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Korean Society for Human Resource Development



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산업교육연구

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## The Mediating Effects of Three Types of Organizational Commitment on the Structural Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions

이윤수<sup>1)</sup>

### 요 약

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본 연구의 목적은 직무 만족과 이직 의도 간의 구조적 관계에서 세 가지 유형의 조직 몰입(정서적, 지속적, 규범적 몰입)의 매개 효과를 조사하는 데 있다. 문헌 분석을 통해 직무 만족, 조직 몰입, 이직 의도 간의 구조적 관계를 정립했다. 한국의 4 개의 생산 공장에서 근무하는 336 명의 사무직 직원으로부터 수집한 자료를 분석한 결과, 정서적 몰입은 직무 만족과 이직 의도를 완전 매개하지만 지속적 몰입과 규범적 몰입은 매개효과가 없었다. 이러한 결과를 바탕으로 HRD 관점에서 학문적, 실천적 시사점에 대해 논의했다.

**핵심 되는 말** : 조직 몰입, 직무 만족, 이직 의도

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## I . Introduction

In today's workplace, the concepts of lifetime employment and permanent jobs are rarely discussed. Stiff competition among global as well as local companies, rapid changes in customer needs, and abrupt upheavals in the global business environment are all pressing factors influencing firms to avoid promising lifetime employment to employees. Yet firms are still requiring employees to be committed to their jobs and loyal to their organizations, as faithful employees tend to fulfill their tasks and have low rates of turnover while they are employed. In order to maintain committed employees, firms have implemented various organizational interventions to increase employees' levels of job satisfaction. Many researchers agree that these interventions improve employees' job performances and organizational effectiveness, as well as result in lower levels of turnover intentions (Iqbal, Latif, Naseer, 2012). One of the key factors in helping firms successfully stay competitive in the global market is the recruitment of individual employees who are highly committed to their organizations as well as human resource (HR) function's provision of appropriate interventions to boost employee satisfaction. At the same time, to reduce the voluntary turnover of high-performers, firms have implemented special programs to sustain and improve the organizational commitment and job satisfaction of this target group of employees since losses of such core human capital are more costly and detrimental to overall organizational effectiveness and health than are general employee losses (Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel, Pierce, 2013). Recognizing these types of needs in the workplace, more and more researchers have recently begun to investigate variables affecting organizational outcomes, such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and employee turnover (Gillet, Vandenberghe, 2014).

The field of organizational research has yielded many studies of organizational commitment (OC), job satisfaction (JS), and turnover or turnover intentions (TI), but the models explaining the relationships between the variables proposed by the researchers differ or contradict one another sometimes. For example, Swanson and Holton (2001) have considered OC, JS, and TI as outcome variables similar to job performance and organizational effectiveness. Other scholars, however (e.g., Mowday, Porter, Steers, 1982; Price, Mueller, 1986), have identified OC as an outcome variable influenced by JS. Still, other researchers (e.g., Freund, 2005; Van

Dick, Christ, Stellmacher, Wagner, Ahlswede, Grubba, Tissington, 2004) have regarded JS as an outcome variable influenced by OC. Interestingly, another group of scholars (Tett, Meyer, 1993) have claimed that OC and JS are related to one another and that both contribute independently to TI. As illustrated by this variety of findings, researchers investigating the relationships among OC, JS, and TI have failed to produce a consistent result. These conflicting findings have not only caused difficulties within academia; they have also caused confusion among organizational practitioners in their selection and application of appropriate organizational interventions.

In a review of relevant literature, this study found that most studies focusing on the relationships among OC, JS, and TI have been conducted in Western cultural contexts and the results were inconsistent with the studies in the Asian region. This is surprising, given that in the field of organizational research, globalization has become a key trend as the boundaries between cultures have become blurry and competitions have become increasingly global (Friedman, 1999). Indeed, globalization and the cross-cultural transfer of management practices between the West and the East have become critical research themes for organizational researchers (Bae, 2011). Moreover, in non-Western studies, organizational commitment and job satisfaction have been found to have national and cultural differences (Yousef, 2000). Thus, identifying the key structural relationships among OC, JS, and TI within an Asian cultural context remains crucial for expanding the current scope of Western-oriented organizational research.

