


When Does Affective Organizational Commitment Lead to Job Performance? Integration of Resource Perspective

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Abstract

To address the inconsistent findings on the relationship between affective organizational commitment and job performance, this study examines whether this relationship depends on employee's occupational commitment and organizational tenure as measured by the stage of their employment (trial stage vs. stabilization stage). Existing evidence has shown that employees with high affective organizational commitment possess a greater willingness to exhibit higher levels of both task performance and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). Integrating social exchange and resources perspectives, we argue that the actualization of such willingness is driven by the perceived value of the resources generated from this behavior. Two specific hypotheses were tested using data from 326 participants (mean age = 26.44; *SD* age = 4.21; 58.1% male) across two time periods. As hypothesized, occupational commitment moderated both the organizational commitment–task performance and organizational commitment–OCB relationships, while organizational tenure stage only moderated the latter link. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords

affective organizational commitment, occupational commitment, task performance, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational tenure stage

Affective organizational commitment (AC) has long been a focus of social and psychological studies in Western countries. Research on AC has uncovered an extensive array of workplace outcomes including turnover intentions, job satisfaction, and job performance (Cohen, 2000; Golden & Veiga, 2008; Leroy, Palanski, & Simons, 2012). Nevertheless, existing research on the relationship between AC and job performance has not produced consistent results. Meta-analytic studies (see Jaramillo, Mulki, and Marshall, 2005; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Wright & Bonett, 2002) report correlations of organizational commitment with task performance and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)

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ranging from 0.05 to 0.25. Individual studies report positive, nonsignificant, or even negative relationships (e.g., Goffin & Gellatly, 2001; Leroy et al., 2012; Wright & Bonett, 1997a). One possible explanation for the heterogeneous nature of findings is that the relationship between AC and job performance might be moderated by other variables (Jaramillo et al., 2005; Riketta, 2002). Identifying these variables would enhance our understanding of where and why AC would (not) affect performance and offer new insights for managers when they could enhance employees' job performance via developing their commitment. Therefore, scholars have called for more studies to address the research query (e.g., Wright & Bonett, 2002). So far, very few studies have responded to this call, however.

Additionally, scholars (Wasti et al., 2016) have indicated that clarifying the effects of AC should also incorporate cross-cultural issues and encouraged more studies to be conducted in non-Western countries. In the Chinese context, with the increasing career motility of adults, how to develop highly committed workforce has drawn more and more attentions of scholars (e.g., Chen & Francesco, 2000; Newman, Thanacoody, & Hui, 2011; Wasti et al., 2016). However, among the small number of studies empirically examining the AC-job performance relationship in China, the results are also heterogeneous in nature (e.g., Chen & Francesco, 2003; Chen, Tsui, & Farh, 2002; Fu & Deshpande, 2014). To clarify the heterogeneous nature of the AC-job performance relationship in the literature, this study introduces two theoretically relevant moderators (i.e., occupational commitment [OC] and organizational tenure) and empirically examines their moderating effects in Chinese cultural context. By doing so, the current study adds to the literature in two ways.

First, we integrated social exchange theory (SET; Blau, 1964) and a perspective of resources (Foa & Foa, 1980; Hobfoll, 2001) to build a theoretical framework to explain why the relationship between AC and job performance (i.e., task performance and OCB) varies across studies. SET has been the dominant framework for explaining the AC-job performance relationship. According to SET, employees who are affectively committed to their organizations are motivated to maintain positive social exchanges with their organization and respond with favorable organizational behaviors, such as job performance, as a result. However, SET illuminates only the positiveness of the AC-job performance relationship, and it fails to explain why an employee high in AC might not exhibit high performance or the fact that an employee with low affective commitment may still perform well for a variety of reasons (e.g., for personal career development). Consequently, we draw upon the resource perspective and argue that employees with high AC are more likely to exhibit high performance when they value the resources that are tied to performance. More specifically, the strength of the AC-job performance relationship tends to be stronger when employees perceive more valued benefits from the resources exchanged as a result of exhibiting job performance.

