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The effects of organizational and job characteristics on employees' organizational commitment in arts-and-culture organizations

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the nature of organizational commitment among employees of Palestinian arts-and-culture organizations and to examine the combined effect and role of organizational and job characteristics in shaping employees' commitment.

Design/methodology/approach – An on-site employee survey was conducted in 20 distinct local not-for-profit arts-and-culture organizations, where the respondent sampling frame constituted of 190 individuals with a response rate of 48 per cent. Confirmatory factor analysis was used in this study to confirm the original scale structure for study constructs and evaluate their distinctiveness in the Palestinian context.

Findings – Results from structural equation modeling analysis revealed a reasonable rather than a good fit of the model to the data. The current study recognized organizational and job characteristics as critical determinants of employees' commitment, particularly its affective component; which was also found to be the most accurate description of organizational commitment in arts-and-culture organizations.

Research limitations/implications – Consistent with the social exchange theory, an emphasis should be placed on employees' perception of organizational and job characteristics. This study advocates for combining organizational characteristics with job characteristics in light of their significant association with commitment in the context of motivational theories.

Practical implications – This study empirically demonstrates the positive effects of organizational and job characteristics on employees' evaluation of their organization. Managers of arts-and-culture organizations should maintain a proper alignment of organizational values with those of the employees and create a working environment that meets employees' psychological and career needs.

Originality/value – This study makes a valuable contribution to the existing body of research and adds to a very limited number of studies investigating organizational commitment in arts-and-culture organizations, validating the structure of commitment and its antecedents in a non-Western context and showing the multi-dimensionality of the concept.

Keywords Human resource management, Organizational commitment, Arts-and-culture organizations

Paper type Research paper



Introduction

Why and how people become emotionally committed to their organizations have been longstanding questions. The works of several scholars, particularly the seminal work of [Meyer and Allen \(1997\)](#), have laid grounds for better understanding of organizational commitment in relation to employee motivational level, retention rates and job satisfaction. It is now generally accepted that a committed workforce is a powerful driving force for organizational effectiveness and success. With reference to not-for-profit arts-and-culture organizations, this study focuses on two key determinants of organizational commitment; namely, organizational characteristics and job characteristics.

Researchers found a strong relationship between employee turnover and organizational commitment in the private sector ([Abbott *et al.*, 2005](#)). However, little is known about the organizational commitment of employees in not-for-profit arts-and-culture organizations (for exceptions, see [Townsend, 2000](#); [DiMaggio, 1988](#)). The majority of literature on arts-and-culture organizations focuses on aspects related to funding development, marketing, board development and strategic planning ([Townsend, 2000](#)). Here lies a specific contribution of this body of work: it attempts to examine the nature of organizational commitment of employees in these highly demanding, unpredictable environments in which staff tend to generally accept smaller financial returns, job insecurity and limited personal and career advancement opportunities. In light of the high employee turnover rates ([Dullahide *et al.*, 2000](#)) and increased competition for attracting potential employees in such organizations ([Rutowski *et al.*, 2009](#)), gaining insights into how to attract and retain their employees is of importance to ensure continued service delivery to the community. In this respect, the first goal of this study is to investigate organizational commitment of employees in these organizations, presupposing organizational commitment to be the dependent variable.

Organizational characteristics and job characteristics are the antecedent variables examined in this study because of their relevance to employee attraction and retention, as well as their positive contribution to organizational commitment ([Defourny *et al.*, 2009](#); [Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002](#)). However, very few studies investigated both antecedents in conjunction; thus, it is not clear whether they produce comparable results when measured simultaneously. Furthermore, though there is a relatively large number of studies of the two variables in the context of the private-sector, few studies have paid attention to them in the context of the public sector, especially that of arts-and-culture organizations. The present study addresses this gap by examining the combined effect of both variables on organizational commitment of employees in arts-and-culture organizations.

A limited number of studies has examined age and level of education and their ensuing effect on organizational commitment as control variables ([Mathieu and Zajac, 1990](#); [Mowday *et al.*, 1982](#)). Another objective of the current study is to investigate whether age and level of education of employees in arts-and-culture organizations cause differences in the relationship of the two antecedents with organizational commitment.

The following sections review the literature on organizational commitment and antecedents and present the hypotheses and the research question. The research protocol and interpretation of results are followed by discussing the practical implications of the study, as well as by its research contributions and limitations.

Study context

In Palestine, arts-and-culture organizations are considered a pillar of local civil society taking into account their important role in service delivery and the overall process of the socio-economic development, satisfying the interests of members of the Palestinian society and providing them with an essential platform for self-expression (NGO Development Center, 2009). The present study aims specifically at exploring the nature of organizational commitment in local, independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit arts-and-culture organizations, as they are highly under-researched and neglected despite their contribution to activating the cultural aspect of the country, advancing the civil society, developing culture and education and enhancing the capabilities of the Palestinian youth. Although these organizations are constantly facing many challenges, they continue to exist and operate obstinately. In reference to the Palestinian Ministry of Culture (2013), there are approximately 275 arts-and-culture organizations, of which 30 operate in the Gaza Strip. Similar to the international context, the majority of these organizations suffer originally from a major financial deficiency, lack of resources and inadequate and unsystematic planning; which in some cases have led them astray from their essential goals and mission. In his study, [Townsend \(2000\)](#) concluded that employees of not-for-profit arts-and-culture organizations are extremely hard-working and dedicated to their work despite of the low pay level, which represents a major obstacle in the development of a more professional staff. This study addresses, in particular, the staffing challenge confronting these organizations to ensure the sector's ability to attract and retain qualified and committed employees.