In order to fill these research gaps, this study proposes a more plausible structural model explaining the influential relationships between OC, JS, and TI through an extensive literature review. In doing so, this study discusses theoretical perspectives of the structural relationship between the three variables and then develop the most reasonable model. The present study assumes organizational commitment mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions, and examine the mediating effects of the three types of organizational commitment, respectively. This study finally offers an empirical analysis result within the South Korean cultural setting.

## II. Literature Review

### 1. Organizational Commitment (OC)

Mowday et al. (1982) have proposed a unique model of OC that adopts two different perspectives in order to explain the core concept. The first perspective is attitudinal commitment, which refers to the process by which individuals strongly associate themselves with their organizations. The second perspective is the relationship of behavioral commitment to the organizational process and individuals' approaches to solving work problems. These two perspectives of OC have been subsequently integrated by Meyer and Allen (2007). The present research focuses on attitudinal commitment, which is conceptualized as "a psychological state that reflects employee relationships to an organization" (Allen, Meyer, 1990: 2). There are three types of attitudinal commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1991: 67):

(a) Affective Commitment (AC) refers to "the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization";

(b) Continuance Commitment (CC), which is "an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization"; and

(c) Normative Commitment (NC), or "a feeling of obligation to continue employment."

In reviewing related literature about OC, this study recognized several negative as well as positive effects. First, OC has been shown to have positive effects on JS as a correlate (Mathieu, Zajac, 1990) and as an influential variable (Tett, Meyer, 1993). Other studies have identified the positive effects of OC on individual employee-level consequences such as attitudes toward jobs (Salancik, Pfeffer, 1978) and in-role or extra-role behavior (Ricketta, Van Dick, 2005).

### 2. Job Satisfaction (JS)

Locke (1976: 316) introduced one of the earliest definitions of JS, suggesting that it referred to "the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values." Many scholars have been interested in researching the link between an employee's level of JS and his or her physical and psychological levels of satisfaction with life

outside work (Kalleberg, 1977). Many organizational-management researchers have also indicated a strong interest in the potential of JS studies to reveal both scholarly and practical implications.

According to Moorman (1993), affective JS is the general affective inclination of individuals toward their present job roles (Kalleberg, 1977), or the positive emotional evaluation of their jobs (Moorman, 1993). Affective satisfaction focuses on whether employees are in positive moods and experience good feelings because of their jobs. In measuring affective JS, previous studies have used items measuring respondents' emotions toward their jobs or their states of mind when they are working (Moorman, 1993). According to these conceptual definitions, affective JS should be properly measured using items that assess how much employees emotionally and intuitively like their jobs (Thompson, Phua, 2012).

### **3. Turnover Intentions (TI)**

A high turnover rate can be costly for organizations and can negatively impact firms' performances (Hancock et al., 2013). Thus, employee turnover is a key issue for both organizations and organizational researchers (Poon, 2012). According to March and Simon (1958), turnover is an individual employee's perception of the ease of movement and the degree of attractiveness of leaving his or her job. Since March and Simon's study, research on employee turnover has been adopted as a subject of widespread interest to various scholars and practitioners (Allen, Bryant, Vardaman, 2010). In contrast to turnover, TI is a variable that measures individual mental states. This study defines TI as "a conscious and deliberate willingness to leave an organization" (Tett, Meyer, 1993: 262) and focuses on TI rather than turnover since doing so brings certain advantages. First, TI have been used as one of the final outcome variables in many HR and organizational studies since it is psychometrically easier to measure and found to be more precise (Hancock et al., 2013). Second, researchers have claimed that it is hard to gather information about why people have resigned from people who have already done so (Firth, Mellor, Moore, Loquet, 2004). Many times, employee records are closed to research scholars or are found to be inaccurate or incomplete (Mitchell, Mackenzie, Styve, Gover, 2000). Therefore, this study considers TI an appropriate variable for measuring the mental state of an employee who has not yet changed jobs. In general, when TI are associated with OC and JS, it is considered one of the best

predictors of actual employee turnover (Van Breukelen, Van der Vlist, Steensma, 2004).

