide corporations. Roca-Puig, Beltran-Martin, Escrig-Tenna (2007), state that human resource development (HRD) practitioners need to understand and develop employee organizational commitment in an effort to curb turnover and increase productivity within the workplace. They found that organizations lose money when employees are not committed to the organization's mission. According to Cho and Lee (2007), the role of HRD is to foster and maintain organizational commitment among male and female employees. During their study, organizational commitment was shaped by the age, tenure, gender, and supervision of an organization's employees. Managing turnover and fostering organizational commitment in highly-skilled fields such as medicine, administration, and nursing is a major challenge today (Kochanski & Ledford, 2001). During their study, the researchers determined that HRD practitioners need to understand the root causes of turnover such as tenure, age, gender, and supervision from an employee's point of view.

Demers (2001) explored the variables that cause employees to remain tenured to their organization. The findings indicated that when money was eliminated as a factor of employee commitment; women and men varied because men tended to seek power and supervisory positions while women tended to seek stable and constant work environments. Waldrop and Butler (2000) theorized that the phenomenon of employee commitment was governed by HRD practitioners during the elements of attracting, retaining, and maximizing the working relationship of employees. Without a thorough understanding of organizational commitment,

companies are destined to fail (Powell, 2002). HRD practitioners can reduce turnover and create a stable workforce by focusing on organizational commitment (Carrant, 2002).

In the past decade or so, the concept of organizational commitment has grown in popularity in the literature of industrial/organizational psychology and organizational behavior (Mei, 2004; Finegan, 2003). According to Fiorito, Bozeman, Young, & Meuers (2007), the factors that affect male and female employees' perceptions of job satisfaction and organizational commitment can differ. Ferreira and Manuela (2007) determined that understanding the factors that affect job satisfaction and organizational commitment will allow human resource development practitioners to determine if their male or female employees feel a sense of commitment to their organization. This understanding could help organizations reduce the voluntary turnover rate of management professionals; thus, saving organizations the time and money it takes to replace these valuable professionals (Dvir, Kass, & Shamir, 2004).

Jaussi (2007) studied male and female employees and determined that gender played a significant role in the affective work behaviors of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and the propensity for employees to remain working for the same employer. This theory was validated by other researchers throughout the years (Foote, Seipel, Johnson, & Duffy, 2005; Skitka, 2003; Van Dijk, 2003; Li-Ping, Kim, and Tang, 2003). Organizational commitment was further linked to the age of an employee and employee tenure (Shore, Sy, & Strauss, 2006; Yoon & Thye, 2002). Mie (2004) determined that more studies need to be conducted with employees sampled from a wide variety of organizations to better understand organizational commitment, job satisfaction and the reasons for leaving an organization.

### *Gender & Organizational Commitment*

According to Belkin (2004), human resource development practitioners must use separate strategies for men and women when they attempt to influence their organizational commitment. This theory was based on findings that indicated women were more committed to their organizations because of a fear that they could not find similar job opportunities if they sought other employment. This theory remains even though empirical research indicates that there are no significant differences in strategies that support organizational commitment when correlated to gender (Chen, 2004; Fuller, 2003; Glasscock 2001; Kress, Manzi, & Mowday, et al, 2005; Palladino, Power & Rothausen, 2003; Sarminah, 2005).

According to Jaussi (2007), gender played a significant role in the affective work behaviors of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and the propensity of employees to remain working for an employer. Their study was conducted in Southeast Florida, where 756 working men and women were selected as participants. Results showed that female participants rated family relationships, personal fulfillment, and security as more important success measures than their male counterpart. Furthermore, they rated status/wealth as insignificant in the relation to job satisfaction and commitment. There was no significant difference between the male and female participants in the areas of job security and professional fulfillment.

Empirical data supported the theory that there are significant differences in the values of men and women (Palladino, Kress, Manzi, & Glasscock, 2001; Skitka, 2003). Although women and men placed in similar situations may behave in similar ways, they are more likely to maintain dissimilar values and goals because they bring different expectations and priorities to work based on their different sex role conditioning and socialization experiences (Jaussi, 2007). However, men and women showed no significant differences in production when their pay scales were



equitable (Cowherd & Levine, 2003). When their pay rates are the same, men tend to be less committed to an organization than women (Galizzi, 2001).

Further research conducted by Cunningham (2006) found that the gender and the wage differential of new employees have a direct effect on organizational commitment. This study was conducted using data collected from 12,686 male and female employees. The data indicated that male wages were significantly higher than female wages in the first four years of employment. This was attributed to a higher level of females that were employed in clerical positions. Similarly, it was determined that women have on average less than fifty percent of the wage growth of men when changing jobs (Foote, Seipel, Johnson, & Duffy, 2005). Therefore, female employees tend to become more committed to their original employers when compared to males.

According to Byrnin (2005), several factors help attract professional employees to different organizations after they complete their college degrees. These factors include age, wages, job status, and types of employment of men and women. Initially, pay is one of the primary reasons that men and women enter and remain in the workforce (Linz, 2004). Research conducted by Lee & Mowday (2000) indicated that higher education had a positive impact on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of male and female employees.

Research conducted by Ellinger, Ellinger, Yang, and Howton (2002) revealed that male and female workers seek intrinsic and extrinsic job characteristics and these characteristics led to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The foundation for this study was earlier research conducted by Herzberg (1959) that hypothesized that extrinsic job satisfaction characteristics prevent employee dissatisfaction, while intrinsic factors create employee job satisfaction. Fuller (2003) further validated the earlier study of Herzberg (1959).

Extrinsic characteristics focused on the context or environment in which work is done and job features determined by external events or other people (Van Dijk, 2003). Intrinsic characteristics include working conditions, relationships with co-workers, supervision, company policy/administration, salary, and job security. These characteristics included the type of work performed in terms of responsibility, variety, skill, autonomy, opportunities for personal growth/development, and feelings of pride and accomplishment (Cunningham, 2004). In a study conducted by Yapp (2003), men and women indicated high levels of commitment and job satisfaction when self-expression and financial rewards were present in the workplace. The data also indicated that males tended to be more committed to their employer when promotional opportunities were present.

Lee (2007) conducted research on 200 employees that included males and females. The sample was tested for sex role conflict and work-related attitudes compared to outcomes. The study revealed that gender did not significantly impact the respondents' overall job involvement, organizational commitment, professional commitment, or propensity to leave an organization. These findings were subsequently validated in a similar study conducted by Lee (2007).

#### *Employee Age & Organizational Commitment*

According to Loughlin and Barling (2001), a younger workforce is shaping organizations. These younger workers are seeking employment with organizations that have non-standard working hours, shared leadership, and a higher wage. These younger workers have witnessed the work done by their parents and they are insisting on a better balance of work and personal life (Hartog, & Belschak, 2007). Since the early 1990's, younger women are becoming less tolerant of family undermining their career possibilities, while younger men are becoming less tolerant of allowing work to separate them from their families (Maccoby, 1995). Research conducted by

Karsan (2007) indicated that young employees entering the workforce would decisively change their initial thoughts about their chosen profession within seven years of employment. According to the data, this change in thought process greatly affects the employees' commitment to their organization.

With these factors in mind, how will organizations recruit and retain these young employees? According to Loughlin and Barling (2001), organizations are going to have to accommodate the individual lifestyles of new employees and focus on the key factors that cause employees to reach satisfaction from their jobs. If organizations fail to do this, they will not be able to recruit and foster committed employees.

#### *Tenure & Organizational Commitment*

Oi-Ling (2003) conducted a study of workers in an attempt to identify personal factors that caused younger and older workers to become committed to their employer. The identified factors were grouped into three categories: supportive behavior, intellectual usage, and involvement. The sample indicated that older employees were more focused and committed to their employer because most of their personal needs were being met. In an opposite view, the younger employees did not indicate a commitment to their employer because the respondents believed that their employer was not addressing their personal needs. The data indicated that the longer an employee is attached to an organization, the likelier they are to identify with the organization, become committed to the organization, and advance to a higher position. Cunningham (2004) further validated these findings by discovering a higher quantitative probability that older and tenured employees were less likely to seek other employment.

Shore, Sy, and Strauss (2006) conducted a study that examined 279 business employees and the factors that influenced their organizational commitment. Two research questions were

formulated during the study: which organizational experiences have the greatest impact on employees' organizational commitment, attitudes, and how does the significance of such an experience differ with organizational tenure, particularly in the early career stages? The data indicated that the longer the tenure of an employee, the more likely that he/she is to be committed to the organization. The data indicated that female employees over the age of forty were more likely to remain committed to their organization. The level of organizational commitment exhibited by employees was directly linked to the levels of social interaction between peers and supervisors, the level of job achievement/satisfaction, and the hierarchical advancement of each employee. The employees that indicated higher levels of social interaction, achievement, and advancement showed the highest levels of commitment to their organizations.

Jones and Meyer (2003) conducted a study where they assessed the variables of personal, role, and organizational predictors of employee commitment. The first variable of personal attributes was defined as the sex, age, job satisfaction, and the education of the employee's immediate supervisor. The second variable of role-related was defined as employee level, work overload, years in the organization, years in the position, skill level, performance in promotion, technical skill in promotion, and seniority in promotion. The third variable of organizational factors was defined as organization size, union presence, percent of supervision, and centralization of authority. A random sample of 634 employees from a population of 71 government agencies was selected. The data indicated that the tenure related variable had the greatest impact on the employee commitment to an organization. The sample indicated that the higher levels of employees, the longer tenured employees (over fifteen years), and the employees that received promotions tended to be more committed to the organization.

### *Employee Job Satisfaction & Organizational Commitment*

According to Grunig (2004), organizational commitment is the result of employee trust and job satisfaction. Chen (2004) found organizational commitment to be associated with an organization's adaptability and an employee's commitment to stay with the organization. The conclusions of the study indicated that organizations should be adaptable to employee needs in an effort to foster committed employees. The level of organizational commitment was highly correlated to the individual employee's level of job satisfaction. The data indicated that employees were likely to become committed to their organization and stay with the organization if the employees felt that they could affect outcomes of the organization. The researchers rationalized that voluntary turnover rates could be reduced by allowing employees to feel their value in relation to the organization and understand their impact on the outcomes of the organization (Chen, 2004).

Addae, H. & Parboteeah, P. (2006) determined that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are precursors to voluntary turnover within organizations. In another study, Dee (2004) argued that commitment and job satisfaction were not causally related. However, Nagy (2002) argued that commitment and job satisfaction were causally related. Addae, H. & Parboteeah, P. (2006) tested their hypothesis using 1,870 employees within telecommunication organizations. The data indicated that employee job satisfaction was a factor in determining organizational commitment and both factors had a causal impact on determining the rate of voluntary turnover.

Solinger, O., Van Olffen, O., & Roe, R. (2008) found that an employee's level of organizational commitment was determined by: (1) a desire (affective commitment), (2) a need (continuance commitment), and (3) an obligation (normative commitment). The employee's

desire (affective commitment) was found to be one of the strongest indicators of their overall commitment to their organization. Mowday et al. (2000) believed that the antecedents of affective commitment generally fall into four categories: personal characteristics, structural characteristics, job-related characteristics, and work experiences. The levels of individual job satisfaction will vary depending on whether the employee is in the early, middle, or late stages of his/her career (Betz, 2003; Johnson, 2001; Savickas, Biddick, & Watkins, 2002; Schulthesiss, Kress, Manzi, & Glasscock, 2001).

According to Mauno and Kinnunen (2002), organizational commitment can be linked to job uncertainty, which was defined as the worry over job continuity and the probability of job-related changes. Job uncertainty was found to be more prevalent in the private sector when compared to the public sector. The data indicated that female employees were more uncertain about their job security when compared to male employees. Their research revealed that employees showed higher levels of commitment to their respective employers when their organizational needs such as job control and organizational communication were met.

High levels of job involvement and job satisfaction are types of affective indicators that can be used to predict the commitment of an employer's workforce (Higgins, 2003; McMurtrey, Grover, Teng, & Lightner, 2002). When employees exhibit high levels of job satisfaction they are more likely to remain committed to their organization because their intrinsic needs are being fulfilled (Higgins, 2003).

#### *Supervision & Organizational Commitment*

In a study conducted by Kershner (2004), organizational commitment was directly linked to the levels of supervision and pay received by employees. This study was conducted in the Midwest and utilized a sample of 353 management professionals from a population, which was

bounded by an insurance company, a hospital, and a personnel department within a large company. The data indicated that the work values of employees and the values of an organization are factors in the decision of employees to leave an organization. The research further indicated that the individual employee's personal values such as supervision, pay, interaction, and advancement are paramount in determining the level of commitment exhibited by employees. This was further validated in a study which determined that supervision was the first predictor of an employee's level of organizational commitment (Gordon & Lowe, 2002).

The perceived fairness of decisions made by supervisors and leaders of organizations has a direct impact on the level of organizational commitment exhibited by employees (Brockner, Tyler, & Cooper-Schneider, 2004). Their research further indicated that when employees leave one organization for another, they often retain their previously formed ideas about organizational commitment. However, the ideas that cause employees to become committed to their organization can be positively impacted if a supervisor mentors their employees (Bennetts, 2002). This study revealed that when employees are mentored they begin to form bonds with their organization and they are less likely to seek other employment.

In a study conducted by Yoon and Thye (2002), the level of organizational involvement and commitment held by employees was measured. The study compared the dimensions of organizational involvement to organizational commitment. This study formulated a hypothesis that stated: when employees perceive that their supervision is professional, they become more committed to the organization. The data of this research supported this hypothesis and the researcher concluded that a high degree of perceived professional supervision was key to obtaining the organizational commitment of their employees.

## Summary

This chapter identified the prevalent theories of organizational commitment. The literature indicated that employee gender, age, tenure, job satisfaction, and supervision were key components of organizational commitment. Mowday (2005) studied organizational commitment and determined that male and female employees had significantly different perceptions of organizational commitment: during these studies it was determined that gender, age, tenure, and supervision were all factors in determining an employees' level of organizational commitment.

Jaussi (2007) along with several other researchers found that males and females differed in their perceptions of organizational commitment. These studies formed the foundation of organizational commitment. All of the reviewed studies were completed using quantitative approaches. Mie (2004), Shore, Sy, and Strauss (2006), and Yoon & Thye (2002) determined that more studies need to be conducted with employees sampled from a wider variety of organizations using qualitative approaches to uncover phenomena's associated with organizational commitment.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This chapter identifies the research methodology, phenomenology, and rationale for choosing a qualitative design. A discussion of the methods chosen for the study including; sampling, data collection procedures, and a detailed description of the data analysis was also discussed. At the conclusion of this chapter, methods used to ensure quality, subjectivity, and credibility were addressed.

According to Steiner (2002), qualitative research holds the promise of escape from smug, exploitative, scientific, and reductive research. The rules of science (paradigms) create a closed system of knowing that permits the self-vindication of science (Hacking, 2003). This self vindication theory states that science discovers or proves paradigms that emerge from a closed system of paradigms (Steiner, 2002). In quantitative research, if new knowledge fails to fit the study it is usually assumed that something was wrong with the methodology that produced it (Ackroyd, 2002).

When studying people, researchers have concluded that on occasions, people do not fit the paradigms of quantitative research (Halmi, 2002). According to Heidegger (2002), people have meaning and significance in the world that does not fit into the constrictive paradigms of quantitative research. This study concluded that each person has the ontological potential to experience the world from a unique perspective. Healy and Perry (2003) theorized that researchers committed to the same paradigm stand in the same place in the world, and their perspectives are confined to the bounds of their paradigm.

