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Role of normative commitment in fostering university employees' commitment

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ABSTRACT

A study investigated how normative commitment leads to employee commitment in a South African University. The literature review was conducted on the concepts of employee commitment, normative commitment, and employee commitment in a university setting. An explanatory research design was adopted together with a deductive research approach. Quantitative methodological was chosen to determine the common characteristics of the respondents, and a survey by means of a questionnaire was used to collect data, while descriptive statistics, t-test, and ANOVA (analysis of variance) were conducted on IBM SPSS, Version 26. Findings suggest that none of the tested variables (gender, age, qualification as well as years in an organisation) influences commitment. This led to the conclusion that normative commitment does not influence employee commitment in that institution. Recommendations to include different variables to test normative commitment have been formulated, involving many other higher learning institutions.

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Introduction

Employee commitment is not a new concept in the field of business management study. Katz (1964) articulates that for organisations to fulfil their obligations, employee commitment is fundamental as it stimulates creativity among employees to go the extra mile and perform unrestrained actions that go beyond their official responsibilities. Ndlovu, Ngirande, Seta, and Zhuwawo (2018) claim that there is a causal link between organisational productivity and employees' commitment. Similarly, Mohamad, Cha, Ramlan, and Azmi (2014) articulate that employee commitment is a significant factor when looking at human resources and it assumes a crucial role in achieving the company's objectives. Edward and Peccei (2020) advise that organisations that are successful and maximise profitability, leverage employee commitment and can then later bring about a spike in the commitment of employees, which subsequently affects the way they perform. Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky (2002) and Morrow (2011) report that employee commitment is regarded as the quality that drives actions(s) towards achieving the organisational goals and objectives.

While the role of employee commitment in any type of organisation is non-disputable, the ongoing debate is about how each type of organisation drives its employees' commitment and how the latter affects its functionality, suggesting that the current knowledge about the topic remains inconclusive. Jaja and Okpu (2013) suggest that employee commitment is one challenge that confronts businesses today. A further gap in the knowledge about the topic is shown by Zhang's (2019) statement that the concept of organisational commitment has been mostly tested in non-academic environments, and this brings us to the conclusion that an environment such as a university deserves a place in this debate. As suggested by Mohamad *et al.* (2014), it is necessary to study organisational commitment in an effort to improve the workers' commitment toward higher productivity.

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Allen and Meyer (1990) suggest that normative commitment entails the employees' view that it is their duty to stay in the organisation and a point at which individuals are dedicated to their organisations because they are morally obliged to do so, thereby representing a sentiment of obligation to remain in the organisation.

The current study contributes to the debate around employee commitment in an organisation in general, with a focus on higher learning institutions in South Africa. Studies on this topic are few and this study aims at determining how normative commitment affects employees' commitment in a South African university. The article is developed into the following sections: the literature review which is divided into theoretical and conceptual reviews follows next. The methodology section follows before the findings are presented and analysed. The conclusion and recommendations end the article.

Literature Review

Theoretical review

Employee commitment

The literature suggests that the concept of commitment has been in use for a long time to describe such different phenomena as the social actor's willingness to give their loyalty and effort to social frameworks (Kanter, 1968). Currently, employers consider commitment as a serious challenge in their organisations (Jaja & Okpu, 2013). Gelade, Dobson, and Gilbert (2006) propose that organisations must make an effort to achieve their employees' commitment due to many relationships between themselves and the success of the organisation.

Meaning of employee/organisational commitment

Kiesler (1971) and Salancik (1977) refer to commitment as the bond of a person to behavioural acts, while Buchanan (1974) defines it as an emotional connection to an organisation that is separate from the instrumental worth of the relationship and a definite desire for a committed employee to maintain their membership with the organisation. Similarly, Ongori (2007) defines employee commitment as an emotional reaction to the entire organisation and the level of connection or steadfastness an employee feels towards the organisation.