Second, we examine boundary conditions of AC-job performance relationship. Drawing on the resource perspective, we introduce two moderators (OC and organizational tenure stage) and argue that both the two variables influence an employee's evaluations of the resources relating to exhibiting high job performance, thus may act as potential moderators. The moderators we introduce are also consistent with Meyer, Becker, and Vandenberghe's (2004) theoretical development, in which they argued that the AC-job performance link can be influenced by (a) other commitment foci and (b) contextual factors.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

Integration of Resource Perspective

AC captures how employees attach to, identify with, and get involved in their organization (Meyer & Allen, 1984). Employees who are psychologically attached to their organizations internally identify with their organization and treat the organization's goals as their own. A sense of felt obligation (Gouldner, 1960) propels those emotionally attached employees to reciprocate and exhibit positive behaviors (e.g., high levels of task performance and active OCB) that are supportive of corporate

aspirations. Nevertheless, because social exchange implies long-term and open-ended obligations, employees may view one single exchange (e.g., pay for specific tasks and networking) in different ways, making the perceived value of the exchange outcome conditional. Resources theory (Foa & Foa, 1980) suggests that how an individual interprets the meaning of the exchanged resources is what plays a decisive role in the exchange relationship.

The quality (level) of exhibited job performance (including both task performance and OCB) resulting from the social exchange driven by an employee's AC depends on how the employee interprets the value of his or her job performance. Related research supports this idea. For example, based on resource perspective, Ng and Feldman (2012) found that how employees interpret the benefits of voice-behavior influences their decision to engage in voice behavior. That is, when they believe that voice behavior will be helpful for obtaining resources that will enable them to deal with stress, they are more likely to exhibit voice behavior. Otherwise, they would reserve the resources associated with engaging in such behavior.

Job Performance

Over the past two decades, the definition of job performance has been expanded to include both task performance and citizenship behavior (Williams & Anderson, 1991), with a number of studies using these two variables to capture overall job performance (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Task performance refers to the basic duties of a particular job, while citizenship behaviors represent the extra-role behaviors (i.e., helping coworkers) that benefit the efficient and effective functioning of the organization (Organ, 1988).

The Moderating Role of OC

OC refers to "a person's belief in and acceptance of the values of his or her chosen occupation or line of work, and a willingness to maintain membership in that occupation" (Vandenberg & Scarpello, 1994, p. 553). As indicated by Aranya, Pollack, and Amernic (1981), employees who are highly committed to their occupations agree with and adhere to the prominent values of their current jobs and occupations. We argue that compared with those less committed to their chosen occupation, employees with high OC are more likely to value the resources they obtain from exhibiting high performance since these resources are perceived as being related to their career development. For example, empirical research has shown that OC is highly correlated with employees' motivation to participate in professional training and developmental behaviors (Kim, Kang, Lee, & McLean, 2016) and the opportunity to develop professional skills and abilities is linked to career competence (e.g., Lee, Carswell, & Allen, 2000; Weng, McElroy, Morrow, & Liu, 2010). Moreover, the opportunity to communicate and collaborate with colleagues and supervisors that results from high performance facilitates one's personal reputation and the accumulation of social capital (Organ, 1988). In contrast, employees with low OC are more likely to change occupations and see little need for either developing professional abilities or accumulating social capital. Thus, they consider job tasks as dull, repetitive activities (Ng & Feldman, 2011) that constrain their work goals (Koopman, Lanaj, & Scott, 2016) and perceive less of a need to exhibit high levels of job performance.

In addition, individuals have an innate drive to acquire critical personal resources such as self-esteem and sense of self (Hagger, Wood, Stiff, & Chatzisarantis, 2010; Hobfoll, 2001). The self-esteem of employees who are psychologically attached to their current occupations is more directly associated with their jobs (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010), than it is for those with low levels of OC. Therefore, compared with employees with lower CC, those with higher levels of OC are more motivated to perform at higher levels since their self-esteem (Pierce & Gardner, 2004) is tied to task performance and active OCB.

To summarize, we expect that for employees with high OC, AC will be more strongly related to job performance because employees who are committed to their occupations are not only emotionally driven to perform better but also perceive more constructive resources for doing so.

Hypothesis 1a: OC positively moderates the relationship between AC and task performance, such that the higher the OC, the more positive the relationship.