Methodologists have pointed to the similarities between the experimental method and phenomenological method of research in terms of design, theory testing, and theory development (Lloyd-Jones, 2003). Research has shown that there is no one best way to research social phenomena such as organizational commitment (Whipp, 2005). According to Parkhe (2001), relatively few researchers utilize qualitative research. The researcher's choice of methodology is rarely and completely conditional upon the research question or epistemological assumptions (Batelaan, 2001).

The design of each qualitative research study might be considered unique (Lloyd-Jones, 2003). Since the research question of why and how individuals become committed to their organization is interwoven together in the processes of the interactive, dynamic, and emergent characteristics of human beings, a phenomenological approach was selected for this dissertation (Becker, 2002 & Maxwell, 2002). Hammersley (2003) found that a phenomenological approach can be strategically used to offset the perceived disadvantages usually associated by some researchers with qualitative studies. Yin (2004), theorized that a qualitative approach using phenomenology may lead to improved theory testing and theory development. The results of a phenomenology study can lead to data that would be left unanswered if a quantitative methodology was selected (Ragin, 2004).

#### Restatement of Purpose and Research Questions

After careful reviews of literature, several theories of organizational commitment emerged. The research indicated that an employee's gender, age, tenure, job satisfaction, and supervision may affect organizational commitment. These theories became the research questions for this phenomenological study. Each research question was explored to determine the occurrence of the behaviors and phenomena associated with organizational commitment.

The primary research question was: What factors contribute to organizational commitment? Secondary questions to be answered were: Does the gender, age, tenure, job satisfaction, and supervision of employees affect their level of organizational commitment?

### Research Design

Phenomenology is a qualitative research inquiry used to clarify human experiences (Polkinghorne, 2005). Since this study was designed to determine the variables that affect an employee's level of organizational commitment, a phenomenological approach was chosen as the methodology. This type of study is useful in exploring the researchable problem of organizational commitment and to develop new ideas through action research (Isaac & Michael, 2005). Phenomenology is the exploration of a person's lived experience (Vickers & Parris, 2007). This approach helps researchers understand human experiences and helps create an understanding of new social knowledge (Conklin, 2007). Since this study was designed to understand more fully employee perceptions of the phenomenon of organizational commitment, an exploration of the employee's understanding of this phenomenon, and the life experience of the employee phenomenology was used to determine participants' perceptions of organizational commitment. The phenomenological approach is an effective tool in helping assess an employee's perception of present situations as well as uncovering new perceptions about work and life (Fay & Riot, 2007).

The qualitative approach of phenomenology traces its roots to Hegel, a researcher who posited theories from 1770-1831 while studying social behavior. Hegel used this early form of phenomenology to describe human knowledge as it appeared to consciousness, the science of describing what a person sensed, perceived, and knew due to their life experiences (Waugh, 2004). This early phenomenological approach was refined by Husserl who conducted research

from 1859 until 1938 (Goulding, 2005). Husserl's research focused on the exploration of human beings and their environment. Husserl posited that anything humans experienced in their world first came to their consciousness (Budd, 2005). Husserl believed that if humans were void of consciousness, everything around us would not exist (Edwards, 2006). According to Rosanas and Velilla (2005), our consciousness allows us to open up and fully become aware of our environment by learning from shared experiences.

For many years, human resource development practitioners were trained in positivistic philosophies that used the scientific approach of quantitative research (Donnellan, 2003). However, human resource development practitioners have validated the use of a phenomenological approach which offers an opportunity to uncover many characteristics of organizational behavior such as organizational commitment (Rihoux, 2006). The most appropriate methods for collecting data in phenomenological studies are direct observation and the direct questioning of the participants (Given, 2006). By using these methods of data collection, a researcher can identify patterns and uncover new meanings through the human consciousness (Poggio, 2004). Phenomenology allowed this study to formulate new understandings of why employees in a large healthcare organization feel a commitment to their respective organizations.

In Chapter II, many studies were explored in an effort to gain a better understanding of organizational commitment. Mowday (2000) and other researchers studied organizational commitment using quantitative approaches. After these studies were completed, researchers expressed a concern that the human consciousness associated with organizational commitment needed further exploration using a qualitative approach (Chamberlin & Broderick, 2007; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Shah & Corley, 2006).

Since many researchers in Chapters I and II agreed that organizational commitment was influenced by multiple factors, phenomenology was chosen as the most appropriate methodology for this study. A phenomenological approach focuses on social constructivism and allows the researcher to identify several truths or answers to research questions (Rena, 2003). Since the human psyche is complex and affected by past experiences, one answer may not fit a single research question posed by a qualitative or quantitative study (Ferris, Hall, Royle, and Martocchio, 2004). A phenomenological approach allowed the researcher in this study to gain an understanding of organizational commitment by uncovering the perceptions and thoughts of employees in a healthcare organization (Willis, Daly, Kealy, & Small, 2007). This approach also allowed the researcher to analyze organizational commitment from multiple viewpoints that are not bound by one question or a single point of view.

#### Population and Sampling

The population for this study was all of the male and female employees that were employed by one healthcare organization in South Florida. The healthcare organization employed approximately 150 personnel annually. All of the male and female employees within this organization were potential participants in the study.

A similar study was previously validated using a quantitative approach by Sarminah (2005) used a survey to determine the correlation between workplace variables, affective responses, and the reasons for leaving an organization among female employees. Their study revealed a need to conduct further research, which included a comparison of male and female employees and their levels of organizational commitment.

Purposeful sampling was used to gather data for this study. Purposeful sampling allows a researcher to select a certain group of individuals that hold valuable information that is needed to

conduct a valid study (Henderson, 2007). This study was not designed to generalize the theories of organizational commitment to all organizations. It was intended to gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon of organizational commitment by employees in a healthcare organization. Purposeful sampling was the best technique for studying the phenomenon of organizational commitment.

The qualitative strategy selected to extrapolate information for this study was criterion-based sampling. Criterion-based sampling requires that participants meet certain predetermined criteria in order to participate in this study (Budd, 2005). These criteria included the gender, age, tenure, and job satisfaction of the participants in a healthcare organization.

Participation in this study was voluntary. In an effort to reach a diverse sample, the researcher placed flyers (Appendix H) in the common areas of each department making it possible for every employee to have an equal chance of participating in the study. Potential participants were asked to contact the researcher directly. For the purposes of this study, six employees were selected as participants. The researcher obtained data associated with the secondary research question in regards to gender, age and tenure from the demographics survey. The survey was used to determine if gender, age and tenure were factors in determining an employee's level of organizational commitment. These criteria allowed the researcher to study several variables that may affect the phenomenon of organizational commitment.

Prior to conducting this study, permission was obtained from the Barry University Institutional Review Board (Appendix A) and the healthcare organization's Chief Executive Officer (Appendix B). After selecting the participants, the researcher contacted each of the individuals. At this time, the researcher explained the purpose of the study, time requirements for interviews, the possibility of follow-up interviews, and the commitment expected of each participant. Each

participant was given a written cover letter and informed consent form that contained an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity (Appendices C & D). The letter further contained the rights and responsibilities associated with being a research participant and an area where the participants signed giving their consent to be a participant in the study. The participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions.

## Methods

The method chosen for this study involved participant sampling using personal interviews to collect data. The collected data was analyzed according to prescribed procedures which were all supportive of the qualitative methodology, phenomenology. Phenomenology uses specific methods which allow the researcher to explore and understand a human experience (Sweeney & Webb, 2007). Phenomenology is an appropriate methodology when human resource development practitioners attempt to explore an experience, identify associations, distinguish representations, and achieve change because participants are free to express their viewpoints without being restricted by a quantitative instrument (Drew, 2007).

## Statement of Subjectivity

The subjectivity of this study was affected by the personal involvement of the researcher (Patton, 2002). When human emotions, thoughts, and perspectives are factored into a study, subjectivity issues may arise (Wall, Glenn, Mitchinson, & Poole, 2004). Even though the principle of epoche was followed during the study, it was impossible to fully separate the researcher from the qualitative study. Prior to entering the study, the personal values and biases of the researcher were examined.

Since the topic of the study was selected by the researcher, bias was a factor. The researcher realized possible biases associated with the prior life experiences of organizational commitment

while working for government and private organizations. The researcher felt strongly that organizational commitment has eroded since the early years of the industrial revolution when employees seemed to take pride and satisfaction in working for one organization during their lifetime. The researcher believed that employees have become more concerned with the notion of “what is in it for me?” instead of making a long term commitment to their respective organizations. This study allowed the researcher to increase the understanding of organizational commitment and use the knowledge to help human resource development practitioners understand this phenomenon.

#### Data Collection

The primary method of data collection for this study consisted of personal interviews. Interviews provide qualitative researchers with valid means of studying a phenomenon (Torka & Schyns, 2007). Prior to collecting any data, each participant was given a demographics survey (Appendix F) and a list of interview questions (Appendix E). Since the phenomenon of organizational commitment was unique and sensitive in nature, the interviews were not audio or video taped. The use of audio or video taping can restrict the truthfulness of many participants during qualitative studies (Stokes & Bergin, 2006). For the purposes of this study, it was important that the participants felt free to express their true feelings and experiences. Participants may not give candid answers during interviews if they believe their responses may be heard at a later time by management or peers (Dean, 2004).

Data was collected using one-on-one interviews and open-ended questions which were detailed and in-depth. Open ended questions are designed to allow researchers the opportunity to collect vast amounts of data when conducting a qualitative study (Avaïd, 2007). Open-ended questions are designed to extrapolate information from the participants (Moss, McFarland, Ngu,



& Kijowska, 2007). The researcher encouraged participants to describe their personal experiences with organizational commitment during the interviews. The researcher used a core set of questions (Appendix E) and used caution to avoid leading the answers of each participant. Leading a participant's answers during a qualitative study can lead to validity issues when data is analyzed (Lawler & Lei, 2007). During the study, the researcher was aware that follow-up interviews might be necessary to clearly understand and gain more depth of knowledge when themes emerge during the data analysis phase.

Since phenomenology seeks to uncover the essence and life experiences of participants, the one-on-one interview was best suited to obtain in depth information about organizational commitment (Wagner, 2007). A person's perceptions, experiences, and thoughts are the primary sources of knowledge and are valuable when collecting data during a phenomenological study (Chien, 2004). By using interviews the researcher was afforded the opportunity to uncover and explore the perceptions of organizational commitment in a healthcare setting (Carney, 2007). This exploration through interviewing sought to identify the important issues surrounding organizational commitment in a healthcare organization.

In an effort to create a relaxed environment and to ensure confidentiality, the interviews were conducted outside of the workplace. The strategy of interviewing participants off-site has been shown to increase the truthfulness of participant responses during qualitative studies (Addae & Parboteeah, 2006). Conducting the interviews off-site also ensured that the interviews would not be cut short due to time constraints in the workplace caused by personnel shortages or an excess workload. Each participant interview was planned to for 45 minutes. All of the participants received prior notice that follow-up interviews might be necessary. Since the process of interviewing is fluid in nature, the data collection plans must remain flexible (Jiunn-Horng,

Hsing-Yi, Hsiu-Yueh, & Hung-Da, 2007). The notes taken during the interviews were transcribed using verbatim language. Transcripts were returned to each participant for validation. Once validated, the notes and transcriptions were kept in a secure location which was only accessible to the researcher to protect the confidentiality of the participants. In an effort to strengthen the validity and credibility of this study, the researcher triangulated the responses of the participants with the theories outlined in Chapter II of this study.

### Participant Interviews

Broad or grand tour questions should be used during the initial stages of a qualitative interview to assess the interviewee's perspective in regards to their level of organizational commitment (Miles & Huberman, 2003). As each interview progresses, probing questions can be used to clarify broad topics (Hon, 2003). Grunig (2004) developed several broad based questions that related to organizational commitment. These questions were further validated in research conducted by Gilfeather (2003), Miller (2002), and Williamson (2002). Examples of these questions are as follows:

1. Would you begin by telling me what are the first things that come into your mind when you hear the name of your organization? What else do you know about your organization?  
**(Grand tour question)**
2. How would you describe your relationship with the organization?  
Please describe.  
**(Grand tour question)**
3. Can you provide me any examples that suggest that your organization wants to maintain a long-term commitment to its employees?  
**(Organizational Commitment – Primary Research Question)**
4. How long have you been employed with your organization? Where do you see your career path in the next five and ten years?  
**(Organizational Commitment – Primary Research Question)**

5. How do you perceive the relationship that your organization has with you is viewed by the organization? Please explain why you are satisfied or unsatisfied with your organization.

**(Job Satisfaction – Primary Research Question)**

6. What are the things that make you want to remain with this organization?

**(Organizational Commitment – Secondary Research Question)**

7. What would cause you to leave this organization for another position? **(Reasons for Leaving – Secondary Research Question)**

### Quality and Credibility

There are several approaches available to researchers when studying human beings.

Researchers may use a quantitative, qualitative, or combination of the approach when conducting studies (Ratnesar & MacKenzie, 2006). All of these approaches have value and credibility if they follow prescribed methods (Scanlan, 2007). Quantitative approaches use valid instruments to collect data and this data is used by the researcher to discover new theories or to test old theories. Reliability is the key component of data analysis when using a quantitative approach (Morse, 2007). This approach tends to be viewed non-interactive by many human resource development practitioners (Dawson, Fischer, & Stein, 2006). Therefore, many human resource development practitioners choose to use a qualitative approach which allows the researcher the unique opportunity to interact with participants and feel the experience of the research (Westerman, 2006).

The instrument used to collect data in a qualitative approach is only valid if the rigor and findings can be replicated (Knigge & Cope, 2006). Therefore, the instrument is the key component to validate qualitative approaches. When researchers select a qualitative approach, they are viewed as part of the instrument for gathering data (Sandbaek, 2006). Since the researcher gathers the data, they must ensure that they use prescribed, reliable, and trustworthy

methods that will protect the validity of the study (Roberts, Priest, & Traynor, 2006). In an effort to maintain credibility the researcher must identify and report any bias that might affect the collection, analysis, and reporting of the data (Ryan, Coughlan, & Cronin, 2007).

When using a qualitative approach, researchers can uncover exact and accurate data by using rigorous data collection techniques, having participants validate transcribed data, and by sorting data into specific themes using a consistent approach (Mills, Van de Bunt, & De Bruijn, 2006). When rigor is maintained, the researcher and their collected data will be viewed as valid and credible by peer researchers (Moret, Reuzel, Van der Wilt, & Grin, 2007). This study was conducted using techniques such as consistent interview questioning, asking participants to validate transcribed data, and the consistent analysis of collected data to ensure rigor.

The first technique in the data collection process that ensured rigor was the use of a specific interview guide (Appendix E). The second technique of the process to ensure rigor was asking participants to validate transcribed notes. The transcribed data was given to each of the participants. The participants were asked to identify the accuracy and omission of data during the interview process (Srinivasan, 2006). The participants were also asked to identify any point that needs further emphasis or clarification (Bryman, 2006).

The researcher used a data spread sheet to facilitate data analysis (Appendix G). This spreadsheet gave credibility to the researcher because data was recorded, organized, and examined using a consistent process (Tse-chi, 2005). The researcher's credibility was further established by reporting individual biases and by analyzing data using an epoche process (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). After completing the data analysis, the researcher shared the results with the participants. Each participant was asked if the study accurately depicted their

perception of organizational commitment (Rolfe, 2006). By utilizing all of these techniques, the researcher and study were shown to be reliable, accurate, and trustworthy (Morse, 2005).

### Data Analysis

A phenomenological method was used to analyze the data collected in this study.

This analysis method allowed the researcher to uncover and examine the meaning, perceptions, and lived experiences of its participants (Harding, 2005). Patton (2002) was an expert in this methodology. He followed the earlier studies of Mostakas (1994). While performing qualitative research, Moustakas theorized that data was valid and meaningful when analyzed using the three core principles of epoche, phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation (Rocknak, 2001).