Porter *et al.* (1974) advance the term "employee commitment". Since then, the focus of the concept of commitment has moved from substantial "side bets" to the mental connection one has to the organisation. The emotional reliance school endeavoured to define commitment as a sort of mentality focused on "monetary agreement". Mowday *et al*. (1979), and Porter *et al.* (1974) and their supporters theorised that commitment was the general quality of a person's relationship with and connection to a specific organisation. From that perspective, they pointed out that strong acceptance, participation, and loyalty were the main pillars of employee commitment in an organisation. In 1982, another school of thought emerged, which linked commitment to the exchange theory. Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) advanced that the concept of commitment could be an alternative to job satisfaction and refuted that dedication could in some cases predict turnover better than job satisfaction itself.

In the view of Scholl (1981), commitment is a balancing force that acts to preserve direction in behaviour when fairness and expectancy conditions do not work or cannot be met. Brickman (1987) states that commitment is a power that balances out behaviour of individuals under conditions in which the individual would somehow be enticed to change that behaviour. Commitment is an obliging power, which necessitates that the individual respects the dedication, despite fluctuating frames of mind (Brown, 1996). Cementing this perspective, Armstrong (2006) states that commitment is a perception (in terms of relation to the workplace), a frame of mind by employees towards the conditions of remuneration, acknowledgment, advancement, and work conditions, among others. It is the strength of identification of a person with and the inclusion in a specific organisation (Mowday *et al*., 1979) and a mental state that ties the person to the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

The above points of view were enhanced by Zheng (2010) when he commented that employee commitment was essentially the attitude of an employee towards his/her organisation. He broadened his view by stating that employee commitment was as wide because the attitude of workers includes different aspects.

Role of employee/organisational commitment

Through several studies, it was proven that commitment does not predict only workers' retention (Koch & Steers, 1978; Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974), but may also predict the workers' performance or effort (Mowday, Porter & Dubin, 1974; Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979). O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) underscore the above view when they advise that the mental connection felt by the individual for the organisation will mirror how much the individual takes on or will embrace characteristics or points of view of the organisation.

Mowday *et al*. (1982) brought up two points of view on employee commitment that have dominated the research: the behavioural and attitudinal perspectives. The behavioural approach to commitment looks at employees strengthening a feeling of connection, but not to their organisation, while the attitudinal looks at commitment as an attitude that reflects the nature of the relationship that exists between a worker and the organisation. Commitment is described by three related variables, namely:

i. a solid belief in and acknowledgment of the objectives and qualities of the organisation;

ii. an eagerness to apply significant effort for the benefit of the organisation;
iii. a powerful urge to maintain being a member of an organisation (Mowday *et al*., 1979).

Akinyemi (2014) highlights the role of employee commitment as an aspect of an organisation that formed a multitude of interests and lines of inquiry due to business-related practices, including work contribution, job satisfaction, employees taking on extra roles, advocacy of subordinate relations, and employee turnover.

However, Jena (2015) launched an opposing idea. In her view, the type of commitments that may be experienced by a worker relies on the idea of the connection between the organisation and its employee. Allen and Meyer (1990), and Cheng and Stockdale (2003) have recognised that organisational commitment has three scopes, namely, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. For the current study, normative commitment is discussed and measured.

Antecedents of employee commitment

Several studies have directed their analysis to the antecedents of employee commitment in various environments. Akintayo (2010) focused on the role played by work-family settings on employee commitment in industrial workers in Nigeria. He found a huge negative relationship between commitment and work-family roles. Moved by this finding, Akintayo advocated that in order to lessen the burden of work-family role struggle, support from the organisation should be provided to all levels of employees. He further suggested that during the hiring process, as well as in the assignment of responsibilities and arrangements processes, managers take into account the degree of family duties of the employees.

Other major antecedents of commitment identified are personality, the level of education, as well as the position occupied in the organisation (Camilleri, 2002). Camilleri's findings go further and assert that the level of education and the position in the organisation are crucially stronger for normative commitment than they are for continuance commitment. Scholars, such as Dex and Smith (2001), demonstrate a significant determinant of increased employee commitment when workers, but not the employer, considered the company as having a caring ethos. This finding suggests that employee commitment is mainly the result of the culture of the organisation they work for (particularly with regard to the welfare of their family) and not by the frame of mind possessed or displayed by their manager or employer towards them.

