In this paper we explain the crucial role played by the processes of internalized motivation in the development of organizational commitment. Our research not only shows that the idealized influence transformational leadership style is causally linked to organizational commitment, but also that an internalization process of motivation operates as an explanatory causal mechanism. We focus on two forms of motivation: identified motivation and intrinsic motivation, which are associated with the internalization process and are closest to self-values. Based on recent findings concerning the positive behavioral outcomes of normative and affective commitment, we modeled organizational commitment as a formative construct consisting of normative and affective commitment forms. Data was gathered from an Australian manufacturing organization in early 2014. 89 responses were received. Our findings show that both intrinsic and identified motivations have a significant effect on the development of willing organizational commitment. In our model the relationship between leadership idealized influence and employee intrinsic motivation was totally mediated by identified motivation. This finding highlights the importance of the internalization process of motivation, and articulates its role in explaining the causal link between idealized influence leadership style and employee organizational commitment.

1. Introduction

It is a common place observation that organizations benefit from the committed behavior of employees (Meyer, Stanley and Parfyonova 2012; Nohria, Joyce and Robertson 2003; Kim and Mauborgne 2005; Mastrangelo, Eddy and Lorenzet 2004). Unfortunately, however, some employees engage in unwilling and begrudging cooperation rather than commitment, and thereby sabotage the organization. Ideally, senior management are able to staff organizations with employees who are characterized as good ‘organizational citizens’ (Meyer, Stanley and Parfyonova 2012 and Riketta 2002), who go beyond their formal job description to behave in ways that promote the effectiveness of the organization. Through a process which we will thoroughly explicate in this paper, committed employees internalize and identify with the values of the organization.

Given the desirability of organizational citizenship, which is an outcome of organizational commitment, it is not surprising that a substantial and significant body of research has developed around the notion of ‘organizational commitment’, because employees who are committed to their organization are more likely to be good organizational citizens. In their attempt to consolidate that research, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) have constructed an integrative definition of commitment which is meant to distinguish it from related concepts such as motives and attitudes: “commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets. As such, commitment is distinguishable from exchange-based forms of motivation and from target-relevant attitudes, and can influence
behavior even in the absence of extrinsic motivation or positive attitudes” (Meyer and Herscovitch 2001, p.301). Defining organizational commitment is, however, not the same as understanding where it comes from.

A significant research gap has been noted by Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), who acknowledge that considerable work remains to be done before we arrive at a clear understanding of the underlying mechanisms which develop organizational commitment in employees. They note that “investigators commonly examine correlations between commitment and potential antecedent variables without much consideration of why these variables should influence commitment (i.e., without identifying underlying mechanisms)” (p. 315) or without consideration of interaction effect between different forms of commitment (Meyer, Stanley and Parfyonova 2012). To address this problem, they recommend that future research should focus on antecedent variables which are chosen for their relevance to the processes outlined in their general model: “that is, rather than appearing like a “laundry list” as Reichers (1985) described it, research pertaining to antecedents of commitment could be organized according to their relevance to underlying mechanisms (Meyer and Herscovitch 2001).

We have taken that recommendation seriously, and the originality of our paper lies in the way we have asked ourselves which possible antecedents are most relevant to the processes outlined by Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) and Meyer, Stanley and Parfyonova (2012). Our answer incorporates the logic employed by Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) but significantly extends upon their general model, thereby making a theoretical contribution. In brief, we propose that a set of charismatic leadership behaviors associated with Transformational Leadership (behaviors categorized as ‘idealized influence’) constitute the most relevant antecedent variables which develop affective organizational commitment within employees, through the mechanism of internalized motivation. We also propose that the development of identification which links charismatic leadership with affective organizational commitment crucially depends upon a particular form of motivation: internalized motivation.