Epoche was the first principle of data analysis using a phenomenological approach. Epoche derives meaning from its Greek origin and when translated means to abstain, stay away, or ignore (Dowling, 2007). When utilizing this principle, researchers look inward to uncover their personal biases, and refrain from becoming personally involved with their participants (Zaner, 2006). The root of this approach allows a researcher to study their participants while keeping an open mind free from personal bias or pre-conceived ideas (Luft, 2004). Epoche promotes a free flow of knowledge and experiences that permit researchers to uncover new meanings and new understandings of a phenomenon (Arp, 2004).

Reduction was the second principle of data analysis using a phenomenological approach. This principle allows a researcher to fully describe, in literal terms, the phenomenon or life experiences of the participants (Lories, 2006). Observation is a component of this principle (Smith, 2005). However, the crucial component of this principle is actively listening to the participants (Mitcham, 2007). By actively listening, the researcher can find new meanings and

understandings in the data rich dialogue of the participants (Gilstrap, 2007). When using reduction, a researcher uses several prescribed principles to analyze data. These analytical principles are bracketing, clustering, horizontalizing, and organizing (Naberhaus, 2005).

When a researcher uses reduction, they begin by bracketing, which means they ignore or eliminate their own personal biases or pre-conceived ideas about the study (Gearing, 2004). By removing or eliminating these thoughts, a researcher can be objective during the data analysis stage of the study (Yegdich, 2003). This objectivity gives the analyzed data validity (Lotz, 2007). After all of the data was analyzed, a researcher may remove any data that is not relevant or grounded to the research topic or research questions ( Beavers, 2002). Once the non-relevant data is removed, a researcher can cluster or group the horizons into themes (Overgaard, 2003). These themes are identified by key phrases and statements made by participants (Vedder, 2005). When the horizons are organized, the researcher can synthesize, reflect, and find meaning in the themes (Mondragon & Zoupanos, 2007).

Imaginative variation is the third principle of data analysis using a phenomenological approach. This principle allows a researcher the opportunity to find new meanings in the collected data (Zaner, 2006). These new meanings or themes should be formed using several sources of reference and imagination (McIntire, 2006). When employing this principle, the researcher should consider all points of view regarding the phenomenon (Priest, 2002). By viewing the data from several perspectives, researchers can get a better understanding of the emerging themes.

## Summary

Chapter III described the methodology of this study. The chapter identified the qualitative method and rationale for choosing this phenomenological approach to study organizational commitment. The site of the study, method of sampling, and rationale for choosing the methodology was discussed in detail. The chapter further outlined the criteria used to select participants for the study. Data collection methods, the research questions that were used to guide the data collection process, and the data analysis procedures chosen for the study were identified. The final section of the chapter discussed the methods that were used to ensure the quality, validity, and credibility of the study.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### *Introduction*

This phenomenological study was conducted to examine the perceptions of organizational commitment. Chapter IV presents a description of the participants, a description of the organization, the results of the interviews, the emerging definitions and themes identified through data analysis, and a summary of the findings. The emerging themes that are presented were identified following an analysis of participants' interview transcripts. The participating organization was not identified by name in order to protect the identity and confidentiality of the participating employees and the organization who volunteered to participate in this study.

The data for this study was obtained from six participants that were selected following the established criteria in Chapter III. The criteria stated that the employees must volunteer, be over the age of eighteen, and employed by the organization for more than one year. Data was collected during an established one-on-one interview process where each participant is asked the same open-ended questions. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes. The interviews were not audio or video taped do to the researcher's concern for the truthfulness of responses on this sensitive topic. However, the researcher took detailed notes during each interview and the notes were transcribed verbatim. After transcription, the data was verified for accuracy, omissions, and completeness by each participant. In an effort to analyze the data using a phenomenological approach, the horizons of data were clustered into themes and this information was recorded using a data spreadsheet (Appendix F). This data spreadsheet allowed the researcher to better understand the data and emerging themes (Alcock & Iphofen, 2007).



This chapter will discuss each of the emerging themes and their relevance to this study. For the purposes of this study, short quotes given by participants were included in-text and longer quotes were off set from the text, singled spaced, justified, and italicized.

In Chapter III, the researcher noted the possibility of follow-up interviews with the participants to clarify any additional questions. After examining the data, it was determined that follow-up interviews were not necessary for this study. Chapter IV will begin with information about the participants and the health care organization used for the study. The findings will be presented after analyzing the data through the processes of epoche, reduction, bracketing, clustering, horizontalizing, and organizing data.

#### Descriptions of Participants and the Health Care Organization

A description of the participants and the health care organization they work for will be presented prior to the findings. The participants were chosen based upon the specific criteria for participation as outlined in Chapter III. The criteria stated that the employees must volunteer, be over the age of eighteen, and employed by the organization for more than one year. A brief description of the health care organization was included in an effort to give readers a thorough understanding of the environment and culture in which these participants work.

#### The Participants

Six employees volunteered to participate in this study. Each of these six employees met the established criteria of male, female, tenure, and age. Potential participants included all of the male and female employees in the healthcare organization who volunteered and were available for 45 minutes to complete the interview. To ensure privacy and confidentiality, each participant was assigned and identified by a number. These numbers ranged from 1-6.

In an effort to reach a diverse sample, the researcher posted flyers (Appendix H) in the common areas of each department making it possible for every employee to have an equal chance of participating in the study. Potential participants were asked to contact the researcher directly. For the purposes of this study, the first six employees that contacted the researcher were selected as participants. This stipulation was noted within the information that was provided to the healthcare organization concerning this study. Doctors, nurses, medical assistants, receptionists, and bookkeepers were all identified as potential participants in this study. Once the participants had been identified, they were provided with both a cover letter and consent form that detailed the study and also reviewed the rights and responsibilities of participants.

Each participant agreed to complete a demographic data sheet and participate in a forty-five minute interview. The researcher transcribed the interviews directly following the completion of the interview. The researcher mailed the transcribed interviews to the participant's home and they were asked to review and place their initials or participant numbers on the bottom of each transcript to ensure data accuracy and enhance study validity. Enclosed in the transcript was a pre-paid envelope with the researcher's address written on it. The participants were asked to mail their verified transcripts back to the researcher using the pre-paid envelopes. The researcher tracked the returned transcripts to ensure that all of them were returned. A breakdown of each participant was as follows:

#### *Participant 1*

The first participant is a female and her current position is a clerical/support person. Her age was 18-25 years and she had between zero and two years of healthcare experience.

### Participant 2

The second participant is a female and her current position is a nurse. Her age was 31-35 years, and she had three to five years of healthcare experience.

### Participant 3

The third participant is a female and her current position is a nurse. Her age was over 35 years and she had three to five years of healthcare experience.

### Participant 4

The fourth participant is a female and her current position is a clerical/support. Her age was 31-35 years and she had six to ten years of healthcare experience.

### Participant 5

The fifth participant is a female and her current position is a clerical/support. Her age was 31-35 years and she had six to ten years of healthcare experience.

### Participant 6

The sixth participant is a male and his current position is a nurse. His age was 31-35 years and he had six to ten years of healthcare experience.

The six healthcare participants were both open and professional during the interview process. Establishing rapport with the participants came with ease; the respondents appeared to be forthright and honest when answering questions. It was apparent that all of the participants responding were proud to be participants in this study. Collectively, the six healthcare employees were diverse in their tenure in the healthcare field and ages. Their tenure ranged from zero to ten years and the ages ranged from eighteen to over thirty-five. The healthcare positions were nurses and clerical/support staff. Five of the participants were female and one participant

was male. The participants represented the organization with a great amount of professionalism, as well as, being accommodating and friendly.

The following summary information about the participants was obtained from the demographic surveys, field notes, and the reflective researcher journal. In order to ensure participant anonymity, the participants were assigned a number, 1-6. Table 1 summarizes the demographic information in terms of gender, age, position, and tenure.

Participant	Gender	Age	Position	Experience/Tenure
1	Female	18-25	Clerical/support	00-02
2	Female	31-35	Nurse	03-05
3	Female	Over 35	Nurse	03-05
4	Female	31-35	Clerical/support	06-10
5	Female	31-35	Clerical/support	06-10
6	Male	31-35	Nurse	06-10

*Table 1.* Participant demographics.

### *The Interview*

Interviewing participants using standardized open-ended questions allows the researcher to develop a detailed picture of the phenomenon being studied (Coar & Sim, 2006). The interview process for this study was guided by seven standardized open-ended questions. All interviews were conducted face-to-face and one-on-one. To ensure and maintain confidentiality, interviews were not video or audio recorded. The interviews were no longer than 45 minutes in length and were transcribed by the researcher after the completion of each interview. The transcribed interviews were mailed to each participant. The participants were asked to read the transcripts and validate the accuracy and completeness of the transcription. Once the transcribed interviews

were validated by the participants they were sent back to the researcher via US mail. The researcher then coded the data into specific categories.

All of the participants stated that they were nervous about sharing their feelings in regards to their specific working environments. In an effort to ease this nervousness, the researcher held each interview off site; at a time and place chosen by the participant. This strategy seemed to alleviate or minimize the nervousness experienced by each participant. During the interview process, the researcher learned that none of the participants had ever been involved in a research study. Therefore, this was a new and unique experience for each of the participants. In the beginning of each interview, the participants seemed to revert towards tentative and direct responses. However, as each interview progressed, the participants seemed to relax, become more comfortable, forthright, and animated in their responses in regard to their personal experiences with organizational commitment.

The researcher noted that the participants seemed honest, sincere, and thorough when answering questions. Some of the participants seemed to enjoy being a part of the study because they continued to share additional experiences with the researcher at the end of the interview process, even though the information was not relevant to the specific topic of the study. The participants seemed to take ownership in their responses and appeared to be proud that they were selected to participate in the study. During the entire interview process, the participants reverted back to the idea that an organization needs to show commitment to its employees thereby creating employee commitment to the organization. Participant 1 stated “I think employee commitment is generated by the organization showing its’ loyalty to help the employees succeed.” Participant 6 concurred with the statement,

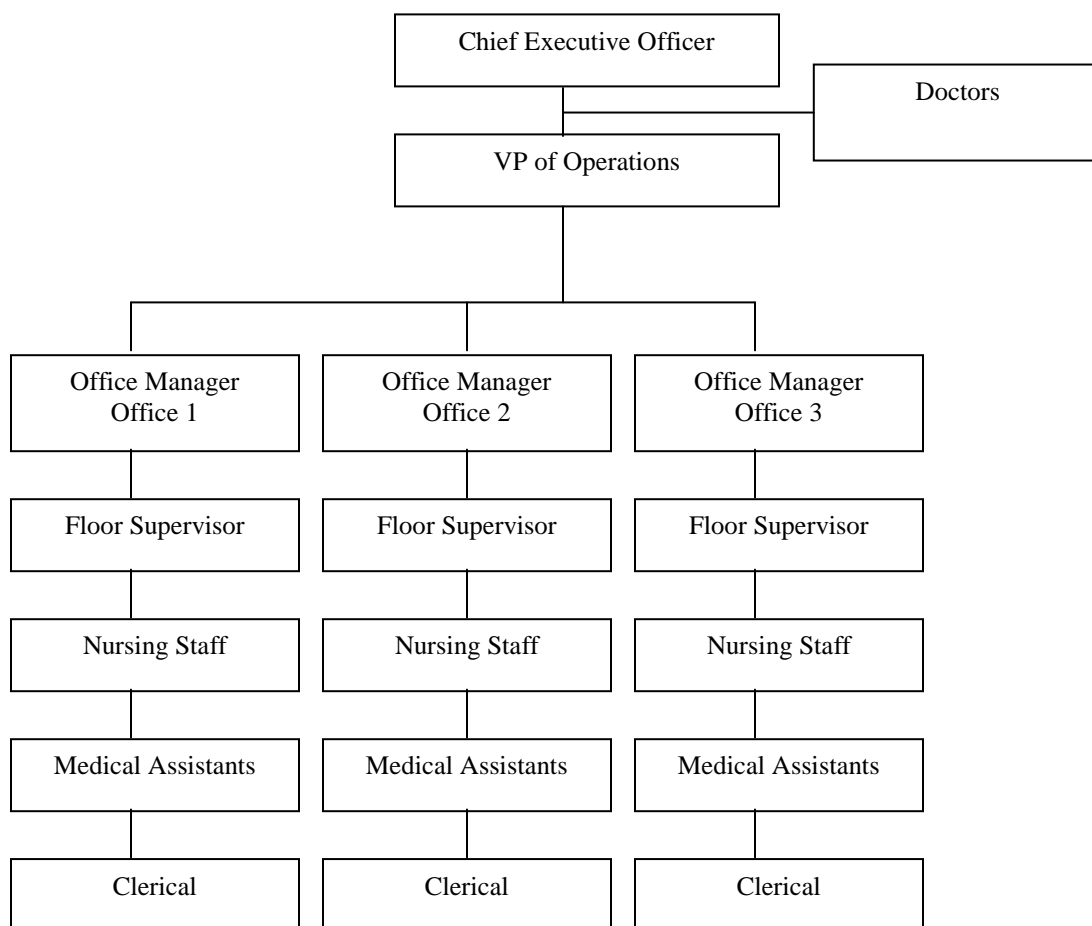
*“What makes me feel loyal to the organization has nothing to do with money. I am loyal to the organization because the owners and managers show their loyalty to*

*me. They constantly tell me when I am doing a good job and they give me gifts for no reason other than to show me their appreciation.”*

By obtaining open and truthful responses, the researcher was afforded the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of organization commitment using participant perceptions and experiences as related to their specific health care organization (DiCicco-Bloom, & Crabtree, 2006).

### The Participating Organization

The organization that participated in this study was located in South Florida and employed of approximately 150 employees. The organization was the responsible for providing quality healthcare to patients that range in age from birth to 21 years. The participating organization was not identified by name to protect the confidentiality of the organization and the participants in the study. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) was responsible for the planning and oversight of the three offices and granted permission to conduct research within the organization. The oversight of daily operations, the hiring of staff and the termination of staff is the responsibility of the office manager. There were three operational offices within the organization. The organizational flow chart was as follows:



*Figure 1.* Organizational chart.

Perceptions of organizational commitment were unique to each participant and the organization. The participating organization appeared to be concerned with the idea of organizational commitment since they sought to reduce employee turnover in a marketplace where healthcare workers are scarce. What one participant perceived as a barrier to organizational commitment was viewed by another as a strength of the organization. Participant 2 stated that the organization was like a close knit family. This feeling was reiterated by all of the participants. All of the participants felt that the close family bond was strength of the organization and a factor in maintaining organizational commitment. However, participant 1

stated that sometimes the closeness of the organization caused feelings of resentment because “everybody knows your business”.

### The Findings

A broader understanding of organizational commitment was defined by using open-ended interviews (Adamson, Gooberman-Hill, Woolhead, & Donovan, 2004). The researcher chose to analyze the data obtained from the participants during interviews by using a phenomenological approach which was discussed in Chapter III. The first process in analyzing the data consisted of bracketing. This process forced the researcher to set aside all of preconceived notions and ideas and to look at the data with an open mind (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005). After bracketing, the researcher horizontalized the data and gave each statement equal value. The horizontalized data in each statement was treated as having equal value (Mitcham, 2007). The horizons of data were then reduced into themes and sub-themes (Li & Seale, 2007).