Attracting and retaining employees are considered major challenges for not-for-profit organizations ([Rutowski et al., 2009](#)). On the whole, these organizations experience a relatively high turnover of employees (estimated at 20 per cent, [Dullahide et al., 2000](#); cited in [Cunningham, 2001](#)), and the rate is expected to grow because of widespread diminishing interest in careers in organizations where skills that are often sought in the field are increasingly being translated into careers in the business sector ([Rutowski et al., 2009](#)).

In arts-and-culture organizations, employees determine organizations' ability to serve their constituents, manage their complex programs and fulfill their mission. Human capital, one of the most valuable assets for any business, is of superior importance to the not-for-profit sector, including arts-and-culture organizations. A shortage of staff would be crippling to any industry, but its consequences in these organizations would be devastating, as it would directly affect its service delivery capacity. Nowadays, these organizations struggle to retain their employees, partially because of restraints that hamper the ability of managers to motivate and control workers. Some such restraints are the intangibility of performance norms affecting the use of rewards and sanctions, employee commitment to the product rather than to the organization and managerial intrusion from key individuals ([Townsend, 2000](#)). These issues are exacerbated by structural and demographic characteristics of the sector, such as small organization size, high female concentration, temporary and contingent employment, a relatively high incidence of higher educational qualifications and reliance on unpaid overtime ([Almond and Kendall, 2000](#)).

Although work settings and job demands have some similarity across public and private sectors, researchers have found the organizational environments to be different ([McAdam and Reid, 2000](#); [Elliot and Tevavichulada, 1999](#)). When compared with their

counterparts in the private sector, employees in arts-and-culture organizations are individuals who want to make a difference and achieve something valuable and meaningful (Giffords, 2009; Rutowski *et al.*, 2009), and these employees tend to place high emphasis on intrinsic satisfaction resulting from fulfilling the organizational mission (Townsend, 2000). However, ironically, high levels of stress are commonly found in this type of organization (Rutowski *et al.*, 2009; Light, 2002) because of tightness of resources and inbuilt uncertainty of environment (Alatrasta and Arrowsmith, 2004).

In fact, a participative approach to decision-making and a strong sense of altruistic values linked to organizational mission are primary characteristics of the “culture” in arts-and-culture organizations (Alatrasta and Arrowsmith, 2004); rendering employees more committed to the cause under which their employer operates (Cunningham, 2001). In addition, organizational structure tends to be flatter and less formal, with leadership being more democratic as compared with other types of organizations (Markham *et al.*, 2001). This, in turn, allows employees to be more involved in decisions related to their work and to voice their concerns about the organization and its activities (Cunningham, 2001). The question thus arises as to whether the commitment of employees in these organizations is linked to sets of “organizational characteristics” and “job characteristics” in light of the existing absence of monetary incentives. The next section briefly reviews the literature on organizational commitment, as well as on organizational, job and personal characteristics.

Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment has been defined as the binding force that inspires individuals and links them to the organization, makes them pursue a specific course of action and elicits behaviors of value to the organization (Meyer *et al.*, 2006; Allen and Meyer, 1990). Several studies have propounded the positive contributions of organizational commitment to the organization, such as increased productivity, enhanced organizational performance, lower absenteeism and more abundant opportunities for employee satisfaction (Aladwan *et al.*, 2013; Natarajan, 2011; Payne and Huffman, 2005; Meyer and Allen, 1997). Following on from the seminal work of Mowday *et al.* (1982), Stites and Michael (2011) identify organizational commitment as having two inherent values:

- (1) *attitudinal*, which describes the attachment of the employee to the organization; and
- (2) *behavioral*, which represents the intention of the employee to continue working for the organization.

Meyer *et al.* (1993) conceptualized organizational commitment as consisting of three dimensions: affective, normative and continuance. Being the most desired dimension of organizational commitment, affective commitment refers to “the employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization” (Allen and Meyer, 1990, p. 2), all of which represent an attitudinal rather than a behavioral value. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) argue that of the three dimensions, affective commitment has the strongest positive association with desired organizational outcomes and is a better predictor of non-turnover behaviors, such as absenteeism, employee performance and citizenship.

Normative commitment constitutes the moral dimension of commitment and is reflected in the beliefs about one's responsibility and obligation toward the organization and toward staying with it ([Allen and Meyer, 1990](#)). [Jha \(2011\)](#) suggests that this dimension of commitment is induced by obligatory factors originating from the upbringing of an individual, similar to commitment to other institutions, such as family, marriage, country and religion. Studies found that normative commitment is positively correlated with outcomes desired by an organization ([Nakra, 2014](#); [Meyer et al., 2002](#)). Finally, continuance commitment refers to commitment that is based on employees' perception of the costs and risks associated with leaving the organization ([Allen and Meyer, 1990](#)). In contrast to affective and normative commitment, continuance commitment leads to unfavorable behaviors by employees where it neither increases levels of job performance nor facilitates personal flexibility and adaptability ([Suliman and Iles, 2000](#)). Both normative and continuance commitment refer to behavioral values.