#### 4. The Structural Relationship among the Research Variables

Tett and Meyer (1993) have proposed three main theoretical perspectives regarding the structural relationship among OC, JS, and TI. The first perspective is that OC mediates the effects of JS on TI because OC develops from JS (Tett, Meyer, 1993); moreover, while OC tends to develop slowly, it is more constant than JS (Porter, Steers, Mowday, Boulian, 1974). This JS-to-OC mediating model has some empirical support (e.g., Currivan, 2000; Fu, Deshpande, 2014; Mowday et al., 1982).

The second perspective is that JS mediates the effects of OC on TI. This OC-to-JS mediating model suggests that OC encourages employees' positive attitudes toward their jobs with the help of a reasoning process and that employees decide their stay in the jobs based on how they feel about their work (Tett, Meyer, 1993). The finding that OC can develop prior to beginning a job (O'Reilly, Caldwell, 1981) or at the very least can be evident in the initial stages of employment (Porter, Crampon, & Smith, 1976) lends support to such a hypothesis (Bateman, Strasser, 1984). According to Tett and Meyer (1993), several studies have provided support for this model; others, however, do not.

The third perspective posits that JS and OC separately influence employees' TI. This independent-effects model considers JS and OC as discrete constructs, although it recognizes that they are correlated (e.g., Kuchinke, Kang, Oh, 2008; Oh, 2016). It suggests that there is no particular causality between them, but it does not rule out the possibility of reciprocal effects (Tetrick, Farkas, 1988).

This study adopts the first perspective, the JS-to-OC mediating model, for the following reasons. The model considering JS as an antecedent of OC is the most widely accepted one by many researchers (Mowdays et al., 1982). More specifically, the JS-OC-TI model has been frequently studied within the field of organizational behavior (Russ, McNeilly, 1995). Johnston, Parasuraman, Futrell, and Black (1990) argued that JS precedes OC supported by the preponderance of conceptual and empirical evidence. Harrison and Hubbard (1998) also showed that JS is predicative of OC based on their empirical study. Johnston et al.'s (1990) assertion also echoed recent empirical research findings (e.g., Fu, Deshpande, 2014;

Jepsen, Rodwell, 2012; Malik, Nawab, Naeem, Danish, 2010). Brown and Peterson's (1993) meta-analysis of 59 studies showed that JS had a causal impact on OC, but not vice versa. Figure 1 depicts the hypothesized relationships in the research model. The research model includes the following hypotheses.

H1: Job satisfaction is positively associated with organizational commitment (AC [H1a], CC[H1b], NC[H1c]).

H2: Job satisfaction is negatively associated with turnover intentions.

H3: Organizational commitment (AC [H3a], CC[H3b], NC[H3c]) is negatively associated with turnover intentions.

H4: Organizational commitment (AC [H4a], CC[H4b], NC[H4c]) mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions.



<Figure 1> Hypothesized Research Model

### III. Method

#### 1. Data Collection and Sample

For data collection, one of the human-resource staff members in one of the affiliates was contacted and agreed to help collect the research data. The affiliate, a machine manufacturing company, had four production plants throughout the country and approximately 2,000 office employees. An online survey invitation was

sent out to all office employees via email, to which 336 employees responded. Of the 336,325 were identified as valid respondents, and their data was used for this study.

Regarding respondents' demographics, most of the respondents were male (85.5%). In 2016, the number of regular employees in the mining and manufacturing industries in South Korea is 3,861,943 with 2,867,042 (74.2%) of men and 994,901 (25.8%) of women(Statistics Korea, 2016). Although the proportion of males is absolutely high, this is also a general characteristic of Korean manufacturing companies. The average age of respondents was 36.05 years, and the average tenure of the respondents was 3.02 years.