Hypothesis 1b: OC positively moderates the relationship between AC and OCB, such that the higher the OC, the more positive the relationship.

The Moderating Effects of Organizational Tenure

Organizational tenure captures the length of employment in an organization (McEnrue, 1988). Based on the organizational socialization process, researchers (Morrow & McElroy, 1987) separated organizational tenure into three stages: (1) the “trial” stage, less than 2 years after entering an organization; (2) the “stabilization” stage, 2–10 years of organizational tenure; and (3) the “maintenance” stage, more than 10 years of service to an organization. We expect that the relationship between AC and job performance differs across these organizational tenure stages. Specifically, exhibiting high task performance and active OCBs is more instrumental for the key goals associated with the trial stage, such as showing strengths, talents, competence, and image, as well as obtaining colleagues’ and supervisors’ recognition, as they strive to establish a footing in their current organization (Cropanzano, James, & Citera, 1993; Helmreich, Sawin, & Carsrud, 1986; Wright & Bonett, 2002). Stated differently, an employee’s personal need to be fully socialized during the “trial” stage is more likely to be fulfilled as a result of the accumulation of the resources that result from high job performance.

However, as one’s length of service within an organization continues beyond the trial stage, what matters to employees tends to change. Studies have shown that as organizational tenure increases, employees’ major concerns may shift to goals that are more highly valued by society, such as social and family goals (Huang, Shi, Zhang, & Cheung, 2006; Nevis, 1983). Similarly, the job experience model (Louis, 1980) indicates that the focus and contents of job-related activities are likely to expand with one’s job experience. Therefore, as time goes by, highly committed employees continue to be motivated to perform, but their focus expands to include organizational contextual-related aspects such as pay, benefits, and company policies (Wagner & Gooding, 1987). Thus, we propose that for employees in the trial stage, organizational commitment is more strongly related to job performance, compared to employees with longer organizational tenure.

Hypothesis 2a: Organizational tenure stage will negatively moderate the relationship between AC and task performance, such that the relationship is strongest for employees in the earliest tenure stage and weaker for later tenure stages.

Hypothesis 2b: Organizational tenure stage will negatively moderate the relationship between AC and OCB, such that the relationship is strongest for employees in earliest tenure stage and weaker for later tenure stages.

Method

Sample and Procedure

A two-wave longitudinal web-based survey over a 1-month period was used in data collection. For better generalization, the participants were from diverse organizations located in various regions of China ($n = 488$ at Time 1 [T1]; $n = 384$ at Time 2 [T2]). The authors collaborated with numerous

alumni of Master of Business Administration Program from a university in Hefei, China, to recruit their friends and colleagues. E-mail addresses were used to identify participants and to merge the two data sets. We assessed demographic variables, organizational commitment, and OC at T1, and task performance and OCB at T2. In data clearance, we eliminated surveys with unmatched T1–T2 pairs and from participants who skipped more than one item on a scale. We also dropped eight surveys constituting the “maintenance” stage responses that were too few to meaningfully analyze. We used personal mean imputation for participants who skipped one item on a scale but had available data for the remaining items (Bernaards & Sijtsma, 2000) and obtained a final sample with 326 usable paired surveys.

Participants were aged 18–41 years old ($M = 26.44$, $SD = 4.21$), and 58.1% were male. Among the participants, 21.4% did not hold a diploma, 26.1% had a 3-year diploma, 40.8% had bachelor degrees, 9.2% had graduate degrees, and 2.5% did not report their educational background. Respondents worked in a range of organizations (36% worked in state-owned enterprises, 39% in private-owned enterprises, 19.7% in foreign-invested enterprises, and 5.3% worked in public institutions) and positions (1.9% in senior/upper management, 11.7% were mid-level managers, 11% were first-line managers, and 53.4% were nonsupervisory).

Measures

The surveys consisted of measures designed to capture AC, OC, task performance, OCB, and organizational tenure stage. In converting the measures of AC, OC, and OCB into Chinese, we strictly followed the translation and back-translation methodology (Jones, Lee, Phillips, Zhang, & Jaceldo, 2001). With the exception of task performance that was measured with an original Chinese scale, the AC, OC, and OCB scales have been well established in the literature. All scales except tenure stage used a 5-point Likert-type scale format (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

AC. AC was measured using 4 items from Meyer, Allen, and Smith’s (1993) scale. Example item was “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.” Their original scale correlated positively with job satisfaction ($r = .49$, $p < .01$) and loyalty ($r = .41$, $p < .01$). Cronbach’s α was .82 in Meyer et al.’s (1993) and .80 in our study.