Further researchers, such Smeenk, Eisinga, Teelken and Doorewaard (2006), reveal that employee commitment is directly linked to three antecedents, namely personal variables, job and role characteristics as well as structural factors. Among the personal variables, the authors cite age, gender, educational level, need for achievement, organisational tenure, positional tenure, and family responsibility. Inside the job and role characteristics, the authors list career mobility, job challenge, job level, role conflict, role ambiguity, level of autonomy, and working hours. Lastly, social involvement, personal importance and formalisation are part of structural factors. Lo, Ramayah, and Min (2009) suggest that individual factors play a significant role in employee commitment. The authors refer to those factors as biographical, such as age, gender, marital status, and many others. Other individual factors named by the authors are job involvement, job security, opportunities for advancement, and many more.

Conceptual review

Normative commitment

As pointed out by Allen and Meyer (1990), normative commitment entails the view of employees that it is their obligation to remain in their organisations. In fact, normative commitment is indicated by the point at which individuals are committed to their organisations because they are morally obliged to do as such. The normative commitment represents a sentiment of obligation to proceed with the organisation. It is believed that workers with a higher level of normative commitment feel that they should remain with the organisation. Concurring with this theoretical substance, Coyle-Shapiro (2008) refers to normative commitment as a commitment of an employee for being part of the organisation and becoming faithful to it. It is the degree to which an employee becomes mindful of certain expectations to remain in the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Allen and Meyer (1990) stipulate further that normative commitment can also occur when the worker is provided with "compensation ahead of time" (e.g., paying school or educational costs) or acquiring huge expenses in giving up their job (e.g., charges or expenses related to job hunting). Meyer and Parfyonova (2009) articulate that normative commitment has received less attention among other dimensions of commitment, i.e., affective and continuance, because, according to some scholars, normative commitment shares many similarities with affective commitment. They deny this claim and argue that normative commitment has a dual nature, and it manifests itself differently according to the strength of the other components in the employees' commitment profile. According to them, normative commitment can be experienced either as a moral duty or a sense of indebtedness, each having different implications for work behaviour.

Organisational commitment in a university

Akpan (2013) considers a university system as a tool used to build a national identity and civil society through shared values and a dedication to a common goal. The main mission of a university is to train and produce high-level manpower for the country to move forward in all its aspects: social, economic, political, and cultural.

Nawab and Bhatti (2021) assert that organisational commitment for university teachers can be regarded as their beliefs in and acceptance of the university's goals and values, as well as their desire to remain part of the university and work towards its development. Employee commitment in a university result from several factors, among which two stand out the most: job security and job satisfaction. In Akpan's view (2013), job security is the individual's expectation about the continuity in his/her job, which implies that the employee needs not fear the loss of a job or desirable job features like job promotion, work conditions, and long-term career opportunities. The author goes further to affirm that a university lecturer's job security is ensured after confirmation of appointment. This view was supported by Abdullah and Ramay (2012) when they articulate that a secure job is an employee's requirement and wish.

On the other hand, job satisfaction is employees' cognitive, affective, and evaluative reactions towards their job and a general attitude towards one's job or the difference between the number of rewards workers receive and the amount they believe they should receive (Robbins, 1998). This view was supported by Lee (2004) when he opined that a lack of commitment among teachers can be a result of the compensation that is being given.

Aderman, Belzer and Smith (1991) report that the culture which prevails a school, the sense of accomplishment, recognition, and affiliation supports satisfaction and commitment among institutional employees. Shan (1998) appends and posits that job satisfaction in an academic environment is a predictor of retention and commitment, resulting in a contribution to the academic institution's effectiveness.