Generally, organizational commitment has been explored from two different angles. The first is impact, i.e. its ability to predict significant behavioral variables, such as intention to leave ([Anvari et al., 2011](#); [Fiorito et al., 2007](#); [Labatmediene et al., 2007](#); [Kwon and Banks, 2004](#); [Wright and Bonett, 2002](#); [Allen and Meyer, 1996](#); [Meyer and Allen, 1991](#)), contribution to employee satisfaction ([Gunlu et al., 2010](#); [Addae et al., 2006](#); [Knippenberg and Sleebos, 2006](#); [Gaertner, 1999](#)) and effect on productivity, absenteeism and enhanced organizational performance ([Natarajan, 2011](#); [Payne and Huffman, 2005](#)). The second angle, also covered by a plethora of studies, is that of antecedents, with commitment treated as a dependent variable ([Gunlu et al., 2010](#)). Among the antecedents considered are "job satisfaction" ([Lok and Crawford, 2001](#); [Gaertner, 1999](#); [Mowday et al., 1982](#)), "empowerment" ([Kim et al., 2012](#); [Liu et al., 2007](#)), "job stress" and "job involvement" ([Hogan et al., 2013](#)), with some studies focusing on demographic variables, such as age, level of education and gender ([Aladwan et al., 2013](#); [Kate and Masako, 2002](#)), and others on cultural variables ([Pathardikar and Sahu, 2011](#)). In the present study, "organizational characteristics" and "job characteristics" are examined as potential antecedents of organizational commitment with placing a particular emphasis on the differential nature of the concept between profit and not-for-profit organizations.

On average, not-for-profit organizations are less hierarchically structured as compared to their counterparts, where the major structural differences relate to ownership, purpose, organizational goals and methods and organizational structure ([Karl et al., 2005](#)). Unlike the private and for-profit sector, not-for-profit organizations are not influenced by business motives: one of the most distinctive characteristics of these organizations, with which the current study is concerned, is their commitment to an often very specific mission ([De Cooman et al., 2009](#)) and values ([Cheverton, 2007](#)). With most studies focused on organizational commitment in the private sector, public sector commitment research is limited and the findings are mixed ([Kim and George, 2005](#); [Al-Qarioti and Al-Enezi, 2004](#); [Goulet and Frank, 2002](#); [Thatcher et al., 2002](#)). It has been recently observed that few empirical comparisons have been made with respect to employees' motivations, apart from monetary incentives ([Borzaga and Tortia, 2006](#)). As most comparisons published up-to-date relate to structural differences between the sectors ([Karl et al., 2005](#)), an extremely bounded body of research examined the individual differences between them and yet focused primarily on differences between employees in public and for-profit organizations with minimal attention being paid to the not-for-profit sector ([Buelens and Van den Broeck, 2007](#)). Nonetheless, a study by

Goulet and Frank (2002) has argued against previous literature where employees of for-profit companies were expected to have lower levels of organizational commitment than those in not-for-profit organizations. Their study has highlighted some differences in organizational commitment across different workplace settings, and, as a result, organizational commitment was found to be highest among for-profit employees, followed by those working for not-for-profit organizations.

In light of the mixed results about employees' commitment toward their organizations across different sectors, Townsend (2000) argues that very few studies have focused on commitment in not-for-profit arts-and-culture organizations (Kletz *et al.*, 2014; Isserman and Markusen, 2013; Townsend, 2000; Parasuraman and Nachman, 1987; and Podilchak, 1983 barely qualify as exceptions). The present study seeks to fill some of the gap by investigating and confirming the factor structure of the organizational commitment constructs with the proposed antecedents, as well as evaluate their distinctiveness, on the basis of data collected from employees in Palestinian not-for-profit arts-and-culture organizations. The following section briefly reviews the literature on organizational, job and personal characteristics and their association with organizational commitment.

Antecedents and hypotheses: organizational, job and personal characteristics

The antecedents of organizational commitment can be grouped under two broad categories: organizational and job characteristics (Suman and Srivastava, 2012; Stallworth, 2003; Nijhof *et al.*, 1998; Mowday *et al.*, 1982). This study sets out to examine the following theoretical model (Figure 1), which depicts the relationships among the variables used in the study.

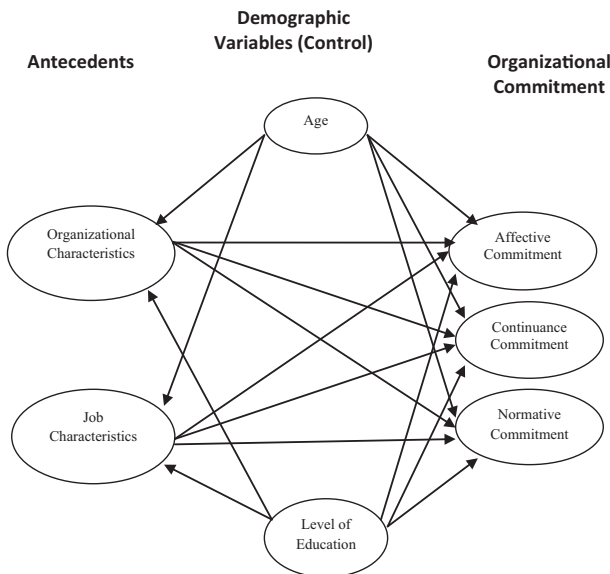


Figure 1.
Theoretical model

Organizational characteristics

According to [Mowday et al. \(1982\)](#), organizational characteristics that propound decentralization and a participatory approach to decision-making are the most significant in influencing organizational commitment. Organizational characteristics that are often studied include organizational structure (e.g. organizational size, degree of formalization, number of levels in the organization's hierarchy and the level of centralization; [Suman and Srivastava, 2012](#)), organizational type, organizational support, job position, yearly earnings ([Giffords, 2009](#)), leadership style and human resource policies ([Nijhof et al., 1998](#); [Peeters and Meijer, 1995](#); [Gallie and White, 1993](#)). [Walton \(1985\)](#) proposes that organizational commitment would increase in a flat organization where control and organization are based on shared goals and values rather than rigid procedures and rules. Similarly, a study by [Stohr et al. \(1994\)](#) has demonstrated a strong positive relationship between participatory management and commitment ([Lambert et al., 2008](#)). With regard to decentralization, it is likely to correlate positively with participative decision-making and organizational commitment levels through employee involvement ([Suman and Srivastava, 2012](#); [Bateman and Strasser, 1984](#); [Morris and Steers, 1980](#)). Furthermore, other researchers have argued that supervisory consideration, perceived promotional opportunities, organizational fairness, integration and institution communication are positively associated with organizational commitment, particularly, its affective component ([Lambert et al., 2008](#); [Lambert, 2004](#); [Lambert et al., 2002](#)).