### Mowday and the Findings

After careful reviews of literature, the researcher used Mowday's (2005), figure 2, theory of organizational commitment as the framework of this study. The research indicated that an employee's gender, age, tenure, job satisfaction, and supervision may affect organizational commitment. These theories became the research questions for this phenomenological study. Each research question was explored to determine the occurrence of the behaviors and phenomena associated with organizational commitment. The gathered data was compared to Mowday's (2005) theory.



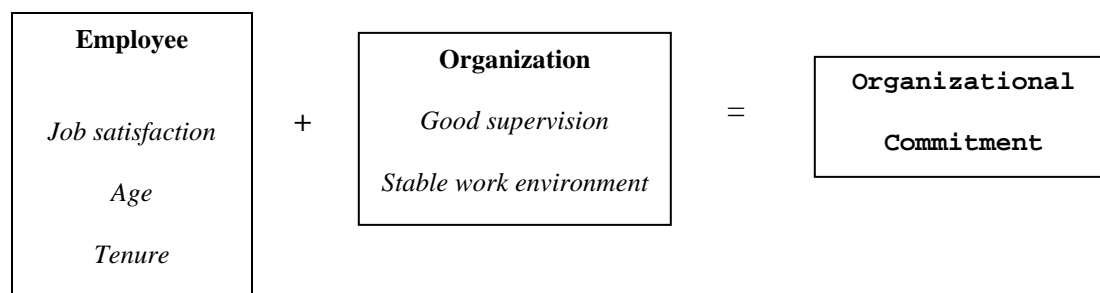


Figure 2. Mowday's (2005) theory of organizational commitment.

The emergent themes in this study were consistent with Mowday's (2005) theory of organizational commitment (see Figure 7) with three additions. The three additions were (1) flexibility in scheduling, (2) an access to training and education, and (3) a compassion for employees and patient care. These three additions are found under the organizational and supervision structures. A modification of Mowday's (2005) theory based upon the findings of this study includes these additions (see Figure 8). This modification was significant for this study in that these additions are somewhat unique to healthcare organizations. Mowday's (2005) theory was developed using a general business organization as a model. This modification allows for the unique practice environment of the healthcare setting. The findings of this study will be presented within the framework of these themes. Before identifying these emergent themes, the participants' definitions of an organization, employee, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction will first be presented. The researcher uncovered data that added to these definitions and helped them emerge within the healthcare organization.

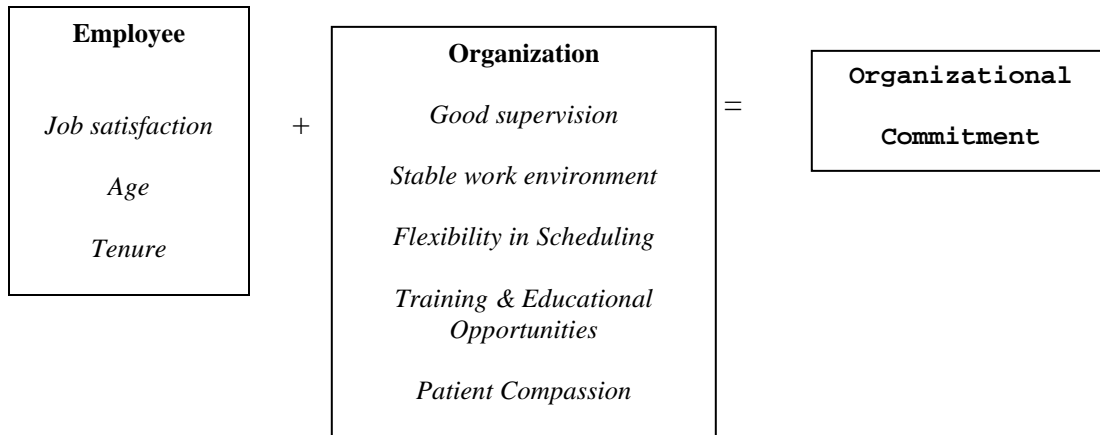


Figure 3. Modification of Mowday’s (2005) theory based upon study findings.

### Emerging Definitions

#### *Organization*

Johnson & Johnson (2003) defined an organization as a group of two or more people, each aware of his/her membership to the organization, each aware of the others who belong to the organization, and each aware of positive interdependence as they strive to achieve mutual goals. This definition was broadened by the participants in this study to include their feelings of what makes up a healthcare organization that is committed to its employees and maintains employee commitment. The emerging definition of an organizational commitment can be found in Table 2.

Term	Emerging Definition
Organization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A close knit group of people almost like a family group.</li> <li>2. People working together to help each other and their patients.</li> <li>3. A group of people that is focused on the needs of their employees.</li> </ol>

*Table 2. Organization: emerging definitions.*

*Employee*

According to Robbins & Coulter (2004), employees are organizational members that perform work within an organization. This definition was expanded by the participants in this study to include the factors that maintain a committed employee. The emerging definition of a committed employee can be found in Table 3.

Term	Emerging Definition
Committed employee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An employee that is dependable.</li> <li>2. An employee that is a hard worker.</li> <li>3. An employee that works well with the group.</li> </ol>

*Table 3. Committed employee: emerging definitions.*

*Job Satisfaction*

According to Chen (2004), job satisfaction can be defined as an employee's propensity to stay with the organization or seek another source of employment. The participants in this study believed that job satisfaction was the key to fostering and maintaining organizational commitment. This definition was expanded by the participants in this study to include the factors that the participants strongly believed contributed to job satisfaction. The emerging definition of job satisfaction can be found in Table 4.

Term	Emerging Definition
Job satisfaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Good supervision.</li> <li>2. Constant praise and communication.</li> <li>3. Frequent gifts and rewards to employees for doing a good job.</li> </ol>

*Table 4.* Job satisfaction: emerging definitions.

### *Organizational Commitment*

When asked about organizational commitment, all of the participants gave similar responses. Interestingly, all of the participants focused on the organization's responsibility to show a strong commitment to its employees before the employees can become committed to the organization. Collectively, the participants agreed that organizational commitment is based on the organization showing genuine respect and compassion to the needs of their employees. Once this is established and maintained, the employees will commit to a long term relationship with the organization. Participant 1 stated, "if I had a bad supervisor that did not show me respect, I would not work here very long." Participants 3 and 2 concurred by stating, if they had bad supervisors that did not care about their employees, they would leave the organization. However, participant 6 appeared to contradict the other participants. Participant 6 stated, "a bad supervisor would not make me leave because I will outlast them." The idea of remaining with an organization that employed a bad supervisor and believing that the participant would outlast the supervisor was unique to the other five participants. A list of organizational commitment definitions by known theorists and the prevailing theory of organizational commitment by the participants are listed in Table 5.

Term	Emerging Definition
Organizational Commitment as defined by Mowday (2005)	The employee's psychological attachment to the organization.
Affective Commitment as defined Mowday, Porter, and Steers's (2000)	The employee who is affectively committed strongly identifies with the goals of the organization and desires to remain a part of the organization.
Continuance Commitment as defined by Mowday, Porter, and Steers's (2000)	The individual commits to the organization because he/she perceives high costs of losing organizational membership.
Normative Commitment as defined by Mowday (2005).	The individual commits to and remains with an organization because of feelings of obligation.
Organizational Commitment as defined by study participants	The individual commits to the organization because he or she is respected and valued by the organization and because the organization shows commitment to the employee.

*Table 5.* Definitions of organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment can contain broad meanings. Organizational commitment, as defined by Pearce and Herbik (2004), has three major components: (1) a strong belief in and an acceptance of the organization's goals and mission, (2) a willingness to exert considerable personal effort on behalf of the organization, and (3) a definite desire to maintain membership in the organization. This theory was validated by the participants in this study. The participants concurred that employees need to work together; similar to a family and towards a common goal to maintain commitment in the organization. Participant 3 stated, "I think the family theme of the office keeps me motivated to work for the organization." Buchanan (2004) defines

organizational commitment as a partisan affective attachment to the goals and values, and to the organization for its own sake, apart from its purely instrumental worth. According to Mowday, Steers, and Porter (2005), organizational commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. The findings of this study were consistent with these theories. Participant 2 stated,

*“I would describe our organization as a close knit family. We have a tight bond between all employees, administrators, doctors, and owners. I believe the organization takes care of its employees. I could not be committed to an organization that does not show its' commitment to the employees.”*

Buchanan (2004) stated that organizational commitment was a partisan affective attachment to the goals and values, and to the organization for its own sake, apart from its purely instrumental worth. Mowday (2005) believed that organizational commitment allowed employees to accomplish tasks and goals within the organization. Simply stated, these theorists set the standards for organizational commitment. These theories were validated by participant 6 stating,

*“the organization has a very giving set of owners. They are trustworthy and approachable by me. They are always willing to help me meet my goals and will give advice or talk to me anytime I need them.”*

The participants of this study felt that organizational commitment was based on managers and employees working together to ensure their organization was viewed as a leader in the healthcare field. The participants seemed to take great pride in knowing that the community in which they served, viewed the organization as a leader in healthcare. During the course of the interviews, the participants were asked to share their ideas of organizational commitment and these ideas lead to an expanded definition (see Table 1). All of the participants defined organizational commitment as the ability to work autonomously, within the confines of the organizational structures. They stated a desire to contribute positive efforts and to be viewed as a highly qualified provider of

healthcare in the community. Participant 5 stated, “We are highly respected in the community. Many people say oh you work for the organization, they are great. It is a great place to work.” This feeling of pride in the organization was a key factor in establishing organizational commitment. Similarly, Participant 3 further supported this by stating, “We are an organization that cares about our employees and patients. We were voted the number one pediatric practice in our county.”

By interviewing employees and exploring their perceptions and lived experiences in a healthcare setting, the researcher uncovered the distinctive experiences of the employees and then identified common themes using Mowday’s (2005) theory of organizational commitment as a framework. The participants all agreed that organizational commitment starts at the top and flows down to their employees. Participant 4 stated “I could not be committed to an organization that does not show me respect and a desire to be committed to my needs.” This was further validated by participant 3 who stated, “I really have no intention of leaving. This organization shows me respect and cares about my well being.” All of the participants agreed that an organization must create a stable work environment and have good supervision to maintain organizational commitment amongst their employees. The participants further stated that an organization must be focused on their employee needs to create and maintain organizational commitment. All of the participants stated that their organization showed employee commitment by offering flexible scheduling to meet family needs, respecting their employees, annual pay increases, opportunities to further education and training, advancement opportunities, and a true compassion for feelings and needs of their employees. However, there were some differences in the responses given by two participants.

The two participants who differed in their ideas about the organization's commitment to its employees agreed that the working environment was good. However, participant 1 stated,

*“the only things that would help me commit to a long term relationship with this organization would be a pay raise and if the organization hired more people to reduce our workload. There is not much more that would make me want to stay here for a permanent career.”*

Participant 6 stated, “if someone offered me more money with better benefits and after I complete my education I may leave this organization.” Both of these participants seemed to focus on money as a factor in establishing organizational commitment. However, the other four participants did not express this sentiment. The emerging definition of organizational commitment can be found in Table 6.

Term	Emerging Definition
Organizational commitment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Based on employer's respect of employees</li> <li>2. Starts at the top of the organization</li> <li>3. Becomes part of the organization's culture</li> </ol>

*Table 6.* Organizational commitment: emerging definition.

### Factors and Their Affect on Organizational Commitment

#### *Employee Gender & Organizational Commitment*

According to the research in Chapter II, gender was a factor in determining organizational commitment amongst employees. To capture this data, a demographics survey was designed and used to determine the gender of each participant. Five of the participants were female. Participant 6 was the only male that participated in this study.

According to Belkin (2004), human resource development practitioners must use separate strategies for men and women when they attempt to influence their organizational commitment.



This theory was based on findings that indicated women were more committed to their organizations because of a fear that they could not find similar job opportunities if they sought other employment. This theory remains even though empirical research indicates that there are no significant differences in strategies that support organizational commitment when correlated to gender (Chen, 2004; Fuller, 2003; Glasscock, 2001; Kress, Manzi, & Mowday, et al, 2005; Palladino, Power & Rothausen, 2003; Sarminah, 2005).

This was not validated by the responses given by the participants in this study. None of the participants expressed a fear of losing their jobs. Participant 4 stated “I would not leave for a similar position.” The female participants expressed a great appreciation of periodic gifts given by the owners of the company. These gifts included lotions, spa treatments, and cosmetic items. Participant 5 stated, “we get gifts and things like spa dates to show their appreciation.” The male participant did not seem to highly value these gifts. The male participant valued paid holidays and annual pay raises. Participant 6 stated “I would only leave if someone offered me more money or better benefits. I am comfortable with my job and I do not like to change jobs.”

According to Jaussi (2007), gender plays a significant role in the affective work behaviors of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and the propensity of employees to remain working for an employer. Their study was conducted in Southeast Florida, where 756 working men and women were selected as participants. Results showed that female participants rated family relationships, personal fulfillment, and security as more important success measures than their male counterpart. Furthermore, they rated status/wealth as insignificant in the relation to job satisfaction and commitment. There was no significant difference between the male and female participants in the areas of job security and professional fulfillment.

The participant responses were consistent with this theory. All of the female participants spoke often of their family relationship and their need for stability within the organization. They also spoke of their desire to learn new things and to achieve personal fulfillment by learning and sharing new knowledge within the organization. Participant 4 stated, “we all rotate our jobs to help each other downstairs and we do not hire many new employees.” This was a factor in determining organizational commitment shown by the female participants. None of the participants expressed a strong desire to increase wealth within the organization. However, many of the participants expressed a desire to increase their status within the organization by getting more education and/or training. Participant 4 stated,

*“I am someone that is going to be here for the long run. There is no more movement for me. I have several children and do not see myself going back to school.”*

Participant 5 concurred by stating, “I do not think there is anywhere else to go in my job.” However, all of the other participants expressed a desire to advance within the organization by obtaining further education and training. Participant 3 stated, “I see myself going back to school to become a registered nurse. I would like to be a supervisor.”

Empirical data supported the theory that there are significant differences in the values of men and women (Palladino, Kress, Manzi, & Glasscock 2001; Skitka, 2003). Although women and men placed in similar situations may behave in similar ways, they are more likely to maintain dissimilar values and goals because they bring different expectations and priorities to work based on their different sex role conditioning and socialization experiences (Jaussi, 2007). The female participants in this study all had similar goals of advancing themselves to their fullest potential within the organization. However, the female participants tempered these goals by stating that

the advancement must meet the needs of their families. Participant 4 summarized these sentiments by stating, “I have several children and would not take another position that negatively impacted the relationship with my children.”

Men and women show no significant differences in production when their pay scale is equitable (Cowherd & Levine, 2003). This was validated by all of the participants in this study since they all expressed their desire to work hard towards the goals of the organization and did not mention any disparity in pay within the organization. When their pay rates are the same, men tend to be less committed to an organization than women (Galizzi, 2001). The male participant in this study agreed with this after he was asked why he would leave the organization. Participant 6 stated, “if someone offered me more money with better benefits and if I completed my education and other opportunities arose I would leave the organization.”

Further research conducted by Cunningham (2006) found that the gender and the wage differential of new employees have a direct effect on organizational commitment. This study was conducted using data collected from 12,686 male and female employees. The data indicated that male wages were significantly higher than female wages in the first four years of employment. This was attributed to a higher level of females that were employed in clerical positions. Similarly, it was determined that women have on average less than fifty percent of the wage growth of men when changing jobs (Foote, Seipel, Johnson, & Duffy, 2005). Therefore, female employees tend to become more committed to their original employers when compared to males.