## 2. Measures

All items used for this study were measured with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). For OC, Allen and Meyer's scale (1996) was used. Allen and Meyer's scale employs three subscales: the ACS (Affective Commitment Scale), the CCS (Continuance Commitment Scale), and the NCS (Normative Commitment Scale). The ACS consists of six items, one of which is: "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization." The CCS consists of six items, one of which is: "It would be very hard for me to leave my job at this organization right now even if I wanted to." The NCS also consists of six items, one of which is: "Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave." The Cronbach's alpha of the scales were .85 for affective commitment, .83 for continuance commitment, and .77 for normative commitment.

For JS, Thompson and Phua's (2012) the Brief Index of Affective JS (BIAJS) was used. This scale consists of four items, one of which is "I find real enjoyment in my job." The Cronbach's alpha of the scale was .83. For TI, Meyer, Allen, and Smith's (1993) was adopted. This scale has shown a good level of reliability with a reliability coefficient of .86. This scale consists of 3 items, one of which is "It is likely that I would search for a job in another organization." The Cronbach's alpha of the scale was .71. All items were translated with cross-review by three doctoral degree holders in human resource development, including the author.

### **3. Analysis**

The structural equation modeling was performed using the Mplus. For the analysis of the mediating model, at first, this study separated the three sub-variables of OC in order to overcome the problem of ignoring the differences in the three sub-variables by combining them in some prior studies. Second, when the sub-variables are analyzed in one model, the covariance between variables can be an issue. For example, some researchers (e.g., Yücel, 2012) who considered the sub-variables to be independent did not take into account the covariance between the sub-variables in the analysis. This strongly contends that there is no correlation between the sub-variables, which is contrary to the concept of OC composed of the three dimensions. On the other hand, it is necessary to pay attention to the covarying with one another because the sub-variables are likely to be highly related to each other. For example, if one of the variables is more strongly related to JS or turnover than others, it can affect the relationships between other variables. Third, this study does not rule out the possibility that the three sub-variables may have different structural relationships such as a full mediating and a partial mediating model. Therefore, this study compares each model with the Chi-square difference test between the full and partial mediating model in order to find a more suitable model.

## **IV. Results**

### **1. Testing Validity and Reliability**

A factor analysis using principal axis factoring and a Direct Oblimin rotation was employed to identify underlying data structures, as suggested by Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, and Strahan (1999). To verify the reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was measured for the factors identified in this study (JS .881; AC .813; CC .692; NC .700; TI .878). Each variable thus met the criterion of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .60 (Van de Ven, Ferry, 1980).

This study also conducted Harman's single-factor test (Harman, 1967) and common latent factor test to check for the possible concern of common-method variance bias. The result of single-factor test showed that all of the items indicated three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00. Each factor explained

27.84%, 6.63%, and 8.32% of the variance, respectively. Common method variance bias is not a problematic issue in the present study because no single factor accounted for the majority (e.g., over 50%) of the variance. The result of common latent factor test also showed that the estimates of the parameters from common latent factor to each measurement variables were .31 (AC model), .29 (CC model), and -.19 (NC model), respectively. Thus, the common-method variances of each model were 9.61%, 8.41%, and 3.61%, respectively. As a result of comparing the standardized regression weights between the measurement model with common latent factor and the measurement model without common latent factor, there were no large differences (e.g., larger than .20) in factor loadings. Therefore, the common-method variance bias is not a problematic issue in each mediating model.

## 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

The results of the correlation analysis, the mean and standard deviation of each variable are presented in <Table 1>. According to the guidelines of non-normality (i.e., skewness > 2; kurtosis > 7) determined by West, Finch, and Curran (1995), the normality assumption of all variables was satisfied. All correlations were significant at  $p < .01$  except for some variables related to OC.