OC. Blau’s (2003) 6-item scale was used to measure OC. Sample items include “I am happy to have entered my current occupation.” Blau’s measure had a Cronbach’s α of .91 and negatively predicted turnover intention ($r = -.26$, $p < .01$) in Blau (2009). The coefficient α in the present study was .83.

Task performance. We used Farh and Cheng’s (1997) 4-item scale to measure task performance (e.g., “I can always fulfill the jobs assigned by the supervisor in time”). Farh and Cheng’s measure had a Cronbach’s α of .80 and significantly related to affective trust ($r = .23$, $p < .05$) in Chen, Eberly, Chiang, Farh, and Cheng (2014). The Cronbach’s α for this scale was .82 in the present study, which showed a good internal reliability.

OCB. OCBs were measured using William and Anderson’s (1991) 16-item scale (e.g., “helps others who have been absent” and “gives advance notice if unable to come to work”). They reported reliabilities of citizenship behaviors toward individuals (OCBI; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .88$) and organizations (OCBO; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .75$) separately and shown that both OCBI and OCBO were significantly correlated with intrinsic ($r = .28$, $p < .05$; $r = .19$, $p < .05$) and extrinsic job cognitions ($r = .24$, $p < .05$; $r = .25$, $p < .05$). However, as some behaviors that were classified toward individuals benefit organizations as well (Lee & Allen, 2002), we used the overall composite score (Cronbach’s α was .90).

Organizational tenure stage. Organizational tenure stage was obtained from respondents’ self-classification according to his or her tenure in their current company. Respondents were classified

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, Internal Reliabilities, and Correlations Based on Full Sample.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Gender (T1)	1.42	0.49										
2. Organisation type (T1)	1.95	0.91	.04									
3. Age (T1)	26.44	4.21	-.80	-.20**								
4. Education level (T1)	2.39	0.932	.06	-.06	-.09							
5. Position (T1)	3.71	0.75	.05	-.10	.30**	.01						
6. AC (T1)	3.44	0.75	-.01	-.04	.18**	-.07	.17**	(0.797)				
7. OC (T1)	3.22	0.76	.02	.02	.22**	.02	.26**	0.65**	(0.830)			
8. OT Stage (T1)	1.64	0.50	-.04	-.02	.49**	-.12*	-.02	.09	.14*			
9. TP (T2)	3.33	0.66	-.13*	.01	.21**	-.02	.14*	.28**	.33**	.13*	(0.824)	
10. OCB (T2)	3.51	0.54	-.06	-.16**	.32**	-.04	.27**	.46**	.42**	.07	.48**	(0.896)

Note: $N = 326$. Two-tailed tests. T1 = data collected in first wave; T2 = data collected in second wave; AC = affective organizational commitment; OC = occupational commitment; OT stage = organizational tenure stage; TP = task performance; OCB = organizational citizenship behavior.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

as being in the trial stage if they reported organizational tenure less than 2 years, the stabilization stage if their service length was between 2 and 10 years, and in the maintenance stage if they reported a tenure longer than 10 years. Of the employees in our sample, 124 indicated they were in the trial stage of their employment, 202 were in the stabilization stage, but only 8 respondents were in the maintenance stage. Although a small sample may provide some insights, we considered the sample size of the third stage too small so we dropped this stage from our analysis.

Validity Issues

We conducted a four-factor model CFA (i.e., AC, OC, task performance, and OCB) to ensure discriminant validity of the overall model. We also compared the four-factor model with three alternative models: three-factor model (i.e., combining AC and OC into one factor), two-factor model (i.e., combining AC and OC, and task performance and OCB into one factor, respectively), and one-factor model. Comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), incremental fit index (IFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were used to evaluate the model fit. The results showed that four-factor model ($\chi^2 = 727.03$, $df = 335$, CFI = .90, TLI = .89, IFI = .90, RMSEA = .06) fits the data better than three-factor model ($\chi^2 = 814.72$, $df = 338$, CFI = .88, TLI = .86, IFI = .88, RMSEA = .07), two-factor model ($\chi^2 = 1,125.56$, $df = 340$, CFI = .80, TLI = .77, IFI = .80, RMSEA = .08), and one-factor model ($\chi^2 = 1,643.80$, $df = 341$, CFI = .66, TLI = .63, IFI = .67, RMSEA = .11). The findings suggest that the four examined variables are distinctive from each other in our study.

Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations for the variables in our study. Before running the regression analysis, we used Harman's one-factor test to evaluate the extent to which common method variance is a problem (Schaller, Patil, & Malhotra, 2015). An unrotated factor analysis of all the reflective constructs: AC, OC, task performance, and OCB indicated the presence of four factors. Results showed that the first factor only accounted for 31.65% of the total explained variance, which suggests that common method bias did not influence our results.

We used hierarchical regression analysis to test the hypothesized moderating effects. Any variable used as a component of an interaction term was centered to avoid multicollinearity (Aiken, West, &

Table 2. Regression Analysis of Moderators on Task Performance and Organizational Citizenship Behavior.

Variables	Task Performance				OCB			
	Model 1-1	Model 1-2	Model 1-3	Model 1-4	Model 2-1	Model 2-2	Model 2-3	Model 2-4
Step1								
Gender	-.10	-.11	-.10	-.10*	-.05	-.05	-.04	-.05
Organizational type	.05	.04	.02	.02	-.93	-.10†	-.11*	-.11*
Age	.12*	.13*	.05	.06	.24**	.18**	.21**	.22**
Position type	.05	.07	.07	.07	.02	.05	.04	.06
Education level	.05	.02	.02	.04	.19**	.15**	.12*	.14*
Step2								
AC		.29**	.15*	.22**		.37**	.28**	.36**
Step3								
OC			.22**	.18*			.14†	.08
OT stage			.08	.10			-.06	-.04
Step4								
AC × OC				.20**				.19**
AC × OT stage				-.08				-.16**
Adjusted R ²	.03	.11	.13	.16	.13	.26	.26	.30
ΔR ²	.05*	.08**	.03**	.03**	.14**	.13**	.01	.04**
F	2.53*	23.17**	4.81**	5.17**	8.70**	45.69**	2.14	6.96**

Note: $N = 326$. Two-tailed tests.

† $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Reno, 1991). Tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values were calculated as well, and the results of the diagnostics showed that multicollinearity was not an issue in either regression (tolerance: 0.51–0.96; VIF: 1.05–1.97). The control variables (i.e., age, gender, organization type, position, and education level) were entered in the first step. In Step 2, the main effects of AC on task performance and OCB were entered. In Step 3, organizational tenure stage and OC were entered, and the two interaction terms (AC × OC and AC × organizational tenure stage) were added in the fourth step.

As shown in Table 2, the interactive effects of AC and OC on both task performance ($\beta = .20, p < .01$) and OCB ($\beta = .19, p < .01$) were significant. We also found a significant interaction between AC and organizational tenure stage on OCB ($\beta = -.16, p < .01$). However, the interaction between AC and organizational tenure stage on task performance was not significant ($\beta = -.08, ns$). Overall, these findings provided potential supports for Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 2b, but no support for Hypothesis 2a.

To elucidate the significant interactive effects further, we computed simple slope tests (Preacher, Curran, & Bauer, 2006) and plotted the interactions. As shown in Figure 1A, the relationship between AC and task performance was stronger for employees with high levels of OC (+1 *SD*; $\beta = .540, t = 2.353, p < .05$) than it was for those with low levels of OC (–1 *SD*; $\beta = .391, t = 2.231, p < .05$). As seen in Figure 1B, when OC was low (–1 *SD*), the relationship between organizational commitment and OCB was positively significant ($\beta = .541, t = 3.437, p < .01$), and the relationship became much stronger ($\beta = 0.678, t = 3.244, p < .01$) when OC was high (+1 *SD*). Thus, Hypotheses 1a and 1b were supported.