Even though two of the participants held clerical positions within the organization, the majority of employees within the organization were female. Male employees were considered a minority within the organization. There were only 25 male employees in the organization. Therefore, women in this organization were not bound to clerical positions as stated in the

theory. Conversely, they were encouraged and given support to elevate their positions within the organization. The researcher was unable to collect any data in this study which indicated a disparity in wages between the different genders. However, part of the original theory stated that newer employees and employees in lower positions within the organization were less committed due to a wage differential. The wage differential part of the theory was validated by the participant that had the lowest tenure, thus having the lowest wage. Participant 1 stated, “there is not much that would make me want to stay here for a permanent career. I think I would do better getting an education and working for a larger organization like a hospital.” All of the other female participants seemed to indicate a strong desire to remain in a long term relationship with the organization. The male participant appeared to be committed to a long term relationship unless he completed radiology training and was offered a position within the field of radiology.

According to Byrnin (2002), several factors help attract professional employees to different organizations after they complete their college degrees. These factors include age, wages, job status, and types of employment of men and women. Initially, pay is one of the primary reasons that men and women enter and remain in the workforce (Linz, 2004). Research conducted by Lee & Mowday (2000) indicated that higher education had a positive impact on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of male and female employees. The participants in this study that completed an education greater than a high school appeared to be more satisfied with their organization. Participant 1 was in the process of obtaining a college education and did not appear to have strong organizational commitment by stating that there was not many things that would make her stay with organization. This was also true with participant 4 that had a high school education. She stated, “I see myself starting my own business within the next five to ten years.” Conversely the participants that obtained higher education and held nursing jobs or specialized

billing positions appeared to be more satisfied with their jobs. Participant 3 (nurse) stated, “I am very satisfied with the organization.” Participant 6 (nurse) concurred by stating she was satisfied except for a reduction in family benefits over the years.

Research conducted by Ellinger, Ellinger, Yang, and Howton (2002) revealed that male and female workers seek intrinsic and extrinsic job characteristics and these characteristics led to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The foundation for this study was earlier research conducted by Herzberg (1959) that hypothesized that extrinsic job satisfaction characteristics prevent employee dissatisfaction, while intrinsic factors create employee job satisfaction. Fuller (2003) further validated the earlier study of Herzberg (1959). All of the participants indicated job satisfaction was a major component of organizational commitment. Participant 2 summarized the viewpoints of the other participants in relation to the factors that would cause an employee to become unsatisfied with their job. Participant 2 stated,

*“New management that did not focus on employee needs. Bad managers that do not treat me fairly. The removal of benefits. Bad relationships with co-workers. No room for advancement because I do not want to feel that my job is going nowhere.”*

Extrinsic characteristics focused on the context or environment in which work is done and job features determined by external events or other people (Van Dijk, 2003). Intrinsic characteristics include working conditions, relationships with co-workers, supervision, company policy/administration, salary, and job security. These characteristics include the type of work performed in terms of responsibility, variety, skill, autonomy, opportunities for personal growth/development, and feelings of pride and accomplishment (Cunningham, 2004). This was validated by the participants in this study and these intrinsic values appeared to be a key component of creating organizational commitment. All of the participants expressed happiness with the organization’s culture that stressed a close-knit family working environment. Participant

5 stated, “they give you an opportunity to advance if you put in your best effort, come to work, and do your job. Participant 3 stated, “administration is very loyal to me.” Participant 5 stated “it is a great place to work because we are highly respected.”

In a study conducted by Yapp (2003), men and women indicated high levels of commitment and job satisfaction when self-expression and financial rewards were present in the workplace. The data also indicated that males tended to be more committed to their employer when promotional opportunities were present. This was not validated by the participants in this study. Even though participant 6 (male) expressed an interest in further education and moving to another organization, female participants 1 and 3 concurred by indicating their desire to further their education and move on to other opportunities, if given the opportunity.

Lee (2007) conducted research on 200 employees that included males and females. The sample was tested for sex role conflict and work-related attitudes compared to outcomes. The study revealed that gender did not significantly impact the respondents’ overall job involvement, organizational commitment, professional commitment, or propensity to leave an organization. The participants of this study validated this earlier research. The researcher was unable to uncover any significant differences in overall job involvement, organizational commitment, professional commitment, or propensity to leave an organization based on gender. All of the participants seemed to agree regardless of gender, in regards to factors that cause them to be satisfied and committed to their organization. The identified theme of gender and sub-themes are listed in Table 7.

Theme	Sub-themes
Employee gender	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Both genders did not fear loss of employment.</li> <li>2. Female participants appreciated frequent gifts as rewards or incentives.</li> <li>3. Male participant valued money and better benefits.</li> <li>4. Both genders valued a close-knit family culture in the organization.</li> <li>5. Female participants desired higher status within the organization by obtaining additional education and training.</li> <li>6. Female participants expressed interest in increasing their level of responsibility if it did not affect their family lives.</li> </ol>

*Table 7. Employee gender: emerging sub-themes.*

#### *Employee Age & Organizational Commitment*

The participants in this study were clustered into three age groups according to the demographics survey. Participant 1 was the youngest and she was placed into the 18 to 25 year old range. Four of the participants were clustered in the thirty-one to thirty-five year old range. One of the participants was over 35 years old.

According to Loughlin and Barling (2001), a younger workforce is shaping organizations. These younger workers are seeking employment with organizations that have non-standard working hours, shared leadership, and a higher wage. These younger workers have witnessed the work done by their parents and they are insisting on a better balance of work and personal life (Hartog, & Belschak, 2007). The participants in this study validated this theory. The participants were all under the age of thirty-five with the exception of participant 6 who was over thirty-five years old. All of the participants stressed the importance of a flexible work schedule and the

importance of sharing responsibilities within the organization. Participant 1 stated, “I am attending college and they are flexible when scheduling me according to my class hours. Participant concurred by stating, “my schedule and the organization’s focus on our families is the reason I remain at this organization.” Since the early 1990’s, younger women are becoming less tolerant of family undermining their career possibilities, while younger men are becoming less tolerant of allowing work to separate them from their families (Maccoby, 1995). This was validated by the participants in this study when they stressed the importance of spending quality times with their families. According to the data, this change in thought process greatly affects the employees’ commitment to their organization. Participant 6 (male) stated, “they work well with our schedules since most of us have children.” Participant 5 concurred by stating, “I would leave the organization if they did not adjust schedules for family needs and if they were not understanding.” Research conducted by Karsan (2007) indicated that young employees entering the workforce would decisively change their initial thoughts about their chosen profession within seven years of employment. This was validated by the participants in this study. The youngest participant seemed to be focused on obtaining her education and seeking other employment opportunities after completing her education. The older participants and stressed happiness with their jobs and stated they would not make career changes unless greater opportunities arose. Participant 4 validated this by stating, “I am not a job hopper.”

With these factors in mind, how will organizations recruit and retain these young employees? According to Loughlin and Barling (2001), organizations are going to have to accommodate the individual lifestyles of new employees and focus on the key factors that cause employees to reach satisfaction from their jobs. If organizations fail to do this, they will not be able to recruit and foster committed employees. Participant 3 validated this theory by stating, “I would not



work for an organization that did not care about the personal well being of their employees. I really enjoy my job because the managers show concern for our family needs and adjust the schedule accordingly.” The identified theme of employee age and sub-themes are listed in Table 8.

Theme	Sub-themes
Employee age	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All age groups enjoyed a comfortable working relationship with administration.</li> <li>2. All age groups felt that administration treats employees as individuals.</li> <li>3. All age groups felt administration shows honest and sincere concern for employees.</li> <li>4. All age groups felt administration adjust work schedules to meet the needs of employees.</li> <li>5. All age groups felt administration listens to the personal needs of employees.</li> <li>6. The youngest participant expressed less commitment to the organization.</li> <li>7. The oldest participant may leave the organization after obtaining more education only if another organization offered more money or better benefits.</li> </ol>

*Table 8. Employee Age: emerging sub-themes.*

#### *Employee Tenure & Organizational Commitment*

The participants in this study were clustered into three groups according to tenure using the demographics survey. Participant 1 was placed in the zero to two years of experience because she had one and one-half years of experience. Participants two and three had between three to five years of experience. The other three participants had between six and ten years of experience.

Oi-Ling (2003) conducted a study of workers in an attempt to identify personal factors that caused younger and older workers to become committed to their employer. The identified factors were grouped into three categories: supportive behavior, intellectual usage, and involvement. The sample indicated that older employees were more focused and committed to their employer because most of their personal needs were being met. The data indicated that the longer an employee is attached to an organization, the likelier they are to identify with the organization, become committed to the organization, and advance to a higher position. This was validated by the participants in this study. The three participants that had six to ten years of tenure all agreed that they were committed to a long-term relationship with the organization. Participant 4 stated, "I am someone that is going to be here for the long run. I am not a job hopper. Overall I am satisfied with the organization." Participant 5 concurred by stating,

*"I am satisfied with the organization because they give you an opportunity to advance if you put in your best effort, come to work, and do your job. I do not plan to leave the organization unless I get an opportunity to start my own business."*

Participant 6 agreed with the others by stating, "overall I am satisfied with the organization. However, I am somewhat dissatisfied because the business has grown and we receive fewer benefits." Participant 6 was the only person in this tenured group that offered any reasons for dissatisfaction with the organization. The researcher determined that this was only a minor display of dissatisfaction with the organization.

According to Oi-Ling's (2003) study, younger employees did not indicate a commitment to their employer because the respondents believed that their employer was not addressing their personal needs. This was validated by least tenured employee in this study. Participant 1 had only been with the organization for less than two years. When asked about the organization she stated,

“It is a great place to work. The people I work with are awesome and this is the reason I work here.” She followed-up on this by stating “Today I am unsatisfied because I had to cover another office on short notice after telling my managers that I need more than an hour notice to switch office. When asked about her plans to remain with the organization participant 1 stated, “a raise would make me want to stay and if the organization would hire more people to reduce my work load. However, there is not much that would make me want to stay here for a permanent career.”

Shore, Sy, and Strauss (2006) conducted a study that examined 279 business employees and the factors that influenced their organizational commitment. Two research questions were formulated during the study: which organizational experiences have the greatest impact on employees’ organizational commitment, attitudes, and how does the significance of such an experience differ with organizational tenure, particularly in the early career stages? The data indicated that the longer the tenure of an employee, the more likely that he/she is to be committed to the organization. The data indicated that female employees tenured over eight years and over the age of forty were more likely to remain committed to their organization. The level of organizational commitment exhibited by employees was directly linked to the levels of social interaction between peers and supervisors, the level of job achievement/satisfaction, and the hierarchical advancement of each employee. The employees that indicated higher levels of social interaction, achievement, and advancement showed the highest levels of commitment to their organizations.

This was partially validated by the participants in this study. According to the demographics study, three females and one male were between the ages of thirty-one and thirty-five. One participant was a female over the age of thirty-five. All of the female participants expressed a desire to remain in a long term relationship with the organization. They all spoke of reasons

ranging from having a close knit family culture, having good relationships with supervisors and co-workers, and the social events that the employees attended as reason for remaining attached to the organization. The male participants in this study agreed with the female participants by stating, “I like the employees that I work with and the team that I work with.” Conversely, the male employee who was over the age of thirty-five and had six to ten years of experience with the organization did not express a desire to remain in a long term relationship with the organization. Participant 6 stated, “I feel comfortable with my job. However, if someone offered me more money with better benefits and if other opportunities arose after completing my education I would leave this organization.” The identified theme of employee tenure and sub-themes are listed in Table 9.

Theme	Sub-themes
Employee tenure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="483 1037 1192 1136">1. Employees tenured over three years tend to commit themselves to the organization even when they are somewhat dissatisfied.</li> <li data-bbox="483 1178 1192 1276">2. Employees with less than three years do not appear committed to the organization if all of their personal needs are not met.</li> <li data-bbox="483 1318 1192 1394">3. Employees with higher levels of seniority develop comfort with the organization</li> <li data-bbox="483 1436 1192 1499">4. Committed employees view the workplace as a career choice.</li> <li data-bbox="483 1541 1192 1604">5. Non-committed employees view the workplace as a job with no desire for long-term attachment.</li> </ol>

*Table 9.* Employee tenure: emerging sub-themes.

### *Employee Job Satisfaction & Organizational Commitment*

According to Grunig (2004), organizational commitment was the result of employee trust and job satisfaction. Participant 6 validated this theory by stating, “I would not work for this organization if they disrespected me or did not trust me.” Chen (2004) found organizational commitment to be associated with an organization’s adaptability and an employee’s commitment to stay with the organization. The conclusions of the study indicated that organizations should be adaptable to employee needs in an effort to foster committed employees. The level of organizational commitment was highly correlated to the individual employee’s level of job satisfaction. The data indicated that employees were likely to become committed to their organization and stay with the organization if the employees felt that they could affect outcomes of the organization. The researchers rationalized that voluntary turnover rates could be reduced by allowing employees to feel their value in relation to the organization and understand their impact on the outcomes of the organization (Chen, 2004). This was validated by all of the participants in this study when asked for examples of why they would maintain a long-term commitment with their organization. Participant 6 stated,

*“when we had a hurricane they paid us for days off and other days when I did not have vacation time so I could tend to family emergencies.” She further stated, The owners are very giving, trustworthy, and approachable.”*

Participant five stated, “I feel that the owners are more than just bosses. They care about your family, your personal well being, they listen to us, and they treat us like family.” Participant 4 stated, “the managers listen to us and are not overbearing, disrespectful, or mean.” Participant 3 stated, “the owners will listen to our personal problems and will go out on a limb for us if needed.” Participant 2 stated, “I believe the organization takes care of its employees. The

owners are constantly asking for our opinions and advice.” Participant 1 stated, “the supervisors are constantly telling us when we do a good job and they listen to us.”

Addae, H. & Parboteeah, P. (2006) determined that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are precursors to voluntary turnover within organizations. All of the participants in this study validated the theory. The participants were asked what would cause them to leave the organization. They responded by stating they would be unsatisfied with the organization and voluntarily terminate their employment if they were dissatisfied with pay, there was no room for advancement, if they were not respected, if they had poor supervision, if they did not maintain a close knit family culture, and if they did not have positive relationships with co-workers.

In another study, Dee (2004) argued that commitment and job satisfaction were not causally related. However, Nagy (2002) argued that commitment and job satisfaction were causally related. Addae, H. & Parboteeah, P. (2006) tested their hypothesis using 1,870 employees within telecommunication organizations. The data indicated that employee job satisfaction was a factor in determining organizational commitment and both factors had a causal impact on determining the rate of voluntary turnover. The participants in this study validated the theory. Organizational commitment appeared to be directly linked to job satisfaction. Participant 2 stated,

*“I love this organization and I am proud to be a member of this organization. I am very satisfied with this organization and I feel that the organization views me as a valuable and committed employee.”*

Participant 3 stated, “I am very satisfied with this organization and they are very satisfied with me. I plan to remain with the organization and become a registered nurse.” Participant 4 stated, “Overall, I am satisfied with the organization and I am someone that is going to be here for the long-run.” Participant 5 stated, “I am satisfied with the organization because they give you an

opportunity to advance. I do not see myself leaving here.” Participant 6 stated, “Overall, I am satisfied with the organization.”

Solinger, O., Van Olffen, O., & Roe, R. (2008) found that an employee’s level of organizational commitment was determined by: (1) a desire (affective commitment), (2) a need (continuance commitment), and (3) an obligation (normative commitment). The employee’s desire (affective commitment) was found to be one of the strongest indicators of their overall commitment to their organization. Mowday et al. (2000) believed that the antecedents of affective commitment generally fall into four categories: personal characteristics, structural characteristics, job-related characteristics, and work experiences. The levels of individual job satisfaction will vary depending on whether the employee is in the early, middle, or late stages of his/her career (Betz, 2003; Johnson, 2001; Savickas, Biddick, & Watkins, 2002; Schulthesiss, Kress, Manzi, & Glasscock, 2001).