<Table 1> Descriptive Analysis and Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.JS	1									
2.AC	.602**	1								
3.CC	.046	-.015	1							
4.NC	.289**	.320**	.247**	1						
5.TI	-.415**	-.597**	-.038	-.258**	1					
6.Sex	.073	-.059	-.053	-.015	-.092	1				
7.Age	.093	.163**	.146**	.281**	-.220**	-.393**	1			
8.TT	.064	.005	.057	.185**	-.143**	-.148	.500**	1		
9.CT	.063	-.002	.017	.181**	-.107	-.106	.437**	.900**	1	
10.MS	.048	.082	-.003	.101	-.047	-.280**	.491**	.235**	.196**	1
<i>M</i>	3.76	3.72	3.27	2.64	2.25	-	-	-	-	-
<i>SD</i>	0.62	0.85	0.78	0.70	0.85	-	-	-	-	-

*Note.* TT for Total tenure; CT tenure for Current job tenure; MS for Marital status; \*\* $p < .01$

### 3. The Mediating Effect of Each OC Model

Before analyzing the research models, this study compared the fitness of JS mediating and OC mediating models to confirm the appropriateness of the selected mediating direction in the study. The focus of this study is on individual OC mediating models, but these models have the same chi-square and degree of freedom as the JS mediating model (e.g., AC-JS-TI partial mediating model vs. JS-AC-TI partial mediating model). Since it is impossible to compare the models using the fitness indices between these models, this study included three OCs, and, in turn, compared the OC mediating model with the JS mediating model. In other words, the AC/NC/CC-JS-TI model was compared with the JS-AC/NC/CC-TI model and five control variables such as gender, age, total/current tenure, and marital status were also included. As a result, the OC mediating model ( $\chi^2 = 279.65$ ,  $df = 154$ , CFI = .944, TLI = .928, RMSEA = .051, and SRMR = .053) was identified as a more appropriate one than the JS mediating model ( $\chi^2 = 313.62$ ,  $df = 164$ , CFI = .934, TLI = .919, RMSEA = .054, and SRMR = .065).

<Table 2> shows both the partial mediating model and full mediating model of fitness for each OC model. In the case of AC with almost the same fitness index between the two models, the value of the  $\chi^2$  difference ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 3.12$ ) between the two models was lower than the value of  $\chi^2(1) = 3.84$ ; therefore, the full mediating model was chosen. Regarding CC, the data adequately fit the partial mediating model. In addition, the value of the  $\chi^2$  difference ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 55.63$ ) was much higher than the value of  $\chi^2_D(1) = 3.84$ ; thus, the partial mediating model was chosen. Lastly, in the case of NC, the data adequately fit the partial mediating model. In addition, the value of the  $\chi^2$  difference ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 34.88$ ) was much higher than the value of  $\chi^2_D(1) = 3.84$ ; Thus, the partial mediating model was chosen.

<Table 3> shows the results of structural equation modelling. In the full mediating model of AC, JS was positively related to affective commitment ( $\beta = .699$ ; supporting H1a), and AC was negatively related to TI ( $\beta = -.713$ ; supporting H3a). The full mediating effect of AC and the results of the bias-corrected

bootstrap with 1,000 resamples were significant,  $p < .05$ , since the estimate of 95% confidence intervals did not include zero ([-.592, -.404]; supporting H4a). In the partial mediating model of CC, JS was negatively associated with TI ( $\beta = .441$ ; supporting H2) but not associated with CC, and CC was not associated with TI, thus contradicting H1b, H3b, and H4b. In the partial mediating model of NC, JS was negatively related to TI ( $\beta = -.396$ ; supporting H2) and positively related to NC ( $\beta = .371$ ; supporting H1c). However, NC was not related to TI, thus contradicting H3c and H4c.

<Table 2> Model Fit Indices of Each OC Mediating Model

Models		$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	AIC	Model comparison
AC mediating	Partial	93.528***	32	.968	.955	.077	.052	7075.484	-
	Full	96.634***	33	.967	.955	.077	.054	7076.590	Chosen
CC mediating	Partial	55.411***	32	.984	.978	.047	.045	6856.408	Chosen
	Full	111.045***	33	.948	.929	.085	.141	6910.042	-
NC mediating	Partial	64.370***	32	.979	.970	.056	.045	6652.236	Chosen
	Full	99.254***	33	.956	.940	.079	.098	6685.120	-