Organizational characteristics differ across sectors, which could generate further differences in levels of organizational commitment. For-profit organizations have become associated with more intimidating and competitive environment, which in several cases has led them to witness frequent layoffs and rising unemployment rates. This situation marked by high levels of tension and job insecurity has diminished commitment levels of employees in for-profit organizations. On the other hand, not-for-profit organizations are embedded in a culture characterized by decentralization and a participatory decision-making approach ([Defourny et al., 2009](#)); high levels of organizational characteristics lead to higher levels of performance, involvement and lower staff turnover ([Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002](#)). However, as organizations grow, the procedures for collective decision-making and decentralization become denser and more complicated ([Cornforth et al., 1988](#)), even more so with the sharp drop in public funding. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

- H1a.* Organizational characteristics are positively related to the affective commitment component of arts-and-culture organizations staff.
- H1b.* Organizational characteristics are positively related to the normative commitment component of arts-and-culture organizations staff.
- H1c.* Organizational characteristics are negatively related to the continuance commitment component of arts-and-culture organizations staff.

Job characteristics

According to [Morgeson et al. \(2003\)](#), job characteristics (JC) are best articulated under three main categories. First is motivational, which addresses how job characteristics relate to individual reactions to work. Second, socio-technical concerned with how people interact with each other, how technically they produce products and services and

how these two facets are interrelated. The third category is contextual elements to which job characteristics are susceptible; they are likely to influence individual needs and behaviors. Although definitions may vary, scholars agree that employee perceptions of job characteristics have powerful effects on important employee and organizational outcomes. For example, job characteristics are correlated with job satisfaction (Häusser *et al.*, 2010) and organizational commitment (Park and Rainey, 2007; Nijhof *et al.*, 1998). According to Suman and Srivastava (2012), job characteristics combine various aspects of the job, such as role clarity, role overload, role conflict, task-significance, degree of autonomy, job scope and skill variety. It has been argued that there is a high correlation between the degree of challenge found in a job and organizational commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Furthermore, several studies have found a negative relationship between role ambiguity and role conflict on one hand and commitment on the other (Kline and Peters, 1991; Johnston *et al.*, 1990; Singh *et al.*, 1981).

Differences in job characteristics in different sectors do exist. A study by Buelens and Van den Broeck (2007) emphasized that hierarchical levels are more important determinants of work motivation than sectoral differences. Also, the main differences can be wholly or partially explained by differences in job content and not by the sector itself. Yet, not-for-profit jobs provide more challenge, variety, satisfaction and intrinsic rewards than those in private enterprise (Mirvis and Hackett, 1983).

Job characteristics differ from organizational characteristics in that they are more specific to a job in a particular organization rather than affect all employees of an organization. One reason some individuals might decide to work in arts-and-culture organizations may be because of characteristics that define the jobs they offer. Given the nature and scope of jobs, as well as stresses described earlier that are inherent in working in arts-and-culture organizations, job characteristics are considered important to the employees. As a result, we posit the following hypothesis:

- H2a.* Job characteristics are positively related to the affective commitment component of arts-and-culture organizations staff.
- H2b.* Job characteristics are positively related to the normative commitment component of arts-and-culture organizations staff.
- H2c.* Job characteristics are negatively related to the continuance commitment component of arts-and-culture organizations staff.

Personal characteristics

The current study explores whether differences in personal characteristics, namely, age and level of education, exist in the relative contribution of organizational and job characteristics toward explaining organizational commitment. Giffords (2003) found that age and tenure are among the personal variables that are positively related to commitment. This is in part based on the idea that alternative employment options generally decrease as employees grow, which makes their current jobs more attractive (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990), or that older individuals may develop higher levels of organizational commitment in response to their stronger investment and greater history with the organization, as opposed to younger workers (Dunham *et al.*, 1994). Conversely, other researchers have suggested that younger employees might be more committed than older employees underpinned by the idea that they are more motivated to start a new career and better able to cope with change than older employees, who are generally

perceived to be less committed and more disappointed (Morris *et al.*, 1993). As for differences in personal characteristics across different sectors, only age and gender were significant (Goulet and Frank, 2002). On average, not-for-profit employees are older than their counterparts in business organizations, and the greater proportion of not-for-profit employees are women as opposed to men in for-profit organizations.

With regard to the level of education, Nijhof *et al.* (1998) argued that higher levels of education open up more possibilities for employees to do the work they like the most, and that highly educated employees tend to have a higher task commitment. On the other hand, Mowday *et al.* (1982) have found that a small negative correlation exists between organizational commitment and level of education.

A relatively fair number of studies focusing on age and level of education differences in personal and organizational characteristics was identified; however, none of them targeted employees in arts-and-culture organizations. Therefore, and in spite of their limited role in predicting commitment, we ask the following:

- RQ1.* Are there age and level of education differences in the relative contribution of personal and organizational characteristics to the organizational commitment of employees in arts-and-culture organizations?