Further researcher concluded that high levels of job involvement and job satisfaction were types of affective indicators that can be used to predict the commitment of an employer’s workforce (Higgins, 2003; McMurtrey, Grover, Teng, & Lightner, 2002). When employees exhibit high levels of job satisfaction they are more likely to remain committed to their organization because their intrinsic needs are being fulfilled (Higgins, 2003).

These theories were validated by the participants in this study. All of the participants were in the middle and late stages of their careers with the exception of one participant that was new to the organization. The participant had less than two years of experience with the organization. The newest participant stated that she was completing college and did not have plans to remain with the organization after graduation. Conversely, the participants that were in the middle and late stages of their careers expressed a desire to remain in long-term committed relationships

with their organization. Participant 2 stated, “I definitely will stay with this organization until retirement.” Participant 3 stated, “I really have no intention of leaving. I really enjoy my job with this organization.” Participant 4 stated, “I am someone that is going to be here for the long run.” Participant 5 stated, “I am satisfied with the organization and will not leave unless I start my own business.” Participant 6 stated, “I have worked here for six years, plan to stay, and would like to learn all of the new technology to increase my value to the organization.” The identified theme of employee job satisfaction and sub-themes are listed in Table 10.

Theme	Sub-themes
Employee job satisfaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Employees need to feel that they have a voice in the organization.</li> <li>2. Employees in the early stages of their careers are less satisfied with their organization.</li> <li>3. Employees that are in the middle to late stages of their careers are more satisfied with their organization.</li> <li>4. Early stage employees need to feel secure in basic needs such as pay and scheduling.</li> <li>5. Middle and late stage employees need to feel comfort and security in within their organization.</li> <li>6. Employees show job satisfaction by exhibiting pride in their organization.</li> </ol>

*Table 10.* Employee job satisfaction: emerging sub-themes.



### *Employee Supervision & Organizational Commitment*

Jones and Meyer (2003) conducted a study where they assessed the variables of personal, role, and organizational predictors of employee commitment. The first variable of personal attributes was defined as the sex, age, job satisfaction, and the education of the employee's immediate supervisor. The second role-related variable was defined as employee level, work overload, years in the organization, tenure in the position, skill level, performance in promotion, technical skill in promotion, and seniority in promotion. The third variable of organizational factors was defined as organization size, union presence, percent of supervision, and centralization of authority. A random sample of 634 employees from a population of 71 government agencies was selected. The data indicated that the tenure related variable had the greatest impact on the employee commitment to an organization. The sample indicated that the higher levels of employees, the longer tenured employees (over fifteen years), and the employees that received promotions tended to be more committed to the organization.

After analyzing the data from the study conducted by Jones and Myer (2003) and comparing it to data obtained from the participants in this study, the researcher determined that the role of supervision was major component of predicting an employee's commitment to an organization. All of the participants in this study spoke often of their positive relationships with supervision including the owners of the organization. The participants also responded overwhelmingly that they would leave the organization if they had poor supervision. Participant 1 had recently experienced some dissatisfaction with her supervisor after she was asked at the last minute to switch offices to cover a shift. However, participant 1 further stated, "the people I work for are awesome. I would leave this organization if a supervisor lied to me." Participant 2 stated, "we have a tight bond between all of the employees, administrators, doctors, and owners. I would

leave the organization if management did not focus on employee needs or if the managers did not treat me fairly.”

Participant 3 stated, “the administration is very loyal to me. If I had a bad supervisor, this would be a main reason for me to leave.” Participant 4 stated, “The owners give us respect. I would not want to work for jerks. I would leave if the managers were overbearing, disrespectful, or mean.” Participant 5 stated, “I feel that they are more than bosses. They care about your personal well being, they treat you like family. I would leave if my managers did not respect or appreciate me and if they were not understanding.” Participant 6 stated, “The owners and managers are very giving, trustworthy, and approachable. I would leave the organization if my employer disrespected me or did not trust me.”

In a study conducted by Kershner (2004), organizational commitment was directly linked to the levels of supervision and pay received by employees. This study was conducted in the Midwest and utilized a sample of 353 management professionals from a population, which was bounded by an insurance company, a hospital, and a personnel department within a large company. The data indicated that the work values of employees and the values of an organization are factors in the decision of employees to leave an organization. The research further indicated that the individual employee’s personal values such as supervision, pay, interaction, and advancement are paramount in determining the level of commitment exhibited by employees. This was further validated in a study which determined that supervision was the first predictor of an employee’s level of organizational commitment (Gordon & Lowe, 2002). Pay was determined to be a factor in determining the organizational commitment of the participants in this study.

The youngest and less tenured employees seemed to focus on pay when expressing their commitment to the organization. Participant 1 stated, “A raise would make me want to stay.”

However, the other participants mentioned pay but focused on supervision as being the determining factor for organizational commitment.

The perceived fairness of decisions made by supervisors and leaders of organizations has a direct impact on the level of organizational commitment exhibited by employees (Brockner, Tyler, Cooper-Schneider, 2004). Their research also indicated that when employees leave one organization for another, they often retain their previously formed ideas about organizational commitment. This was validated by the participants in this study. Interestingly, two of the participants expressed some dissatisfaction with recent decision made by management. One of the participants in this study expressed a desire to seek other employment after graduation from college and the other employee stated a desire to remain committed to the organization.

Participant 1 stated, "Today, I am unsatisfied because I had to cover another office on short notice after telling my manager that I need more than an hour notice to switch offices. There is not much that would make me want to stay here for a permanent career." Participant 2 stated,

*"I feel that the organization abuses my work ethic sometimes. They make me go to another office when there are junior employees that could be forced to go. I am told that they do it because they need my skills in this office. This makes me somewhat dissatisfied. However, I believe that the relationship with my managers is the primary reason that I want to stay with this organization and I love this organization."*

In a study conducted by Yoon and Thye (2002), the level of organizational involvement and commitment held by employees was measured. The study compared the dimensions of organizational involvement to organizational commitment. This study formulated a hypothesis that stated: when employees perceive that their supervision is professional, they become more committed to the organization. The data of this research supported this hypothesis and the researcher concluded that a high degree of perceived professional supervision was key to obtaining the organizational commitment of their employees. This theory was validated by the

participants in this study. Participant 2 stated, “the administrators attempt to meet all of our needs and treat us professionally and personally.” Participant 3 concurred by stating, “we have very good doctors and managers. They are very loyal to the employees and treat us with respect and compassion.” The identified themes of supervision and sub-themes are listed in Table 11.

Theme	Sub-themes
Support of supervision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supervisor must create a comfortable working relationship.</li> <li>2. Supervisor must use positive reinforcement via verbal and written communications.</li> <li>3. Supervisor must treat employees as individuals.</li> <li>4. Supervisor must give verbal praise.</li> <li>5. Supervisor needs to be honest and sincere.</li> <li>6. Supervisor must be respectful.</li> <li>7. Supervisor must provide periodic rewards for all of the employees.</li> <li>8. Supervisor needs to create and maintain a comfortable and close-knit culture.</li> </ol>

*Table 11.* Support of supervision: emerging sub-themes.

#### Summary

Chapter IV discussed the findings of this study. The chapter further described the participants, organization, chain-of-command structure, and the results of the interviews, emerging definitions, themes, and sub-themes. The emerging themes and sub-themes were consistent with Mowday’s (2005) theory of organizational commitment with two exceptions. These three exceptions reveal new structures not previously identified by Mowday (2005). The three exceptions were (1) flexibility in scheduling, (2) an access to training, and (3) a

compassion for patient care. A modification of Mowday's (2005) theory based upon the findings of this study was discussed and the findings were presented in accordance of the modified framework.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The final chapter of this dissertation interprets the meaning of the emerging themes uncovered during data analysis in relation to Mowday's (2005) theory of organizational commitment. The relevance of findings to existing bodies of literature, as well as, new findings is discussed. The limitations of this study and recommendations for further research on this topic are also covered. At the conclusion of this chapter, the implications for human resource practitioners working within healthcare organizations are identified.

#### *Discussion*

The employees that volunteered to be interviewed were all polite and eager to share their personal stories and experiences in relation to organizational commitment. Regardless of whether their experiences were positive or negative, all the participants were very proud of their profession and their individual contributions to their organization, as well as, the impact they make daily in the lives of their pediatric patients. All of the interviews lasted for approximately 45 minutes. The data collected during the interview process was rich and complete with stories associated with participants' experiences in the workplace. After organizing the horizons of data by synthesizing the emerging and recurrent themes, the information was clustered into similar themes using Mowday's (2005) framework.

The primary research question was: What factors contribute to organizational commitment? This question was answered similarly by all of the participants. All of the participants stressed the importance of an organization showing commitment to their employees before the employees could commit to the organization. This was new to Mowday's (2005) theory of organizational commitment which focused on the employee factors of age, tenure, gender, and job satisfaction

as determining factors of organizational commitment. Participant 1 stated “I think employee commitment is generated by the organization showing its’ loyalty to help the employees succeed.” Participant 6 concurred with the statement,

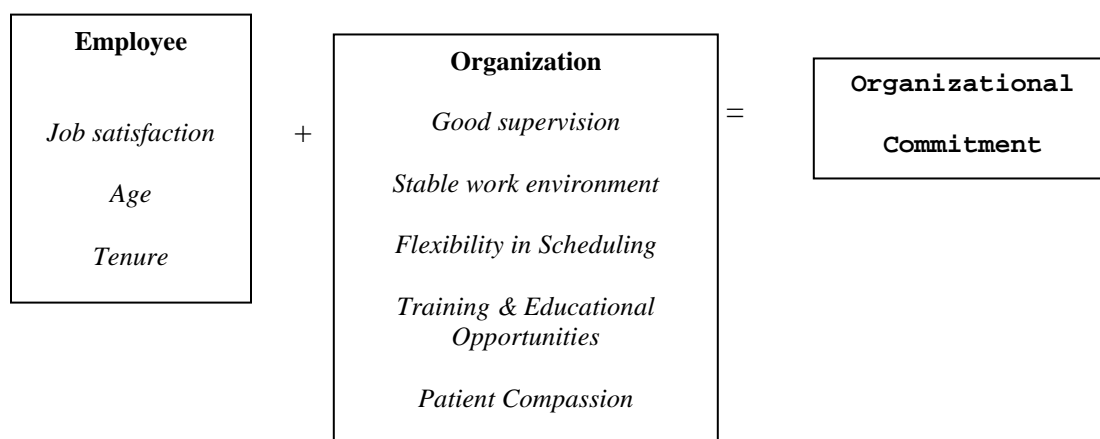
*“what makes me feel loyal to the organization has nothing to do with money. I am loyal to the organization because the owners and managers show their loyalty to me. They constantly tell me when I am doing a good job and they give me gifts for no reason other than to show me their appreciation.”*

The study also sought to gain further knowledge of Mowday’s (2005) theory of the factors that contribute to organizational commitment. To further this knowledge, secondary questions were developed. The secondary question to be answered was: Does the gender, age, tenure, job satisfaction, and supervision of employees affect their level of organizational commitment? An analysis of the data revealed that employee gender, age, and tenure were minor factors in determining an employee’s commitment to an organization. Conversely, employee job satisfaction and the supervisors within the organization had the greatest affect on organizational commitment. The identified themes of job satisfaction and supervision were interwoven in the responses given by the participants when they were asked about the factors of gender, age, and tenure.

The study continued by describing the health care organization and the participants. The chain-of-command was as set forth by the use of an organizational chart. The researcher confirmed the findings with the research participants. The researcher then described how the organization operated and how the working conditions, behaviors, and environment were guided by the actions of the owners, managers, and supervisors within the organization.

The researcher then presented all of the remaining data by using Mowday’s (2005) theory of organizational commitment as a framework. The data was consistent with Mowday’s (2005) identified structures of organizational commitment with three exceptions. These three exceptions

were: (1) flexibility in scheduling, (2) an access to training and education, and (3) a compassion for employees and patient care. These three additions were linked to supervision within the organization. All of the participants stressed the importance of these additional structures and linked them to supervision and job satisfaction within the organization regardless of participant gender, age, or tenure. These emerging themes can be visualized in a modification of Mowday's (2005) theory of structural organization commitment (see Figure 3).



*Figure 3.* Modification of Mowday's (2005) theory based upon study findings.

The participant responses were both positive and negative and led to a deeper understanding of their experiences and feelings of organizational commitment. Having collected and analyzed the data, the researcher will now present the study and its findings in relation to the review of the literature. The researcher will start by discussing how the findings are supportive of the theoretical framework chosen for this study, that of Mowday's (2005) theory of organizational commitment. In the literature review found in Chapter II, the researcher reviewed multiple studies and categorized them into five categories: (1) studies of gender and organizational commitment, (2) studies of age and organizational commitment, (3) studies of tenure and organizational commitment (4) studies of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and (5) studies of supervision and organizational commitment,. The researcher



will discuss the findings in comparison to the existing literature on the subject of organizational commitment as well as discuss similarities and differences from the results in related research.

#### Mowday's (2005) Theory of Organizational Commitment

The data collected for this study was found to be supportive of Mowday's (2005) theory as the horizons of data were clustered into themes and then placed within the framework of Mowday's (2005) theory. The purpose of this study was to explore in-depth employee perceptions of organizational commitment in the healthcare organization in which they work, and what would cause them to be committed to their organization. Throughout the interview process, when participants were asked questions about their perceptions of organizational commitment, the employees were quite similar in their responses. It was this repetitiveness in their responses that led the researcher to cluster the data into themes that were consistent with Mowday's (2005) theory. The repetitive responses also identified three new emerging themes (1) flexibility in scheduling, (2) an access to training and education, and (3) a compassion for employees and patient care will be included in this discussion of the findings.

Organizational commitment can contain broad meanings. Organizational commitment, as defined by Pearce and Herbik (2004), has three major components: (1) a strong belief in and an acceptance of the organization's goals and mission, (2) a willingness to exert considerable personal effort on behalf of the organization, and (3) a definite desire to maintain membership in the organization. This theory was validated by the participants in this study. The participants concurred that employees need to work together; similar to a family and towards a common goal to maintain commitment in the organization. According to Mowday (2005), organizational commitment was attained when the organization and its' employees work together.

Mowday (2005) believed that the organization needed to provide a stable work environment and good supervision. In turn, the employees would commit to the organization according to their age, tenure, and level of job satisfaction. Mowday believed, contrary to other researchers, that an employee's gender was a factor in establishing organizational commitment. The findings of this study supported most of Mowday's framework of organizational commitment. The exceptions were three new emerging themes and that gender was a not factor in determining an employee's commitment to the organization.

When asked about organizational commitment, all of the participants gave similar responses. Interestingly, all of the participants focused on the organization's responsibility to show a strong commitment to its employees before the employees can become committed to the organization. Collectively, the participants agreed that organizational commitment is based on the organization showing genuine respect and compassion to the needs of their employees. Once this was established and maintained, the employees would commit to a long term relationship with the organization.

The participants in this study expressed great pride in their organization. They told the researcher about their organization winning many awards and being held in high esteem by the community. This data indicated that the employees were committed to their organization. This was based on earlier studies conducted by Buchanan (2004) and Mowday, Steers, and Porter (2005). Buchanan (2004) defined organizational commitment as a partisan affective attachment to the goals and values, and to the organization for its own sake, apart from its purely instrumental worth. According to Mowday, Steers, and Porter (2005), organizational commitment was the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization.