\*\*\* $p < .001$

<Table 3> Results of Structural Equation Modeling

Path/variables	Affective commitment		Continuance commitment		Normative commitment	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
JS → TI	-	-	-.441***	-.456***	-.396***	-.405***
JS → OC	.699***	.719***	.065	.047	.371***	.300***
OC → TI	-.713***	-.697***	-.079	-.077	-.135	-.179
JS → OC → TI	-.498***	-.501***	-.005	-.004	-.063	-.054
Gender		-.010*		.065		.096
Age		.133		-.180*		-.142
Total tenure		.025		.134		-.152
Current job tenure		.042		.095		.125
Marital status		.098		.106		-.113

Note. Men=1; Female=0; Married=1; Not married=0; \* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

## V. Discussion

The finding of the study provides additional support for the previous studies using the OC mediating model (e.g., Currivan, 2000; Porter et al., 1974). As Chiu and Francesco (2003) have discussed, employees experiencing high levels of AC may continue to stay in a company because they buy into the organization's mission and vision (Dunham, Grube, Castaneda, 1994). Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, and Welbourne (1999) have offered another possible explanation for this relationship by stating that individuals with high levels of commitment are better able to cope with changes and ambiguity and therefore are less likely to wish to leave.

In this study, however, CC and NC were not found to mediate the relationship between JS and TI. These results are in accord with earlier findings indicating that whereas affective commitment and JS are correlated, continuance commitment and JS are not (e.g. Freund, 2005; Lim, 2010). In addition, the findings align with the conclusion that continuance commitment does not have a significant effect on TI (Somers, 1995); unlike affective commitment, continuance commitment is not affected by JS (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, Topolnytsky, 2002).

Based on the research findings, several implications can be posited. First, even though employees may be satisfied with their jobs, without the assistance of affective commitment, it is difficult to prevent them from seeking other ones. For example, employees may leave the organization to perform the same job they are satisfied with in another company that offers a better working environment if they do not feel attachment to and identify themselves with the organization. To address this kind of employee turnover problem, firms and human resource practitioners should employ organization-specific interventions.

Second, the results of the NC mediating model indirectly demonstrate that the JS mediating model is effective; however, the results of the CC mediating model indirectly reveal that the independent model is effective and that both JS and OC have unique influences. These results can be interpreted in different ways. First, each type of OC can yield a different relationship between JS and TI, but by merely combining these types of OC, there is a high probability that the results will differ from or contradict each other depending on the measurement used and the type and number of the sample employed. In particular, recent research studies

(e.g., Gillet, Vandenberghe, 2014; Taing, Granger, Groff, Jackson, Johnson, 2011) have empirically shown that CC may contain multidimensional characteristics (e.g., few alternatives and perceived sacrifices) and that each characteristic of CC has a different relationship with AC and NC. Second, choosing the affective perspective of JS and using its measurement may explain why only AC was significant. In particular, there are similarities between cognitive JS and CC since both concepts take costs into consideration. In this study, JS and CC did not have an interdependent relationship. Lastly, considering the Korean organizational culture and the antecedents of commitment such as alternatives, organizational investment, and socialization experiences, AC was found to exert a mediating effect on the relationship between JS and TI.

Third implication of this study is that the findings illuminate the characteristics of the OC of Korea society compared to Western societies. As in the previous two studies (Ko, Price, Mueller, 1997; Lee, Allen, Meyer, Rhee, 2001) that used the Korean sample to verify the generalizability of the three components of OC, the three factors of Meyer and Allen's were clearly distinguished in this study. Of the three components of OC, only AC mediated the relationship between JS and TI. This finding is consistent with Western studies that AC is relatively prominent compared to other types of commitment (Meyer et al., 2002).