There are debatable views about university lecturers/teachers and their level of commitment and dedication to their organisations. For example, Steyn and Van Wyke (1999) state that there is a perception that teachers/lecturers are lazy, uncommitted, and only care about month-end salaries. On their side, university teachers/lecturers have their own concerns about their work conditions, which they complain about. Steyn and Van Wyke (1999) name just two – the lack of involving teachers/lecturers in policy changes and the violation of their rights. These may lead to a poor level of commitment, thereby affecting the productivity of a university. A further study is recommended to confirm these findings because most of the studies such as one empirically done by Zarid, Izadi, Ismail, and Alipour (2021) and statistically analysed reported that lecturers are motivated by their work conditions and thereby display a high level of commitment.

Research and Methodology

Design

To achieve its objectives, the study adopted an explanatory research design because the problem under investigation has not been well investigated before in the South African educational sector. By adopting such a design, the study aims to help better understand the way normative commitment affects employee commitment, specifically in a university context.

Research approach

For this study, a deductive approach was used. The study discusses various theories and studies on the topic, which help to reach a logical conclusion. The literature review on the topic allowed thorough discussions through which arguments emerged. Those arguments allowed to construct the research questions and formulate the research instrument.

Methodological choice

Because the study aimed at being as objective as possible, it adopted a quantitative methodological choice. The choice of quantitative method was premised on the philosophy of testing an idea or theory (hypothesis) towards reaching a conclusion. Furthermore, the choice of the quantitative method was motivated by the desire to determine the common characteristics among the respondents who participated in the study. This nomothetic approach allows the use of statistics that are essential in solving quantitative problems.

Research strategy.

A research strategy is seen as the glue connecting the theory and the selection of methods to assemble and interpret information. For the current study, the research strategy used a survey by means of a questionnaire. A survey by questionnaire was the preferred strategy due to its nature of selecting a sample of respondents from a population, collecting data from them, and analysing this data using statistical techniques to make inferences about the sample or population.

Furthermore, the study presents itself as a case study since one university[1] has been singled-out to be a unit of investigation. There are 26 public universities in South Africa, but only one is featured in the study, making the findings difficult to generalise, though the working conditions as well as other university employees' characteristics look very similar.

Population

The target population for the current study was the University of X employees from the Faculty of Business, in different roles and from all its campuses. Though the Faculty is made up of full-time and part-time employees, the respondents in the current study

[1] *For confidentiality reasons, the name of the university in question has been withheld in the study and will be replaced by X.*

comprised full-time employees only, as it was judged difficult to measure the commitment of a temporary employee. Furthermore, attention was paid to feasibility issues, especially because the study aimed at capturing all the salient issues, which temporary employees might not know.

Sample and sampling technique

The sampling frame was the different categories of employees in the Faculty of Business from University X. These categories comprised both administrative staff (from top management to lower-level employees) and all academic staff (from professor to junior lecturer) from all the departments. The simple random sampling technique was used in this study. With this sampling technique, the researchers considered every member of the population to have an equal chance of being selected to participate as a respondent of the study. The sample selection criteria included:

i. being an employee of University X in its Faculty of Business
ii. being from any department, at any level of employment
iii. being any gender, race, or age
iv. not being excluded by the level of qualification or number of years working at the organisation.

Reliability and validity

Reliability

The reliability analysis was conducted on the constructs of normative commitment: gender, age, qualifications, years in the organisation and the position occupied in the organisation, including their items to measure internal consistency. As stated by Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2014), the cut-off value of the Cronbach's alpha is 0.7, although 0.6 is sometimes acceptable. As far as the current study is concerned, most of the constructs are internally consistent in their measurement because of the Cronbach's alpha values of above 0.6 and 0.7.

Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which a concept is precisely measured, meaning that all the items used to measure a concept (construct) should be measuring it in the same direction. To be meaningfully valid, the values of items being measured are expected to be above 0.3 (Pallant, 2010) to indicate an acceptable contribution of at least 30%. For the current study, most items met these criteria but those with a contribution of below 0.3 were kept because the values were not negative.

Findings

The following section presents and analyses the results from the empirical investigation. A quantitative method was applied to collect responses from the respondents, and descriptive statistics, *t*-test and ANOVA (analysis of variance) were conducted on IBM SPSS, Version 26.