Mowday (2005) believed that organizational commitment allowed employees to accomplish tasks and goals within the organization. The participants spoke often about an organizational culture that encouraged employees to rotate their assignments, learn new things, and accomplish the goal of providing quality patient care. The participants of this study felt that organizational commitment was based on managers and employees working together to ensure their organization was viewed as a leader in the healthcare field. They acknowledged management's approachability and trustworthiness as being key to helping employees grow and progress within the organization. This personal growth, though intrinsic, caused employees to feel a commitment to their organization.

The participants all agreed that organizational commitment starts at the top and flows down to their employees. This flow of commitment was based on the respect and value given to employees by management within the organization. The participants stated that they would not remain with an organization that did not respect and value them as individuals. Once this is established the participants agreed that the work environment becomes stable, and good supervisors are needed to maintain the stability and commitment of the employees.

All of the participants further stated that an organization must be focused on their employee needs to create and maintain organizational commitment. All of the participants stated that their organization showed employee commitment by offering flexible scheduling to meet family needs, respecting their employees, providing annual pay increases, providing opportunities to further education and training, creating advancement opportunities, and showing a true compassion for feelings and needs of their employees. All of the participants agreed that the organization met their personal needs and that they were committed to the organization. However, the youngest and oldest participants stressed their need to receive higher pay rates as a

condition of committing long-term to the organization. Pay was not a factor in committing long-term to the organization with the other four participants.

*Employee gender and organizational commitment.* According to Mowday (2005), gender was a factor in determining organizational commitment. All of the female participants expressed their commitment to the organization. However, the youngest female stated that her commitment was not long-term because she was in the process of completing a college education and would seek employment with a larger organization upon graduation. The male participant also expressed his commitment to the organization. However, he expressed a desire to leave the organization if he could obtain a higher paying job with better benefits. Therefore, the researcher disagrees that employee gender was a factor in determining the commitment to an organization by an employee.

*Employee age and organizational commitment.* According to Mowday (2005), age was a factor in determining organizational commitment. Mowday believed that younger employees were less committed to a long-term relationship when compared to their older counterparts. The youngest participant in this study did not appear to be committed long-term to the organization. However, the participant expressed present short-term commitment to the organization. This short-term commitment was described as doing her best to help the organization maintain its' status as a quality healthcare provider. The older employees expressed strong desires to maintain a long-term commitment to the organization. Therefore, the researcher agrees that employee age was a factor in determining the commitment to an organization by an employee.

*Employee tenure and organizational commitment.* According to Mowday (2005), employee tenure was a factor in determining organizational commitment. Mowday believed that higher tenured employees were more committed to a long-term relationship when compared to their less

tenured counterparts. The lowest tenured participant in this study did not appear to be committed long-term to the organization. With the exception of one higher tenured employee, they all expressed a desire to remain in a long-term commitment with the organization. However, the one exception and highest tenured employee would only leave the organization for another job with more pay and higher benefits. The participant did not appear to be actively seeking other opportunities. Therefore, the researcher agrees that employee age was a factor in determining the commitment to an organization by an employee.

*Employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment.* According to Mowday (2005), job satisfaction was a factor in determining organizational commitment. Mowday believed that if employees liked their jobs and their personal needs were satisfied they were more committed to a long-term relationship with their organization. Mowday et al. (2000) believed that the antecedents of job satisfaction generally fall into four categories: personal needs, structural needs, job-related needs, and work experiences. All of the employees agreed that meeting their personal needs, structural needs, job-related needs, and work experiences was key to creating and maintaining organizational commitment. Therefore, the researcher agrees that employee job satisfaction was a factor in determining the commitment to an organization by an employee.

*Employee supervision and organizational commitment.* According to Mowday (2005), employee supervision was a factor in determining organizational commitment. Mowday believed that if employees were valued, respected, and treated fairly they were more committed to a long-term relationship with their organization. In this study, employee and supervisor relationships were the most important factor in determining a participant's propensity to commit to a long-term relationship with the organization. All of the data triangulated to supervision. The participants stated many times that they would leave an organization that employed bad

supervisors. They gave examples of behaviors exhibited by bad supervisors that included; non-flexible when scheduling, not concerned with the family needs of the employee, unfair, dishonest, non-understanding, poor listener, overbearing, disrespectful, and non-trustworthy. Therefore, the researcher agrees that employee supervision is a factor in determining the commitment to an organization by an employee. However, the researcher notes that in this study, supervision was the most critical component of establishing organizational commitment amongst employees.

In conclusion, the data gathered supports Mowday's (2005) theory of organizational commitment in organizations. While assessing Mowday's (2005) five factors of organizational commitment was beyond the scope of this study, the data did support the result of the study and identify supervision as being the most important factor when establishing organizational commitment. The data further identified three new emerging themes (1) flexibility in scheduling, (2) an access to training and education, and (3) a compassion for employees and patient care that added to Mowday's (2005) theory of organization commitment.

#### *Studies of organizational commitment healthcare organizations*

Through the course of this literature review, the researcher found multiple studies in support of Mowday's (2005) theory of organizational commitment. These studies were separated into five categories. The researcher will present the findings in relation to the findings of the existing literature as well as comment on how the findings are similar to or different from the results of related research. First and foremost, the findings are different from the related research in that this study was qualitative in nature and did not have the purpose of measuring participants' level of commitment to the organization. The studies identified below were all quantitative and as a result of this methodology, they sought to find one answer to a question. The purpose of this

study was to explore multiple perspectives on the phenomenon of organizational commitment.

*Studies of employee gender and organizational commitment*

There were several studies found relating to the relationship between employee gender and organizational commitment. All of the studies used a quantitative approach. Six of the studies included data that suggested gender was a significant factor in determining organizational commitment (Belkin, 2004; Cunningham, 2006; Jaussi, 2007; Mowday, 2005; Palladino, Kress, Manzi & Glascock, 2001; Skkitka, 2003). Three studies included data that suggested gender was not a significant factor in determining organizational commitment (Chen, 2004; Fuller, 2003; Power & Rothausen, 2003; Sarminah, 2005). The findings of this study lead the researcher to believe that employee gender was not a significant factor in determining organizational commitment. All of the participants in this study appeared to be committed to the organization. However, two participants, one from each gender, indicated that they may not be committed to a long-term relationship after finishing higher education.

*Studies of employee age and organizational commitment.*

There were five studies found relating to the relationship between employee age and organizational commitment. All of the studies used a quantitative approach. The data gathered by these five studies suggested age was a significant factor in determining organizational commitment (Barlin, 2001; Hartog & Belschak, 2007; Karsen, 2007; Loughlin & Barling, 2001; & Maccoby, 1995). These studies determined that younger employees were less committed to their organizations when compared to older employees. The findings of this study lead the researcher to believe that employee age was a significant factor in determining organizational commitment. All of the participants in this study appeared to be committed to the organization. However, the youngest participant stated she desired leave the organization after completing a

college degree. All of the older participants indicated their desire to remain in a long-term relationship with the organization. Therefore, this study supports the earlier theorists who found that age was a factor in determining an employee's commitment to an organization.

*Studies of employee tenure and organizational commitment*

There were four studies found relating to the relationship between employee tenure and organizational commitment. All of the studies used a quantitative approach. The data gathered by these four studies suggested tenure was a significant factor in determining organizational commitment (Cunningham, 2004; Jones & Meyer, 2003; Oi-Ling, 2003; Shore, Sy, & Strauss, 2006). These studies determined employees in the beginning stages of the careers were less committed to their organizations when compared to employees that worked for the organization for several years. The findings of this study lead the researcher to believe that employee tenure was a significant factor in determining organizational commitment. Five of the participants in this study appeared to be committed to the organization. The newest employee stated her desire to leave the organization after completing a college degree. Therefore, this study supports the earlier theorists who found that tenure was a factor in determining an employee's commitment to an organization.

*Studies job satisfaction and organizational commitment.*

There were several studies found relating to the relationship between employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment. All of these studies used a quantitative approach. The data gathered by these seven of the studies suggested job satisfaction was a significant factor in determining organizational commitment amongst employees (Addae & Parboteeah, 2006; Chen, 2004; Grunig, 2004; Higgins, 2003; McMurtrey, Grover, Teng, & Lightner, 2002; Mowday et al., 2000; Solinger, Van Olffen, & Roe, 2008). These studies determined employees



were more committed to their organizations when their personal needs, structural needs, job-related needs, and work experiences were met and developed by their organizations. Conversely, the data gathered by two additional studies suggested job satisfaction was not a significant factor in determining organizational commitment amongst employees (Dee, 2004; Mauno & Kinnunen, 2002). The findings of this study lead the researcher to believe that employee job satisfaction was a significant factor in determining organizational commitment. All of the participants in this study appeared to be committed to the organization. They provided the researcher with rich data indicating that if they were not satisfied with their organization they would seek employment elsewhere. Therefore, this study supports the earlier theorists who found that job satisfaction was a factor in determining an employee's commitment to an organization.

*Studies of supervision and organizational commitment.*

There were five studies found relating to the relationship between employee supervision and organizational commitment. All of the studies used a quantitative approach. The data gathered by these five studies suggested employee supervision was a significant factor in determining organizational commitment (Bennetts, 2002; Brockner, Tyler, & Cooper-Schneider, 2004; Gordon & Lowe, 2002; Kershner, 2004; Yoon & Thye, 2002). These studies determined employees were more likely to remain with an organization if they felt that the supervisors were compassionate, fair, and honest. The findings of this study lead the researcher to believe that employee supervision was a significant factor in determining organizational commitment. All of the participants in this study appeared to be committed to the organization. The employees gave many examples of behaviors exhibited by bad supervisors that included; non-flexible when scheduling, not concerned with the family needs of the employee, unfair, dishonest, non-understanding, poor listener, overbearing, disrespectful, and non-trustworthy. All of the

participants stated they would not remain with an organization that employed supervisors that exhibited these negative behaviors. In addition, the collected data further identified three new emerging themes which related to supervision (1) flexibility in scheduling, (2) an access to training and education, and (3) a compassion for employees and patient care that added to Mowday's (2005) theory of organizational commitment. Therefore, this study supports the earlier theorists who found that job satisfaction is a factor in determining an employee's commitment to an organization.

While it is difficult to compare this study to prior research due to the differences in purpose and methodology, the themes identified upon the clustering of the horizons of data did support Mowday's (2005) theory of organizational commitment. All of Mowday's (2005) structures, as well as the three new emerging themes, were referred to by the participants throughout the data collection process. These participants considered all of the identified factors as important in the accomplishment of providing quality patient care and maintaining a productive work environment. They perceived organizational commitment as long-term relationships that flowed down from the top of the organization and where healthcare workers create and maintain a high quality service to their patients and their employees.

#### Limitations

There are some important limitations of this study that need to be acknowledged. First, only one of the six participants was male. It would be exceedingly interesting to further explore a male's perceptions of organizational commitment in a healthcare organization that contained a larger population of male employees. Males are still considered to be a minority in the nursing field. By studying men as a minority in the nursing profession, it would be meaningful to examine the effect of their belonging to a minority group when considering organizational

commitment. The male viewpoint may have a direct impact on organizational commitment in a female dominated organization.

Another limitation of this study was that it involved just one pediatric healthcare organization. As discussed in Chapter IV, the limited population for this study could affect the findings of the study. For example, organizational commitment might be perceived differently by workers in a large hospital, larger primary healthcare facility, or large geriatric care facility.

Finally, a third limitation is that all the participants with the exception of two were of the same age. The healthcare organization chosen for this study currently employs a small percentage of people under the age of thirty. Cultural differences associated with age may have an impact on perceptions of organizational commitment. Additionally, their styles of communication could affect the ability to network with co-workers. The ability to network or fit into the culture of an organization could impact employee perceptions of organizational commitment.

#### Implications for Human Resource Development Practice

The implications of this study for human resource practitioners are significant. The findings of this study give further support to Mowday's (2005) theory of organizational commitment and add three additional sub-themes not previously mentioned in the reviewed literature. The collected data identified these new sub-themes which related to supervision (1) flexibility in scheduling, (2) an access to training and education, and (3) a compassion for employees and patient care that added to Mowday's (2005) theory of organizational commitment. Creating a working environment that includes the newly identified sub-themes of supervision is important when seeking to decrease the voluntary turnover rate of healthcare workers from the organization. Organizational commitment can be strengthened and achieved

through the creation of forums where supervisors encourage and support healthcare workers by creating flexible scheduling for employees, allowing access to training and education, and showing compassion for employee and patient needs.

Human resource practitioners in the healthcare profession should be encouraged to share information about advancement opportunities within their organization, as well as, possibly offering tuition reimbursement for formal education or certification. They should also consider possibly offering flexible scheduling to strengthen employee commitment within their respective organizations. This sharing of knowledge and employee compassion should allow new and experienced employees to understand and feel that the leadership within the organization cares about their personal development. The findings of this study indicated that when employees perceive these factors within their organization, they are more likely to commit to a long-term relationship with the organization.

The findings of this study also revealed that employee age, tenure, job satisfaction, and supervision are all factors in supporting and strengthening commitment within an organization. Conversely, gender was not found to be a significant factor. These findings are significant in that all of the factors with the exception of gender support Mowday's (2005) theory organizational commitment.

As leaders within healthcare organizations develop strategies such as focus groups, consistent feedback forums, and frequent reward programs based on performance; they should help the organization obtain a universal goal of reducing costs within organizations by reducing voluntary turnover. Recommendations for human resource practitioners, based upon the findings of this study, include finding methods to motivate younger employees to form long-term commitment to the organization and reducing barriers identified by the participants that would cause middle and

senior tenured employees to leave the organization. A specific example is giving recognition and rewards based upon participation in employee problem solving groups. Employees could identify problems within the organization, gather data, and present solutions to the leadership. By involving employees at all levels, the participants would feel ownership in the decision making process and develop a commitment to see their solutions implemented and refined. This would strengthen the commitment of new and seasoned employees within the organization.

Another recommendation for human resource practitioners is to help leadership within the organization understand the importance of organizational commitment. Without a thorough understanding of why employees want to remain in long-term relationships with their respective organizations, leaders may inadvertently fail to recognize and minimize barriers that reduce organizational commitment. The primary and most important emerging theme of this study was the support of supervision. This was found to directly increase organizational commitment amongst employees. The findings revealed that the participants highly valued good supervision and identified it as being the primary key to forming long-term relationships with the organizations. The participants revealed that a supervisor's display of negative behaviors would inhibit their ability remain committed to the organizations. Human resource practitioners could evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of supervisors during courses developed to help supervisors develop good skills. This would allow the practitioners to enhance supervisor strengths while minimizing weaknesses during training courses developed help supervisors develop good skills.

There were barriers discussed by the participants that would be beyond the scope and role of the human resource practitioner, such as access to the materials necessary to perform their jobs. While these barriers cannot be directly affected by practitioners, the findings of this study

were supportive of Mowday's (2005) concept that when supervision and leadership focuses on the personal needs of their employees the employees will be more likely to remain committed to the organization in a long-term relationship. The changes within the scope and role of the practitioner can minimize the effects of these identified barriers. Rather than becoming disassociated with the organization or leaving the organization, employees will become proactive in working with the organization in its pursuit to reduce voluntary turnover. Organizational commitment is the foundation of a successful healthcare organization.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

Continuing research into the phenomenon of employee, more specifically, nurses' perceptions of organizational commitment in healthcare organizations is very important for human resource practitioners who strive to reduce costs associated with training new nurses. As stated earlier, healthcare organizations in the United States are faced with nursing shortages. Based on the findings of this study, there are three recommendations for future research. These three recommendations are (1) exploring the impact of gender on organizational commitment in a larger healthcare population, (2) exploring the differences of employee perceptions related to organizational commitment and job satisfaction depending upon the specific healthcare unit they work for, and (3) exploring the perceptions of new healthcare workers to determine why they would commit to a long term relationship with an organization. The recommendations would further include a suggestion for the studies to focus on nursing staffs.