Research design and methods

Sample and procedure

The targeted population in the present study included professional employees, at all organizational levels, of the major arts-and-culture organizations registered in the Palestinian Ministry of Culture (PMoC). A list of member organizations was provided by the PMoC in three main cities – Jerusalem, Ramallah and Bethlehem – as the largest arts-and-culture organizations had their major operations in these cities. The current study used a judgmental/purposive sampling technique, where the sample mainly comprised the most active and recognized organizations in the local community: the selection of 20 organizations was based on two main criteria: first, size as determined by the number of employees (seven employees and above) and the number of years in operations (10 years and above). The survey was administered with the endorsement and support of the directors of all participating organizations, allowing the authors to conduct an on-site employee survey. All employees working in these 20 organizations were invited to complete the survey. The respondent sampling frame included 190 individuals with 92 responses being returned, for a response rate of 48 per cent.

The survey questionnaire included responses to the Allen and Meyer's (1990) three-dimensional measure of organizational commitment, measures of two groups of antecedents (organizational and job characteristics) and demographic information. No personal identification data were collected from the participants to ensure individual anonymity. The sample of 92 responses consists of about 62 per cent females and 38 per cent males; respondents' median age was 20-30 years. Their highest completed level of educational attainment was mostly a bachelor's degree (69 per cent); with 17 per cent holding master's and higher degrees and around 14 per cent holding diplomas.

Measures

To measure organizational commitment, the study used a 24-item scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) and later modified by Meyer *et al.* (1993). Affective commitment was measured using eight items ($\alpha = 0.73$), including "I would be very happy to

spend the rest of my career life in this organization” and “I really feel as if the organization’s problems are my own”. Normative commitment was measured using eight items ($\alpha = 0.72$), including “I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to an organization” and “I do not believe that the person must be loyal to his/her organization”. Continuance commitment was also measured using eight items ($\alpha = 0.37$), including “I feel that I have too few options considering leaving the organization” and “It would be very hard for me to leave this organization, even if I want to”. The low reliability coefficient for the third sub-scale may be attributed to the inherent characteristics of the present sample in terms of the work environment (not-for-profit arts-and-culture organizations) and the distinctive attributes (e.g. motives and drives) of professionals working in such organizations, as opposed to employees working in the private sector. In addition, this result is somehow consistent with previous studies stating that the continuance dimension of organizational commitment is not fully developed compared with affective and normative dimensions ([Stallworth, 2003](#); [Allen and Meyer, 1990](#)).

Organizational characteristics were measured using a ten-item scale (perceived organizational support) developed by [Eisenberger et al. \(1986\)](#), $\alpha = 0.82$. Sample questions included “The organization values my contribution to its well-being” and “The organization strongly considers my goals and values”. Job characteristics were operationalized using eight items developed exclusively for the present study on the basis of a combination of factors identified by [Allen and Meyer \(1990\)](#) and [Hackman and Oldham \(1980\)](#), including “My superiors are receptive and listen to my ideas and suggestions” and “In general, I have a say or an influence on what goes on in my organization”. The reliability coefficient for this scale is quite low ($\alpha = 0.47$), which requires more meaningful analysis of these variables as a scale. Because this study proposes that organizational and job characteristics could be antecedents to organizational commitment, the reliability of each of the antecedents scales was explored. All survey items were measured on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A pre-test with a pilot sample of 15 employees in three organizations resulted in no changes to the survey instrument.

Analysis of data

Structural equation modeling was performed using AMOS (version 22), adopting a maximum likelihood estimation method, as the assumption of multivariate normality of data was satisfied ([Bollen, 1989](#)). The present study applied the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to determine factor solutions for the study constructs and verify reliabilities of measured variables. Primarily, the analysis consisted of two-step procedure: measurement model and structural model. First, an examination of the discriminant validity of the research variables was conducted to establish a foundation for their structural relationship. Second, an assessment of the hypothesized theoretical model was carried out followed by estimating parameters.

Results

Measurement model

Before examining specific relationships between the variables in the research model, an examination of the measurement model using CFA was conducted to validate the constructs ([Anderson and Gerbing, 1988](#)) in the context of arts-and-culture

organizations in Palestine. To assess the overall fit of the research model, a chi-square statistic (χ^2), along with other fit indices, was applied using maximum likelihood estimation.

The measurement model consisted of five constructs (three organizational commitment constructs – affective, normative and continuance; and two antecedent constructs – organizational characteristics and job characteristics). A total of 42 items constituted the five constructs. Items with loadings above 0.50 on their corresponding construct were maintained ([McCoach, 2003](#); [Hu and Bentler, 1999](#); [Hair et al., 1998](#)), leaving 24 items in the measurement model. All five constructs in this research were verified to be five unique constructs; *t*-values for all items were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) with a minimum *t*-value of 3.196 ([Table I](#)).

The χ^2 -test which was significant revealed an intolerable fit (= 367.147, *df* = 245, $p < 0.001$). However, given that χ^2 is notoriously sensitive to sample size ([Kenny and McCoach, 2003](#); [McCoach, 2003](#)), almost any model with a relatively large sample size has a statistically significant χ^2 , even if there is trivial amount of data misfit. To correct this problem that could result from judging the fit model solely by examining the model χ^2 , in [Table II](#) a number of fit indices were generated that are generally not influenced by sample size, indicating a reasonable overall fit of the model to the data. The RMSEA (0.074) and RMR (0.056) fall within the recommended range with a maximum cutoff point of 0.08 ([McCoach, 2003](#)). The CFI (0.846), NFI (0.656) and IFI (0.852) indicated a reasonable fit in accordance with their proximity to the level of 0.90 ([Kelloway, 1998](#); [Kline, 1998](#)). Other fit indices such as GFI (0.758), AGFI (0.704) and TLI (0.826) have confirmed the reasonable fit of the model: the closer is the outcome to 1.00, the better is the fit ([McCoach, 2003](#)). Finally, the ratio of the CMIN/DF (1.499) falls within the range of acceptable fit – the closer is the value of CMIN/DF to 1.00, the more correct the model is ([Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1984](#)). In conclusion, the CFA results have achieved an acceptable degree of fit to the data while maintaining that multi-collinearity is not an issue for the model constructs.