On the other hand, the CC and NC did not mediate the relationship between JS and TI. The reliability of continuous commitment in the study of Ko et al. (1997) was low, .58 and .64, and Lee et al. (2001) pointed out that CCS might contain items that are not culturally relevant. In this study, the reliability coefficient was relatively low (.629) compared to other constructs, even though three of the six items were eliminated. The reliability coefficient of Lee et al.'s (2001) which modified some items of CCS was observed as .76 and .77, but the figures were also relatively low compared to other constructs. These results suggest that it is necessary to develop an OC measurement suitable for Korean culture, rather than simply removing or revising the items that are not relevant. In particular, the results of recent research on the multidimensional nature of CC (e.g., Gillet, Vandenberghe, 2014; Taing et al., 2011) also need to be reflected. Although not evident in this study, the results of previous studies have suggested that the correlation between NC and TI is relatively high in samples belonging to the collectivist culture (e.g., Ko et al., 1997). These consistent findings imply that the characteristics of the collectivist culture need to be reflected in using the

normative commitment scale.

As Yousef (2000) points out, another possible explanation is that these results may be due to the influence of the unique characteristics of Korean culture. Korea has different cultural norms and values compared to other non-Western countries and shows highly homogeneous organizational cultures and characteristics in the workplace (Magoshi, Chang, 2009). Since the 1990s, the notion of life-long employment in the workplace has been changed affected by the economic downturn and severe competitions among local firms and within global business environment. Workplace employees' retirement of relatively early ages like 40s has been the norm among most major firms. Such drastic changes inside and outside the organizational atmosphere may have weakened younger employees' NC and their willingness to sacrifice through CC, implying that tenure in the organization is related to their OC of Korean employees (Sommer, Bae, Luthans, 1996). In addition, the increase of part-time employees in the workplace has become a societal problem that ties to job insecurity as well as low wage issues. The part-time employees in Korea typically show a lower level of JS and OC compared to regular full time employees (Han, Moon, Yun, 2009). Taken together, due to these societal and organizational conditions, it is cited that the psychometric properties of CC and NC tended to be low in the Korean sample (Ko et al., 1997; Lee et al., 2001). Chang (1999) pointed out that items relevant to sacrifice are about economic loss or cost but, at the same time, they may also indirectly allude loss of reputation in Korean culture. In this regard, the fact that the studies of OC using Korean samples have reproduced such results that were not consistent with Western literature can be attributed to the unique cultural context and workplace characteristics in Korea. Therefore, in conducting a research study focusing on the OC of Korean employees, researchers should not rule out the possibility that Korean sample may possess a culture specific multidimensionality different from that of Western and other non-western countries, and it is advised to pay a more special attention in interpreting the future study findings obtained from the Korean sample.

JS implies the possibility that employees could be satisfied with the same jobs at other organizations, whereas AC is an attribute that is particular to the given organization. Employees with low commitment levels may focus their intentions in other directions and search for job possibilities elsewhere (Meyer, Allen, 1997) if they only experience JS. In terms of practical approaches to increase the AC

levels of employees, firms and human resource practitioners should utilize such strategies as recruiting with fringe benefits, impartial employee appraisal, and more training options for individual development. In addition, an encouraging work climate, trust-based employee relations, and open and efficient communication may help in increasing employee commitment in the workplace (Salleh, Amin, Muda, Halim, 2013).

Finally, generalizing the findings of this study may be limited to Korean organizational settings with similar industry characteristics to the firm used in this study. Also, this study identified the mediating effect of only AC; therefore, it is difficult to conclude that the general OC mediating model is effective because other types of commitments with multidimensional characteristics may have different structural relationships to JS and TI. Therefore, future studies are needed that subdivide OC into specific types with clear constructs. Future studies also require a longitudinal approach to reveal the causal relationship between variables.

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## Abstract

### The Mediating Effects of Three Types of Organizational Commitment on the Structural Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions

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The purpose of the present study is to investigate the mediating effects of three types of organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative) on the structural relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions. The structural relationship between job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention was established through literature review. Data was collected from 336 office employees at four production plants located in South Korea. The results of the data analysis indicate that affective commitment has a full mediating effect on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions, whereas continuance and normative commitment do not. Drawing on these results, this study suggests academic and practical implications for researchers and practitioners.

**Key words** : *organizational commitment, job satisfaction, turnover intentions*