Group differences of the respondents

Group difference analysis was also conducted to determine if normative commitment is different across characteristics, such as gender, age, qualification, years in organisation, and position.

Table 1: Gender

Gender	Percent
Male	48
Female	52
Total	100

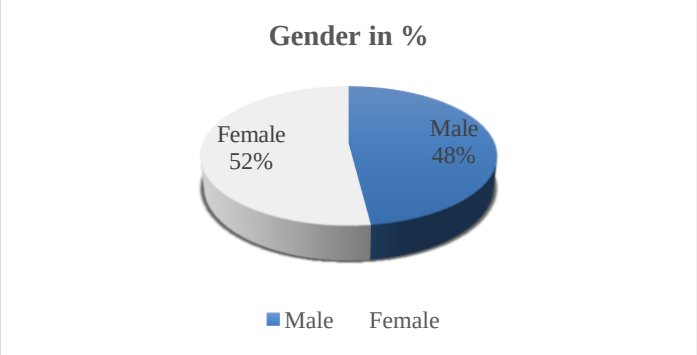


Figure 1: Gender

Gender Statistics

The frequency table above (Table 1) was used to sum up the gender of the employees who participated in the study. The data were collected for both males (48%) and females (52%). Table 1 is a gender aggregate of the respondents to the study. From the table, females constituted the majority of the respondents (52%), while their male counterparts were 48%.

Table 2: Descriptive results: Normative Commitment – Age

	Mean	**Std. Deviation**
20 – 29 years	3.200	0.872
30 – 39 years	3.242	0.903
40 – 49 years	3.056	1.049
50 – 59 years	3.022	0.724
Total	3.131	0.908

Table 3: ANOVA – Descriptive Results: Normative Commitment – Age

	Sum of Squares	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	***p*-value**
Between Groups	.044	3	.015	.025	.995
Within Groups	26.174	45	.582		
Total	26.218	48			

Table 2 below indicates the age group of employees, and according to the results, the highest number of employees were aged 30-39 years old (38%), and 40-49 years old (36%).

ANOVA results in this study show that the mean score of normative commitment is different, to some extent, across all different age groups. However, the difference is not statistically significant because the *p*-value (0.995) is above 0.05, as shown in Table 3. Furthermore, the results of this study show that normative commitment is the same for all employees of different age groups. This finding goes against Isaiah *et al.*'s (2006) opinion that age is positively related to commitment. The authors argue further that older people develop a sense of maturity due to their obligations. The same can be said of Baron and Greenberg (1990) who point out that those employees who are older and mature, especially those that are in senior positions and are satisfied with their work performance, tend to have higher levels of commitment than others.

Table 4: Descriptive Results: Normative Commitment – Qualifications

	Mean	**Std. Deviation**
Post-Matric Diploma or certificate	3.68	1.00
Baccalaureate Degree(s)	3.52	0.64
Postgraduate Diploma(s)	2.70	0.88
Postgraduate Degree(s)	3.09	0.90
Total	3.11	0.91

Table 5: ANOVA: Normative Commitment – Qualifications

	Sum of Squares	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	***p*-value**
Between Groups	4.162	3	1.387	1.761	.168
Within Groups	36.251	46	.788		
Total	40.413	49			

The mean scores of normative commitments are slightly different across level of education, and the difference is non-significant ($p = 0.168 > 0.05$). Results from this study on the perceptions of qualifications on normative commitment ($p = 0.168 > 0.05$), show that this does not impact or influence employee commitment because the *p*-value is above 0.05. However, the effect of educational qualifications has received different views from scholars. Studies that have been carried out argue that academic qualifications have an inverse effect on organisational commitment.

Scholars such as Manriquez, Ramirez and Guerra (2010) are of the opinion that employees with higher educational qualifications exhibit lower commitment. Their findings show that employees with low academic qualifications stay longer in organisations than those who have high qualifications.

Based on the views from employees from University X that was used as a case in the current study, the difference is non-significant.