Tests of hypotheses and results of research questions

Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for all dependent and independent variables are presented in [Table III](#). Overall, the average level of affective commitment in this sample is relatively high (4.32), and similar results were reported by previous studies ([Bang et al., 2012](#); [Stallworth, 2003](#); [Meyer et al., 1990](#)). The scores of the two independent (antecedent) variables are above mid-point of the scale, which indicates that employees in the current sample have generally positive perceptions of the job and organizational characteristics. Continuance commitment is the only variable with an average score of 2.45, which confirms the scale's lack of internal consistency, as suggested by [Allen and Meyer \(1990\)](#) and [Stallworth \(2003\)](#) and might as well be attributed to the distinctive setting in which this study was conducted and the unique attributes and motives of its employees. The correlation matrix shows the inter-relations among all variables used in this study. Both antecedents (organizational and job characteristics) are significantly correlated with affective and normative commitment, with the highest correlation of 0.62 between affective commitment and organizational characteristics. Consistent with previous research, the matrix also reveals that

Item	Factor	Mean	Median	SD	Factor loading	<i>t</i> -values	Organizational commitment
<i>AC1</i> . I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career life in this organization	<i>AC</i>	4.00	4	0.889	0.565	4.171	1013
<i>AC2</i> . I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside of it	<i>AC</i>	4.42	4	0.633	0.585	4.240	
<i>AC3</i> . I really feel as if the organization's problems are my own	<i>AC</i>	4.07	4	0.970	0.571	4.171	
<i>AC4</i> . I do not feel emotionally attached to this organization (R)	<i>AC</i>	4.62	1	0.488	0.539	4.003	
<i>AC5</i> . I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization (R)	<i>AC</i>	4.62	1	0.531	0.597	4.303	
<i>AC6</i> . This organization has a great deal of "personal meaning" to me	<i>AC</i>	4.41	5	0.787	0.565	4.143	
<i>AC7</i> . I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization (R)	<i>AC</i>	4.49	1	0.564	0.735	4.885	
<i>CC1</i> . Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire	<i>CC</i>	1.98	2	0.937	0.609	4.523	Table I. Results of confirmatory factor analysis: three constructs of organizational commitment and two antecedent variables
<i>CC2</i> . It would be very hard for me to leave this organization, even if I want to	<i>CC</i>	1.99	2	1.00	0.926	6.097	
<i>CC3</i> . Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I would be leaving this organization	<i>CC</i>	2.13	2	0.986	0.755	5.707	
<i>CC4</i> . I feel I have too few options considering leaving the organization	<i>CC</i>	2.00	2	0.864	0.555	4.523	
<i>CC5</i> . One of my major reasons that I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice- another organization might not match the benefits I have here	<i>CC</i>	2.22	2	0.981	0.525	4.323	
<i>NC1</i> . I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to an organization	<i>NC</i>	4.04	4	0.876	0.539	3.196	
<i>NC2</i> . I do not believe that the person must be loyal to his/her organization (R)	<i>NC</i>	3.79	2	1.18	0.508	3.196	
<i>POS1</i> . The organization values my contribution to its well-being	<i>POS</i>	4.07	4	0.530	0.604	5.357	
<i>POS2</i> . The organization strongly considers my goals and values	<i>POS</i>	4.02	4	0.741	0.740	6.484	
<i>POS3</i> . The organization would ignore any complaint from me (R)	<i>POS</i>	4.05	2	0.600	0.634	5.605	
<i>POS4</i> . The organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me (R)	<i>POS</i>	4.04	2	0.740	0.521	4.639	
<i>POS5</i> . My supervisors are proud I am part of this organization	<i>POS</i>	4.17	4	0.720	0.755	6.609	
<i>POS6</i> . The organization takes pride at my accomplishments at work	<i>POS</i>	4.09	4	0.640	0.573	5.087	

(continued)

Table I.

Item	Factor	Mean	Median	SD	Factor loading	t-values
POS7. The organization is willing to extend itself to help me perform my job to the best of my ability	POS	3.86	4	0.820	0.633	5.599
POS8. The organization wishes to give me the best possible job for which I am qualified	POS	4.11	4	0.733	0.698	5.357
JC1. My superiors are receptive and listen to my ideas and suggestions	JC	4.10	4	0.742	0.907	6.386
JC2. In general, I have a say or an influence on what goes on in my organization	JC	3.92	4	0.745	0.716	6.386

χ^2	RMSEA	CMIN/DF	RMR	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI	IFI	TLI
367.15	0.074	1.499	0.056	0.758	0.704	0.656	0.846	0.852	0.826

Table II.
Goodness-of-fit indices for the measurement model

Notes: RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; CMIN/DF = minimum discrepancy/degrees of freedom; RMR = root mean square residual; GFI = goodness-of-fit index; AGFI = adjusted goodness-of-fit index; NFI = normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; IFI = incremental fit index; TLI = Tucker–Lewis coefficient

Table III.
Mean, median, standard deviation and correlation matrix of study variables

Scale	Mean	Median	SD	AC	CC	NC	POS	JC
AC	4.3220	4.3750	0.42992	1.00				
CC	2.4592	2.3750	0.60023	-1.95	1.00			
NC	3.5462	3.5000	0.42771	0.411**	-0.207*	1.00		
POS	4.0554	4.1000	0.43358	0.619**	-0.179	0.533**	1.00	
JC	3.7242	3.7500	0.36948	0.547**	-0.158	0.322**	0.607**	1.00

Notes: ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

continuance commitment is negatively correlated with the two antecedent variables investigated in the study (Stallworth, 2003; Whitener and Walz, 1993). Therefore, all hypotheses proposed in the current study are supported.