As shown in Figure 1C, for employees in the trial of stage organizational tenure, AC had a strong positive association with OCBs ($\beta = .280, t = 2.622, p < .05$), while for employees in the stabilization stage, AC was not related to OCBs ($\beta = .190, t = 1.229, ns$), which was consistent with Hypothesis 2b.

Discussion

The research ascertains why the relationship between AC and job performance varies across studies and identifies potential moderators of this relationship. Findings support that OC moderated the AC-task performance and AC-OCB relationships, and organizational tenure stage moderated the

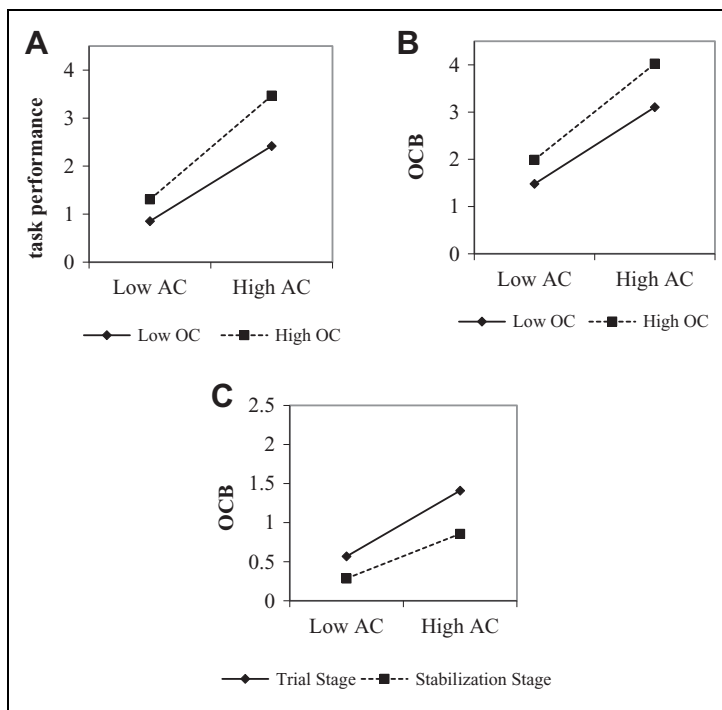


Figure 1. Moderating effects on the relationship between affective organizational commitment and job performance.

AC-OCB relationship. By collecting data from a variety of organizations located in China, the present study answers the calls for considering commitment cross-culturally (Wasti et al., 2016) and enriches the commitment-performance research in Chinese context.

Moreover, as in Western countries, the results show that the strength of AC-job performance relationship is conditional in China. By integrating the theories of social exchange and resource, our work explained the universal inconsistency in the AC-job performance relationship to some extent. Viewing job performance as an outcome of social exchange, we suggested that the strength of the AC-job performance relationship is contingent on the degree to which individuals perceive the resources received as a result of high job performance as beneficial. Previous literature has supported this theoretical conceptualization as well. For example, Foa and Foa (1980) suggested that an individual's perception of "receiving something of value influences the quality of the exchange relationship (Shore, Tetrick, Lynch, & Barksdale, 2006). Hobfoll (2001) proposed that individuals are innately driven to obtain valued resources, which leads them to allocate their limited resources into ways that facilitate the accumulation of valuable resources.

The current study also responds to the call for studying the "additive and interactive effects" of multiple commitments on organizational behaviors (Dick, Becker, & Meyer, 2006). Previous research involving multiple commitment foci focused on the comparative validity of each commitment facet in predicting workplace outcomes (Cohen, 2000). The few scholars who paid attention to the combined effects of multiple commitments largely focused on predicting turnover-related variables (Yalabik, Swart, Kinnie, & Van Rossenberg, 2017). This study adds to previous research on multiple commitment foci by examining the interactive effects of affective organizational and OCs on two aspects of employee job performance, task performance and OCBs. Our findings also support Meyer et al.'s (2004) theoretical prediction that the effects of organizational commitment could be moderated by other foci of commitment.