Table 6: Descriptive Results: Normative Commitment – Years in Organisation

	Mean	**Std. Deviation**
Between 1 to 3 years	2.67	0.97
Between 4 to 6 years	3.41	0.80
Between 7 to 10 years	3.05	0.88
Between 11 to 15 years	3.44	0.79
Between 16 to 20 years	2.52	1.17
Total	3.11	0.91

Table 7: ANOVA: Normative Commitment – Years in Organisation

	Sum of Squares	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	***p*-value**
Between Groups	5.079	4	1.270	1.617	.186
Within Groups	35.333	45	.785		
Total	40.413	49			

The mean scores of normative commitments are slightly different across different years in the organisation, and the difference is non-significant ($p = 0.186 > 0.05$). This means that the mean scores of normative commitments are also different among employees who have spent differing spans of time in the organisation. The number of years in the organisation of employees does not affect commitment. Past research by Mathieu and Zajac (1990) has also demonstrated that demographic characteristics such as years in the organisation may only serve as a potential predictor of organisational commitment of employees. However, the findings of Riordan, Griffith and Weatherly (2003) and Olanike (2016) show that employees who have stayed in the organisation for a long time usually commit more to the organisation.

Table 8: Descriptive Results: Normative Commitment – Positions

	Mean	**Std. Deviation**
Manager	3.20	1.05
Supervisor	3.50	1.27
Lecturer	3.09	0.86
Faculty officer	2.87	1.29
Administrator	3.29	0.75
Librarian	3.27	0.90
Total	3.16	0.87

Table 9: ANOVA: Normative Commitment – Positions

	Sum of Squares	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	***p*-value**
Between Groups	.808	5	.162	.194	.963
Within Groups	35.028	42	.834		
Total	35.837	47			

The mean scores of normative commitments are slightly different across different positions, and the difference is non-significant ($p = 0.963 > 0.05$). This translates that, due to its pa-value of 0.963, which is higher than 0.05, the variable of "positions" does not impact or influence normative commitment.

Central Tendency Measures

Central tendency measures (mean, median, and standard deviation) were used to conduct the descriptive analysis of the construct of normative commitment. The aim was to assess the main tendency of the responses on scaled items. A 5-point Likert scale was used, in which one corresponded to *strongly disagree* and five corresponded to *strongly agree*. Based on the principle that 2.5 (5 ÷ 2) is the middle point of the 5-point scale, any mean score below 2.5 indicates that most respondents tend to either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. Mean scores between 2.5 and 3.4 suggest that most respondents tend to be neutral about the statements of the construct.

The entire mean scores equal or above 3.5 indicate that most respondents tend to agree or strongly agree with the statements of the construct. Frequencies and percentages were also conducted to see responses per each item (statement).

Table 10: Normative Commitment

Items	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Overall	3.11	3.20	0.91						
Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave (NC2).	2.72	3.00	1.05	10.0%	34.0%	38.0%	10.0%	8.0%	100.0%
I would feel guilty if I left this organisation now (NC3).	2.88	3.00	1.38	18.0%	30.0%	14.0%	22.0%	16.0%	100.0%
This organisation deserves my loyalty (NC4).	3.54	4.00	1.23	10.0%	10.0%	18.0%	40.0%	22.0%	100.0%
I would not leave my organisation right now because of my sense of obligation to it (NC5).	3.18	3.00	1.27	8.0%	30.0%	16.0%	28.0%	18.0%	100.0%
I owe a great deal to this organisation (NC6).	3.24	4.00	1.33	14.0%	18.0%	16.0%	34.0%	18.0%	100.0%