To examine the research hypotheses and investigate the research question, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted between organizational commitment (one type after the other) and antecedent variables while controlling for age and level of education (in Step 2 of each hierarchical regression). Overall, the hierarchical regression reveals that R^2 for affective commitment (Table IV) has accounted for the highest variance ($R^2 = 4.3, F = 33.57, p < 0.001$) in comparison with continuance and normative commitment, Tables V and VI, respectively. Consistent with previous studies, organizational and job characteristics were found significant in predicting organizational commitment, particularly the affective commitment type (Stallworth, 2003; Rhoades et al., 2001; Nijhof et al., 1998; Allen and Meyer, 1990; Eisenberger et al., 1990, 1986).

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Table IV.
Hierarchical
regression results of
antecedents on
affective
commitment

Variable	Beta	Standard error	<i>t</i> -statistic	Significance
<i>Step 1</i>				
Intercept	10.547	3.005	3.510	0.001
POS	0.361	0.080	4.522	0.000
JC	0.315	0.117	2.689	0.009
<i>Step 2</i>				
Intercept	9.980	3.250	3.071	0.003
POS	0.362	0.082	4.434	0.000
JC	0.315	0.120	2.629	0.010
Age	-0.037	0.362	-0.103	0.918
Level of education	0.204	0.381	0.536	0.594

Notes: $R^2 = 0.430$, $F = 33.576$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.432$, $F = 16.542$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.001$

Variable	Beta	Standard error	<i>t</i> -statistic	Significance
<i>Step 1</i>				
Intercept	29.360	5.456	5.381	0.000
POS	-0.145	0.145	-0.999	0.320
JC	-0.128	0.213	-0.601	0.549
<i>Step 2</i>				
Intercept	30.961	5.861	5.282	0.000
POS	-0.138	0.147	-0.933	0.353
JC	-0.145	0.216	-0.671	0.504
Age	0.459	0.653	0.703	0.484
Level of education	-0.820	0.688	-1.193	0.236

Notes: $R^2 = 0.036$, $F = 1.653$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.197$; $R^2 = 0.052$, $F = 1.196$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.319$

Table V.
Hierarchical
regression results of
antecedents on
continuance
commitment

Variable	Beta	Standard error	<i>t</i> -statistic	Significance
<i>Step 1</i>				
Intercept	11.345	3.349	3.387	0.001
POS	0.422	0.089	4.746	0.000
JC	-0.004	0.131	-0.028	0.978
<i>Step 2</i>				
Intercept	4.624	3.439	4.252	0.000
POS	0.419	0.086	4.841	0.000
JC	-0.009	0.127	-0.068	0.946
Age	0.324	0.383	0.845	0.400
Level of education	-1.257	0.403	-3.115	0.002

Notes: $R^2 = 0.285$, $F = 17.698$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.357$, $F = 12.088$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.001$

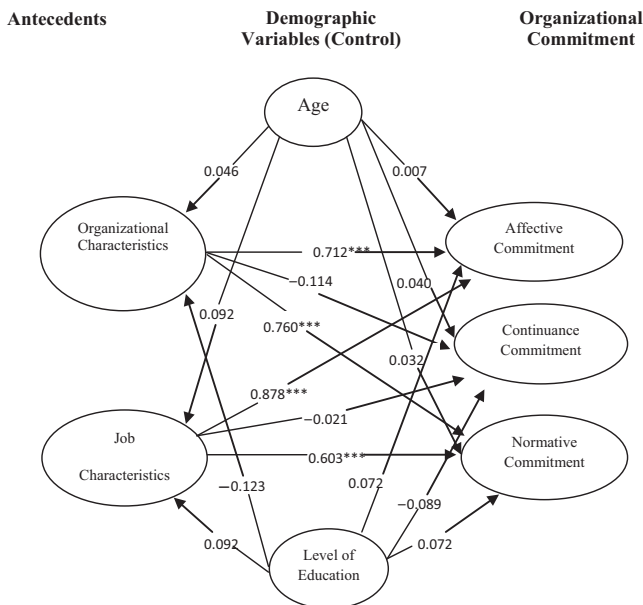
Table VI.
Hierarchical
regression results of
antecedents on
normative
commitment

To answer *RQ1*, whether age and level of education differences exist in the relative contribution of organizational and job characteristics to organizational commitment, both control variables were calculated in Step 2 in Tables IV, V and VI. Not counting the slight improvement in the predictability power of the models, none of these variables were significant, indicating no age and level of education differences.

As a follow-up analysis, Figure 2 compares the coefficients of direct effects of the two antecedents on the three components of organizational commitment. The direct paths from organizational characteristics to affective and normative commitment ($\beta = 0.71$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.76$, $p < 0.001$, respectively) were similar to those of job characteristics ($\beta = 0.87$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.60$, $p < 0.001$, respectively). With regard to the continuance commitment, the direct paths coming from organizational and job characteristics are consistent with the results presented in Tables III and V. Finally, the path coefficients from age and level of education to all other variables in the model are insignificant, indicating no relationship.