Exploring the impact of gender and organizational commitment in a larger healthcare organization such as a hospital would have significance for human resource practitioners. There were no prior qualitative studies found exploring gender differences in a large hospital setting. Exploring possible gender differences or similarities in relation to organizational commitment

within this setting would be interesting since females are the largest population within the nursing profession. Research may determine that gender is a factor in determining organizational commitment within a minority (male population). Males being minorities would be unique since this is reversed in most businesses. Exploring if being part of the minority is beneficial or detrimental to men when committing to an organization could assist practitioners in understanding where these potential employees could be a good fit in a unique organization like a hospital. In an effort to control turnover, a good fit between a potential employee and the healthcare unit is always considered by nursing directors and human resource recruiters during the hiring phase. Future research may determine that certain nursing units within a large hospital would provide better support to the male employees thus allowing them to commit to a long-term relationship with the organization.

While the findings of this study did not delineate a difference in positions held by the healthcare workers, prior research using quantitative methodology did. Continuing to explore any differences in the perceptions of organizational commitment among nurses working the many different types of nursing units within a large hospital setting would lead to a further understanding of organizational commitment. Expanding participant recruitment to other specialties would be helpful to leadership and human resource practitioners because they could work to develop and implement workplace strategies that reduce voluntary turnover and increase organizational commitment.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand more deeply healthcare employees' perceptions of organizational commitment. The research site chosen for this study was a healthcare organization that employed approximately 150 employees annually in South Florida.

The participants chosen for this study consisted of one male and five female employees. The primary research question was: What factors contribute to organizational commitment? Secondary questions answered were: Does the gender, age, tenure, job satisfaction, and supervision of employees affect their level of organizational commitment?

Phenomenology was chosen for the research design since the researcher sought to explore the essence healthcare employees' lived experiences, more specifically, their perceptions of organizational commitment in their respective organization. In an attempt to gain an in-depth exploration of a person's perceptions of a certain experience, or phenomenon, required a phenomenological research design (Jackson, Drummond, & Camara, 2007). This in-depth exploration of an experienced phenomenon required open-ended interviews to acquire that first-person account of the experience (Reeves, Lewin, & Zwarenstein, 2006).

While this qualitative study did not seek to find an absolute truth, or answer, what constitutes organizational commitment, the findings have significance to both the leadership and human resource practitioners serving within healthcare organizations. Developing a more in-depth understanding of organizational commitment and the indicators of employee commitment, can help healthcare leaders and human resource practitioners develop insight as to why employees may be leaving the organization and becoming less committed to meeting organizational goals (Arnett, 2007). In addition, this increased knowledge will further enhance the literature and organization's bottom line (profit) by reducing voluntary turnover and increased training costs in healthcare organizations (White, 2006).

After completing the transcription of the interview data, a phenomenological approach was used to analyze the data. By using phenomenological reduction the researcher was able to fully describe the experiences healthcare employees regarding organizational commitment (Jacobson,



Gerwurtz, & Hatdon, 2007). Reduction enabled the researcher to fully synthesize the data and identify emerging themes, including three new structures of organizational commitment not previously identified in literature, before relating them to Mowday (2005). The findings of this study support the need to educate supervisors to actively support strategies designed to foster and build organizational commitment among employees. Decreasing employee turnover and dissociation with organizational goals can be achieved by increasing the understanding of organizational commitment within healthcare organizations.

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## Appendix A



**Barry University**

Provost and Senior Vice President  
for Academic Affairs

11300 NORTHEAST SECOND AVENUE  
MIAMI SHORES, FLORIDA 33161-6695  
Direct (305) 899-3020  
Fax (305) 899-3026

Research with Human Subjects  
Protocol Review

Date: May 12, 2008

Protocol Number: 080412  
Title: A Phenomenological Study: Factors Affecting Organizational Commitment

Meeting Date: April 16, 2008

Researcher Name: Robert G. Logsdon II  
Address: 14 SW 34<sup>th</sup> Place  
Cape Coral, FL 33991

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Madeleine Doran  
School: EDU

Dear Mr. Logsdon:

On behalf of the Barry University Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have verified that the specific changes requested by the convened IRB on April 16, 2008 have been made. It is the IRB's judgment that the rights and welfare of the individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected; that the proposed research, including the process of obtaining informed consent, will be conducted in a manner consistent with requirements and that the potential benefits to participants and to others warrant the risks participants may choose to incur. You may therefore proceed with data collection.

As principal investigator of this protocol, it is your responsibility to make sure that this study is conducted as approved by the IRB. Any modifications to the protocol or consent form, initiated by you or by the sponsor, will require prior approval, which you may request by completing a protocol modification form.

It is a condition of this approval that you report promptly to the IRB any serious, unanticipated adverse events experienced by participants in the course of this research, whether or not they are directly related to the study protocol. These adverse events include, but may not be limited to, any experience that is fatal or immediately life-threatening, is permanently disabling, requires (or prolongs) inpatient hospitalization, or is a congenital anomaly cancer or overdose.

The approval granted expires on 12/31/08. Should you wish to maintain this protocol in an active status beyond that date, you will need to provide the IRB with and IRB Application for Continuing Review (Progress Report) summarizing study results to date. The IRB will request a progress report from you approximately three months before the anniversary date of your current approval.

If you have questions about these procedures, or need any additional assistance from the IRB, please call the IRB point of contact, Mrs. Barbara Cook at (305)899-3020 or send an e-mail to [dparkhurst@mail.barry.edu](mailto:dparkhurst@mail.barry.edu). Finally, please review your professional liability insurance to make sure your coverage includes the activities in this study.

Sincerely,



Doreen C. Parkhurst, M.D., FACEP  
Chair Institutional Review Board  
Assistant Dean, SGMS &  
Program Director, PA Program  
Barry University  
Box SGMS  
11300 NE 2 Avenue  
Miami Shores, FL 33161

cc: Madeline Doran

\*\*\*\*\*

Note: The investigator will be solely responsible and strictly accountable for any deviation from or failure to follow the research protocol as approved and will hold Barry University harmless from all claims against it arising from said deviation or failure.

## Appendix B

### Permission to Conduct Research

Your organization's participation in a research project is requested. The title of the study is A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: FACTORS AFFECTING ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT. The research is being conducted by Robert G. Logsdon II, a student in the Adrian Dominican School of Education at Barry University, and is seeking information that will be useful in the field of Human Resource Development. The aims of the research are to explore the perceptions of employees that work in the health care profession

In accordance with these aims, the following procedures will be used: (a) information about the study will be made available to research participants and the organization (b) individuals who volunteer to participate will complete a demographic data sheet, and will be interviewed by the researcher. Field notes and a reflective journal will also be used in the study; however, these measures will be completed by the researcher. We anticipate the number of participants to be 8.

If your organization decides to participate in this research, you will be asked to do the following: (a) allow the researcher to post flyers that ask for voluntary participants in the different departments within your organization; (b) allow your employees to participate in a standardized, open-ended, one-on-one interview with the primary investigator to explore their perceptions of Organizational Commitment.

The demographic data sheet will require participants to provide the following information: a) gender (b) age (c) tenure, and their (d) current position held. This sheet will be given to the participants approximately one week before the interview, and they will be asked to return it to the primary investigator the day of the interview.

The interviews will take approximately forty-five minutes and will take place at a day and time that is convenient for your employee. The interviews will take place off site and will not interfere with normal work assignments. Approximately one week following each interview, the participants will be asked to examine the interview transcript to ensure accuracy and to be certain that collected information does not contain anything that they feel may reveal their identity or the identity of your organization.

Your consent to be a research participant is strictly voluntary and should you decline to participate or should you choose to drop out at any time during the study, there will be no adverse effects to your current position as a professional healthcare employee.

There are no known risks to your organization or employees for participating in this research study. Although there are no direct benefits to your organization, your participation in this study may help in understanding the role of the Organizational Commitment in the healthcare profession.

As a research participant, information you and your employees provide will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Any published results of the research will refer to group averages only and no names will be used in the study. Data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's office. Your signed consent form will be kept separate from the data. All data will be destroyed after five (5) years.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in the study, you may contact me, Robert G. Logsdon II, at (239) 470-3462 or my supervisor Dr. Madeleine Doran, at (239) 936-6877 (ext. 18) or the Institutional Review Board point of contact, Ms. Barbara Cooke, at (305) 899-3020. If you are satisfied with the information provided and are willing to participate in this research, please signify your consent by signing this consent form.

#### Permission to Conduct Research

I acknowledge that I have been informed of the nature and purposes of this doctoral research project by Robert G. Logsdon II and that I have read and understood the information presented above, and that I have received a copy of this form for my records. I give my permission for my organization and my employees to participate in this doctoral student research project..

Authorized Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Participant Informed Consent Form

Your participation in a research project is requested. The title of the study is A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: FACTORS AFFECTING ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT. The research is being conducted by Robert G. Logsdon II, a student in the Adrian Dominican School of Education at Barry University, and is seeking information that will be useful in the field of Human Resource Development. The aims of the research are to explore the perceptions employees that work in the health care profession

In accordance with these aims, the following procedures will be used: (a) information about the study will be made available to research participants and (b) individuals who volunteer to participate will complete a demographic data sheet, and will be interviewed one-on-one by the researcher. Field notes and a reflective journal will also be used in the study; however, these measures will be completed by the researcher. We anticipate the number of participants to be 8.

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to do the following: (a) complete a demographic sheet; (b) participate in a standardized, one-on-one open-ended interview with the primary investigator to explore your perceptions of Organizational Commitment.

The demographic data sheet will require you to provide the following information: a) gender (b) age (c) tenure, and your (d) current position held. This sheet will be given to you approximately one week before the interview, and you will be asked to return it to the primary investigator the day of the interview.

The interview will take approximately forty-five minutes. . The interviews will take place off site and will not interfere with normal work assignments. The interview will be held at a date and time that is convenient for you. Approximately one week following each interview, you will be asked to examine the interview transcript to ensure accuracy and to be certain that collected information does not contain anything you feel may reveal your identity.

Your consent to be a research participant is strictly voluntary and should you decline to participate or should you choose to drop out at any time during the study, there will be no adverse effects to your current position as a professional healthcare employee.

There are no known risks to you for participating in this research study. Although there are no direct benefits to you, your participation in this study may help in understanding the role of the Organizational Commitment in the healthcare profession.

As a research participant, information you provide will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Your name will not be used on any documents to help ensure confidentiality. Any published results of the research will refer to group averages only and no names will be used in the study. Data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's office. Your signed consent form will be kept separate from the data. All data will be destroyed after five (5) years.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in the study, you may contact me, Robert G. Logsdon II, at (239)470-3462 or my supervisor Dr. Madeleine Doran , at (239) 936-6877 (ext. 18) or the Institutional Review Board point of contact, Ms. Barbara Cooke, at (305)899-3020. If you are satisfied with the information provided and are willing to participate in this research, please signify your consent by signing this consent form.

#### **Voluntary Consent**

I acknowledge that I have been informed of the nature and purposes of this experiment by \_\_\_\_\_ and that I have read and understand the information presented above, and that I have received a copy of this form for my records. I give my voluntary consent to participate in this experiment.

*Signature of Participant* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date* \_\_\_\_\_

*Researcher* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date* \_\_\_\_\_

*Witness* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date* \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

### COVER LETTER

Dear Research Participant:

Your participation in a research project is requested. The research is being conducted by Robert G. Logsdon II, a student in the Adrian Dominican School of Education at Barry University, and is to seek information that will be useful in the field of Human Resource Development. The aims of the research are to explore the Organizational Commitment, in the health care profession.

In accordance with these aims, the following procedures will be used: (a) information about the study will be made available to research participants and (b) individuals who volunteer to participate will complete a demographic data sheet, and will be interviewed one-on-one by the researcher. Field notes and a reflective journal will also be used in the study; however, these measures will be completed by the researcher. We anticipate the number of subjects to be 6 employees.

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to do the following: (a) complete a demographic sheet; (b) participate in a standardized, one-on-one open-ended interview with the primary investigator to explore your perceptions of Organizational Commitment.

The demographic data sheet will require you to provide the following information: (a) gender (b) age (c) tenure, and your (d) current position held. This sheet will be given to you approximately one week before the interview, and you will be asked to return it to the primary investigator the day of the interview.

The interview will take approximately 45 minutes and will take place at a day and time that is convenient for participants. Approximately one week following each interview, participants will be asked to examine interview transcripts to ensure their accuracy and to be certain that collected information does not contain anything you feel may reveal your identity.

Your consent to be a research participant is strictly voluntary and should you decline to participate or should you choose to drop out at any time during the study, there will be no penalty or adverse effects on your employment. There are no risks to you for participating in this research study. Although there are no direct benefits to you, your participation in this study will help in understanding the role of the Organizational Commitment in the health care profession.

As a research participant, information you will provide will be kept confidential, that is, no names or other identities will be collected on any instruments used. Data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's office, and will be destroyed five (5) years following the completion of this study.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in the study, you may contact me, Robert G. Logsdon II, at (239) 470-3462 or my supervisor, Dr. Madeleine Doran, at (239) 936-6877 (ext. 18), or the Institutional Review Board of contact, Ms. Barbara Cooke, at (305) 899-3020.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Robert G. Logsdon II, M.S.  
Doctoral Student, Leadership and Education Program, Barry University



## Appendix E

### Interview Guide

Project: Factors affecting organizational commitment

Time of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: Rob Logsdon

Interviewee: Confidential

Position of Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for being here today and allowing me to interview you one-on-one. The purpose of this study is to explore factors that affect an employee's perception of organizational commitment in a healthcare organization. Your consent to be a research participant is strictly voluntary and should you decline to participate or should you choose to drop out at any time during the study, there will be no penalty or adverse effects on your employment. I will be speaking to six employees from your organization that have been employed for various lengths of time. I will interview all of the participants one-on-one and then look at the data to see if there are any common themes. Your participation is strictly voluntary and your information will be kept confidential. My notes will be transcribed and destroyed in five years following the completion of this study. Only I will have access to the notes and transcriptions which will be stored in locked files. This interview will last approximately 45 minutes. Please let me first show you this consent form. After you read and sign the consent form, we will start. Your name will not be used on any forms or questionnaires to help ensure confidentiality.

#### Questions:

1. Would you begin by telling me what are the first things that come into your mind when you hear the name of your organization? What else do you know about your organization?
2. How would you describe your relationship with the organization? Please describe.
3. Can you provide me any examples that suggest that your organization wants to maintain a long-term commitment to its employees?
4. How long have you been employed with your organization? Where do you see your career path in the next five and ten years?
5. How do you perceive the relationship that your organization has with you is viewed by the organization? Please explain why you are satisfied or unsatisfied with your organization.
6. What are the things that make you want to remain with this organization?
7. What would cause you to leave this organization for another position?

Thank you very much for your cooperation and participation in this interview and study. Again, your identity and responses will remain confidential.

## Appendix F

**Demographic Data Sheet**

The following information will be useful to this study on Organizational Development. Please check the response that best describes you.

1. Gender:

Male       Female

2. Age:

18-25       26-30       31-35       over 35

3. Position held in this organization:

Doctor       Nurse       Clerical/Support       Management  
 Other

4. Number of years employed by this organization:

0-2       3-5       6-10       over 10 years

Appendix G  
**Data Spread Sheet**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Identified Themes</b>						
<b>1</b>							
<b>2</b>							
<b>3</b>							
<b>4</b>							
<b>5</b>							
<b>6</b>							
<b>7</b>							
<b>8</b>							