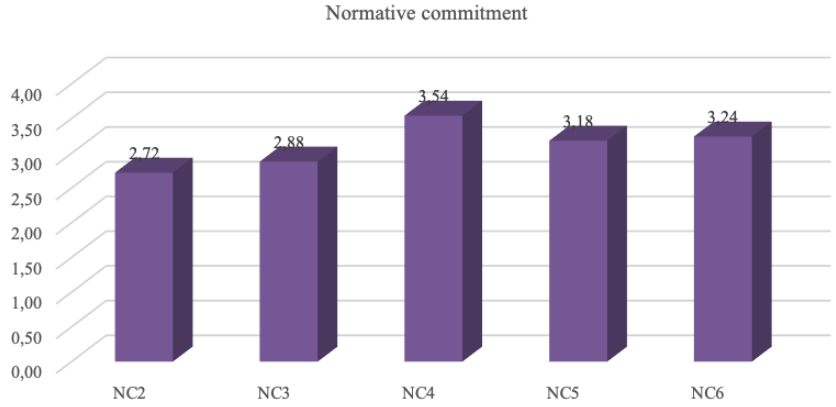


Figure 2: Normative Commitment

Normative commitment

The results of this study show that 38% of the respondents tended to be neutral in terms of the normative commitment construct, evidenced through the mean score of 3.11, which is below 3.4. Thirty per cent went even further to say that they would not feel guilty leaving the organisation, even when it is to their own advantage. Even though 40% stated that the organisation deserved their loyalty, 30% stated that they would leave and not feel a sense of obligation. However, the literature argues that normative commitment mirrors a sentiment of obligation to proceed with the organisation (Morrow, 2011; Mowday, Porter, and Steers, 2013; Ongori, 2007). Workers with a higher level of normative commitment feel that they should stay with the organisation (Beck & Wilson, 2000). In any case, normative commitment may likewise develop when the worker is provided with compensation ahead of time (e.g., having school or educational costs paid by the company) or acquiring huge expenses in giving up their job (e.g., charges or expenses related to job hunting), etc.

Conclusion

Throughout the current study, evidence transpired that committed employees add more value to the organisation's success through awareness of quality and productivity, and that commitment improves the performance of employees as it is related to institutional performance and productivity (Wang, 2010; Owenyemi, Oyelere, Elegbede and Gbajumo-Sheriff, 2011). The current study discussed the effect of normative commitment on employees' commitment in one university in South Africa, using the variables of gender, age, qualification, years spent in the organisation as well as the positions respondents occupy in the university.

Regarding the variable of gender, the ANOVA results show a p-value of 0.924, which is above 0.05, thereby making it statistically insignificant. It, therefore, means that the variable of gender does not have an impact on normative commitment. Concerning age, ANOVA results showed that the mean score of normative commitment is different across all age groups, but that difference is not statistically significant with a p-value of 0.995.

To contrary Manriquez, Ramirez, and Guerra's (2010) view, and to the researcher's expectations, the current study found that educational qualifications (p-value 0.168) did not have any influence on employees' normative commitment. With a p-value of 0.186, the same finding was also true on the variable of "years in the organisation", while the variable of "positions" with a p-value of 0.963 was also not found statistically influencing normative commitment.

The literature around the topic in a South African context was very sparse, making it difficult to corroborate the findings. However, though they have a different dimension from the current study, the few existing studies in South Africa – Udjo and Erasmus (2014); Ndlovu, Ngirande, Seta, and Zhuwawo (2018); Coetzee, Ferreira, and Potgieter (2019) –played a significant role.

Al-Jabari and Ghazzawi (2019) proposed the following to be focal points for future research on organisational commitment:

i. key predictors of workplace citizenship behaviour
ii. focus on a three-dimensional work attitude: commitment, satisfaction, and performance
iii. role played by commitment during the organisational decline or challenges
iv. how innovation and success influence organisational commitment
v. how the age of the organisation impacts employees' commitment

Considering the above fact of lack of studies on the topic at hand, as well as the above directions for future research as suggested by Al-Jabari and Ghazzawi (2019) the current study firstly recommends that more academics carry out more studies on the welfare of employees to expand the dialogue and open new insights into the subject of employee commitment. Furthermore, studies on employee commitment in higher learning institutions could include other variables, such as nationality, sexuality, disability, and others, given the rise of these demographic characteristics in an academic environment. Further studies on the topic can also involve more universities or all higher learning institutions in South Africa.

The study showed that the tested variables do not have an influence on normative commitment. It is therefore recommended that universities investigate which aspects can strengthen commitment among their employees.

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Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy.
Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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