Another distinctive feature of our study is the addition of the role of organizational tenure on the AC-job performance relationship. We argue that employees in different stages of organizational tenure possess different personal pursuits and differentially value the resources they might acquire as a result of exhibiting high job performance. Notably, we extend previous studies (Ng & Feldman, 2011; Wright & Bonett, 2002) by examining the moderating effect on the relationships of AC-task performance and AC-OCB simultaneously. However, contrary to our expectation, we found that stages of organizational tenure (trial or stabilization) had no significant effect on the AC-task performance relationship. This might be due to the fact that employees' work experience, job-related skills, and knowledge accumulate along with their organizational tenure (Sparrow & Davis, 1988) and, as a result, employees at different stages of tenure may not perceive significant differences in the efficacy of accumulating valued resources from high job performance. However, the fact that we found support for our prediction that the magnitude of the AC-OCB relationship differs across organizational tenure stages confirms Ng and Feldman's (2011) finding showing that the strength of the AC-OCB relationship decreased as employees' length of service increased.

Practical Implication

Our study also offers several implications for both individuals and organizations. Our findings showed a significant interactive effect of AC and OC on performance. To make effective decisions, information about intended organizations and individuals' own attitudes toward specific occupation are both influential. Therefore, counselors need to help job seekers acquire skills in recruitment-information screening and recognize their attitudes toward the intended occupation. Moreover, it is very difficult to judge the job applicants' future organizational commitment; thus, HR managers should assess the applicants' OC and select the ones who are highly committed to the occupation because they are more likely to regard high job performance as valuable resources and to exhibit high job performance. Furthermore, to main employees' high job performance, organizations should also pay attentions to employee's organizational career growth, as it relates to both organizational commitment and OC (Weng et al., 2010; Weng & McElroy, 2012).

The findings also demonstrate the role of AC on job performance could decrease as employees' tenure increases. This suggests the need to establish differential policies toward employees in different tenure stages. For example, putting effects on organizational socialization might be particularly useful for enhancing newcomer's job performance, as Cohen and Veled-Hecht (2010) found that organizational socialization tactics relate to newcomer's affective commitment. Finally, employees' attentions might shift to nonwork domains as they turn to be senior on the position, therefore adopting strategies such as assigning tasks requiring a variety of skills and facilitating job rotations may help draw their attentions back to work domain.

Limitations and Future Research

The theoretical framework developed here is an attempt to offer an alternative approach for future commitment-performance research. Although we examined two moderators related to attachment foci and timing, much more work can be done. Other possible moderators may include personality and individual differences in regulatory focus, which also shape employees' assessment of the effectiveness of particular behaviors. For instance, conscientiousness subsumes the more specific dimension of the need for achievement, and thus conscientious individuals are more likely to value high performance for its potential fulfillment of the need for achievement (Hollenbeck & Klein, 1987). Promotion-focused employees tend to be less sensitive to resource-losing facets than prevention-focused employees (Appelt & Higgins, 2010), and promotion-focused ones also tend to perceive higher levels of benefits associated with high job performance.

The results of our study and its implications for future research must be viewed in light of the study's limitations. First, our data were collected via self-report, which may result in common method bias. To reduce common method bias, we applied some procedural remedies suggested by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff (2012). In particular, the questionnaires were anonymous and we collected data at different points in time. We also conducted Harman's one-factor test to evaluate the extent of the common method problem (Schaller et al., 2015). In addition, it has been suggested by Schriesheim and DeNisi (1981) and others that the testing of moderators is, in itself, a partial control for this bias. Nevertheless, future research should replicate the study using data from different sources to minimize common method bias.

A second limitation is that we theorized that employees' evaluation of the benefits of exhibiting a certain level of job performance tends to differ widely, and we argued that this effect depends upon their varying psychological bonds to their current occupations and service length. Because we didn't actually measure the resources attached to high performance and employees' evaluation of those resources, future research is needed that explicitly examines the specific resources generated from task performance and citizenship behavior.

Finally, we did not obtain enough long-term employees to include the third stage of organizational tenure. According to a 10-year analysis done by Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016), millennials (aged 25–34) only work with their current employers for an average of 3 years, while employees between the ages of 55 and 64 have an average organizational tenure of 10.4 years. Thus, future research is needed on employees in the maintenance stage. Finally, since globalization and economic conditions have made job hopping a more common phenomenon, it would be interesting to try to determine the inflection point at which people consider making a move in order to provide suggestions for preperformance and career path management.


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