Discussion

One of the major contributions of the present study is that it adds to a limited number of studies investigating commitment in not-for-profit organizations and is one of a very few studies to focus on employees in arts-and-culture organizations. In light of the shortage of employees facing arts-and-culture organizations and their importance to the ongoing functioning of these organizations, the present study makes a valuable addition to the existing research. The consequences of organizational commitment in the specific setting of this study indicate the multiple-dimensionality in preference to the



Note: *** $p < 0.001$

Figure 2.
Theoretical
(structural) path
coefficients

uni-dimensionality of commitment, which several studies have propounded. Results of the CFA suggest that both affective and normative commitment constitute relevant description of organizational commitment sustained by employees in arts-and-culture organizations; a view established in the “social exchange theory”, which indicates that employees’ commitment to the organization is strongly affected by their perception of the organization’s commitment to them (Meyer and Smith, 2000; Eisenberger *et al.*, 1990, 1986). In line with other studies, affective dimension was the most accurate description of organizational commitment (Stallworth, 2003; Miller, 2000), whereas continuance commitment was found to be a poor depiction of the concept. These results may also suggest that notwithstanding the constant unpredictable externalities and resource crunch that arts-and-culture organizations face, individuals working for these organizations are not primarily motivated by extrinsic rewards. Organizational features such as mission and strategy and others such as those related to organizational practices and relevant job characteristics are considered significant predictors of commitment (Suman and Srivastava, 2012).

Results indicated that employees’ commitment in arts-and-culture organizations is sensitive to organizational characteristics (e.g. organizational values and taking pride in employee contributions) and job characteristics (e.g. an employee at liberty to influence her/his own work). Hence, the study makes a second major contribution: it advocates for the tying together of organizational characteristics with job characteristics in a comprehensive and strategic motivational framework. This will allow organizations to cultivate strong and long-term relationships with employees through enhanced commitment. Given the unrestrictive flexible culture that characterizes arts-and-culture organizations (Alatrasta and Arrowsmith, 2004; Markham *et al.*, 2001), Defourny *et al.* (2009) argue that the distinctive culture in these organizations, based on values of decentralization, participative decision-making, employee empowerment and open communication, has led employees to be emotionally committed to their organizations, thus reflecting the prevalence of the affective component. Moreover, it is clear that job characteristics were also an important determinant of commitment among employees in this sample, suggesting that these employees’ desire for good rewards, challenging work and high-quality supervision are necessary conditions for organizational commitment. These results are comparable with those of Townsend (2000), who describes that employees working in arts-and-culture organizations, as individuals who strive to make a difference through their work, are highly driven by achievement and tend to assign a high emphasis on inherent satisfaction as a result of fulfilling the organizational mission.

In arts-and-culture organizations, age and level of education appear to have no significant relationships with organizational commitment. Generally, these results explain that arts-and-culture organizations are thought to be more age- and level-of-education-friendly workplaces. These results were similar to those of Mowday *et al.* (1982), and in contrast to other studies (Giffords, 2003; Nijhof *et al.*, 1998; Morris *et al.*, 1993).

As in any study, there are few limitations which also highlight the need for future research. The most obvious is that self-reported data were collected within a number of major arts-and-culture organizations at one point in time. This limitation, however, is quite pervasive in many studies because of the enormous costs associated with data collection (Kim, 2005). Although valid and reliable scales were used, further testing and

validation of the job characteristics instrument are needed. In addition, our understanding of organizational and job characteristics would be enhanced if interview data have also been collected.

Implications and future research

This study provides significant managerial implications through testing associations and attempting to deliver a framework for organizational commitment of employees in arts-and-culture organizations and its theoretically related variables (i.e. demographics, organizational and job characteristics). In this regard, it presents empirical evidence that organizational and job characteristics have positive effects on employees' evaluation of their organization. Therefore, managers of arts-and-culture organizations should look at organizational commitment as an attitude that is directly affected by managerial actions and organizational practices and ensure that a proper alignment of organizational values and mission with those of the employees exists. This can be achieved in the very first place through recruiting and selecting individuals whose values coincide with the organizational mission and goals. Moreover, they can empower employees by demonstrating that the organization recognizes and appreciates employees' contributions and cares for their development through constantly decentralizing the control of organizational power and designing jobs in a manner that maximizes challenge, autonomy and feedback and skill variety and allows for growth and learning. The sector's inability to motivate employees financially necessitates emphasizing on non-financial means of eliciting and maintaining organizational commitment.

In addition, the findings stress the importance of using various types of interpersonal relationships to mitigate the challenging conditions inherent in the environment of arts-and-culture organizations. The retention of employees who decide to work in these organizations can be enhanced by creating a working environment whereby employees' psychological and career needs are met through instilling a sense of belonging, a sense of shared mission and a sense of contribution.

At a policy level, the results of the study indicate that arts-and-culture organizations can benefit from instituting policies and practices aimed at fostering organizational responsibility, diversity and equity. For example, policies aimed at providing work-life balance and other aspects of a supportive and equitable work environment will help these organizations retain and attract talented employees with diverse backgrounds.

Given the dearth of research in this field, additional studies are needed, especially in arts-and-culture organizations. Future research may examine which items in the instrument have more discriminating power over organizational commitment constructs. As early as 1985, Reichers shed light on the significance of dealing explicitly with the effects of organizational characteristics on the nature and direction of commitment, pointing out that most measures assume that the organization is a "monolithic, undifferentiated entity that elicits an identification and attachment on the part of individuals" (p. 469). Hence, it would be more realistic to treat commitment as a situational construct that varies with the work setting and interests of individuals. Cross-country research could help provide more insights into the relative importance of the antecedents used in this study, given the unique characteristics of employees in arts-and-culture organizations. It is also a promising avenue for future studies to examine the perceptions of employees in these organizations using qualitative data collection instruments, which could provide some insights whether employees in this

sector are committed to the organization in general or to particular entities or constituents in the organization (e.g. superiors, colleagues or workgroups), a view called “foci of commitment” as held by Reichers (1985).

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