The paper is organized as follows. We turn first to a broader analysis and exposition of the literature, from which four hypotheses are developed. We then detail and explain our methodology, including sampling procedures, measures, and the construction of our two-stage structural model. After analysing our data, we then provide a discussion of ways in which our findings support our contention that employees who experience idealized influence when interacting with their managers are more likely to embrace the values underlying management assigned tasks as cohering with their self-values and thereby are more likely to experience self-determination when performing such tasks.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Given that commitment has been conceptualized as a force that binds a person to an organization, we need to inquire into the nature of that force. Clearly, the force referred to by Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) is psychological, not physical, which means that mind-sets are involved. To be committed to an organization is to have a certain mind-set toward it. In their consolidation of previous research, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) identify three commitment mind-sets: desire (affective commitment); obligation (normative commitment); and perceived cost of leaving (continuance commitment) (p. 316). Importantly for our purposes, affective commitment has been found to correlate most strongly with organizational citizenship (Meyer, Stanley and Parfyonova 2012).
What then, is the mind-set of affective commitment, and what antecedent conditions foster that mind-set? To experience an affect is to experience an emotion, a feeling, a desire – to be moved in some way. It follows that the affective mind-set is one in which employees feel an attachment to an organization and consequently want to support that organization: want to assist it to flourish. We can take this reasoning further with the observation that to be attached to a person or an organization is to care about it, to identify with it, and to agree with its goals, its purpose, and its values. So what antecedent conditions are most likely to produce the affective mind-set? There are good reasons to believe that the answer is: the set of behaviors that constitute transformational leadership (TL) (Herold et al. 2008; Jackson, Meyer and Wang 2013 and Kovyanic et al. 2012).

The already established causal links between TL and positive outcomes for organizations and employees are numerous, and include: employee sense of well-being, employee discretionary behavior, organizational citizenship behavior, productivity, and organizational commitment (Arthur and Hardy 2014; Krishnan 2012; Muchiri, Cooksey and Walumbwa 2012 and Song et al. 2012). In this study we have focused on the idealized influence component of transformational leadership, which involves communication of values. Previous research has established that leaders who effectively communicate the collective mission of the organization with their subordinates and talk about their values and beliefs explicitly, gain their employees’ trust and respect and managers who enact a transformational leadership style are more likely to encourage their people to perform beyond their job description (Srithongrung 2011). We therefore propose Hypothesis 1:

**H1: Idealized influence (behavior) has a strong positive effect on organizational commitment.**

In measuring and modelling organizational commitment, we employed the notion of commitment profiles introduced by Meyer, Stanley and Parfyonova (2012), given their substantial contribution to the development of organizational commitment theory, which acknowledges that employees with high levels of normative and affective commitment are more likely to be associated with organizational positive outcomes. Therefore we have approached willing organizational commitment through the development of a formative construct consisting of normative and affective commitment.

Our analysis now raises a new question: what mechanism or mechanisms explain how the idealized influence component of transformational leadership produces the affective mindset, and thereby develops organizational commitment? To identify that mechanism, we turn briefly to an exposition of self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci 2000). A key feature of self-determination theory is its recognition that variations in motivation can be aligned along a continuum. At one extreme is external regulation: individuals act for the sole purpose of achieving a reward or avoiding a punishment. Mid-way along the continuum is introjected regulation, which refers to the partial internalisation of extrinsic motives. Next is identified regulation, which refers to behavior conditioned by an individuals’ identification with the values, accepting them as their own. Finally, integrated regulation refers to identification with the values and meanings of the activity to the extent that it becomes fully internalised and autonomous (Ryan and Deci 2000).

Through the internalization process, regulations that are external to individual selves, transform to regulations which are close to individual’s inner values – but internalization has received little attention from organizational researchers. This could be because of limitations experienced in previous attempts to measure internalization in empirical organizational studies. To address those limitations, the current study has developed a model which
enabled the authors to capture the internalization process by studying the mediation role played by identified motivation within the relationships between intrinsic motivation, transformational leadership, and organizational commitment.

We also contend that employees who experience idealized influence when interacting with their managers are more likely to embrace the values underlying management assigned tasks as cohering with their self-values (which is an outcome of the internalization process) and thereby are more likely to experience self-determination when performing such tasks. Therefore we propose hypothesis 2a and hypothesis 2b:

**H2a:** Idealized influence (behavior) has a strong positive effect on identified motivation.

**H2b:** Idealized influence (behavior) has a strong positive effect on intrinsic motivation.

Finally, our review of the literature leads us to Hypothesis 3:

**H3:** Identified motivation mediates the relationship between idealized influence behavior and intrinsic motivation.

### 3. Methodology and Model

#### 3.1 Participants and Procedures

Data was collected from a private machinery manufacturing organization in Victoria Australia. Questionnaires were distributed to all levels of the organization. 89 people returned the completed surveys. In distribution of the questionnaires non-proportional quota sampling which is the non-probabilistic analogue of stratified random sampling played the central role to ensure the heterogeneity of the representative samples (Collis and Hussey 2009). Three steps of data screening, validation of the measurement model and evaluation of structural model were undertaken in data analysis as recommended by Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt (2011). Data sets were visually inspected to identify and correct errors. Furthermore IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22 was employed to detect missing data, unengaged responses and to test for violations of statistical assumptions such as normality (Pallant 2011). Analytical tool of Partial Least Squares, structural equation modelling, was employed to assess the measurement and structural models.

#### 3.2 Measures

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire developed by Bass and Avolio (1995) was adapted to measure idealized influence (Behavior) in the organization. We used the 12-item questionnaire to measure employee types of and levels of motivation at work (Gagne et al. 2008). We also used the 9-item version of the scale originally developed by Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) to quantify the commitment of employees to their organizations. For all three instruments, responses selected from a 5-point scale; 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=neither Agree nor Disagree, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

#### 3.3 Model

To base our model on the notion of commitment profiles rather than single forms of commitment we employed partial least squares, Smart PLS 3 (Ringle, Wende, and Becker 2014), variance-based structural equation modelling (SEM). The use of PLS, which has been introduced as the most suitable analysis method for the models with complex formative constructs (Roldán & Sánchez-Franco 2012), enabled us to develop our dependent variable,
organizational commitment, as a formative construct comprising affective and normative commitment. PLS-SEM is proposed as preferred method by Hair et al. (2013) when the objective of the research is explanation of the variance. PLS maximises the explained variance in the dependent constructs (Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt 2011). PLS-SEM as a method based on causal-predictive analysis (Anderson and Gerbing 1988) is particularly appropriate for this study which wants to predict the significance of relationship between idealized influence and organizational commitment and is focused on exploring the mediation role of need satisfaction and motivation processes on this relationship. Our higher-order construct, which is formed of two first-order constructs of normative and affective commitment, is the endogenous variable in our structural model. Therefore we applied the two-stage approach introduced by Becker, Klein and Wetzels (2012) in our analysis.

3.4 Measurement Model Estimation

We assessed the reliability and validity of our structural model including the first-order reflective constructs of affective and normative commitment: all individual indicators are loaded on their relevant constructs with a factor loading of well above 0.70 (Figure 1) which demonstrates the reliability of the indicators (Roldán and Sánchez-Franco 2012). Construct reliability of our model was supported by Cronbach’s alpha values of 0.757 and greater along with composite reliability of 0.860 and greater for all constructs. We also evaluated convergent validity of the model and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values of 0.673 and greater for all constructs has provided evidence for convergent validity of our model (Roldán and Sánchez-Franco 2012) (Table 1).

**Figure 1: Factor Loadings**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs/Indicators</th>
<th>Loading</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Composite Reliability</th>
<th>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identified Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDM-a</td>
<td>0.832</td>
<td>0.825</td>
<td>0.896</td>
<td>0.741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDM-b</td>
<td>0.902</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDM-c</td>
<td>0.845</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.850</td>
<td>0.909</td>
<td>0.770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INM-a</td>
<td>0.868</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INM-b</td>
<td>0.844</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INM-c</td>
<td>0.918</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.816</td>
<td>0.890</td>
<td>0.731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIB-a</td>
<td>0.874</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIB-b</td>
<td>0.909</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIB-c</td>
<td>0.776</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.757</td>
<td>0.860</td>
<td>0.673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC-a</td>
<td>0.832</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC-b</td>
<td>0.833</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC-c</td>
<td>0.796</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.849</td>
<td>0.909</td>
<td>0.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC-a</td>
<td>0.822</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC-b</td>
<td>0.888</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC-c</td>
<td>0.918</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 demonstrates that all square roots of Average Variance Extracted of the constructs are higher than their correlations with other constructs, which supports discriminant validity of the constructs in our model (Fornell and Larcker’s 1981). Cross loadings of the indicators have also been evaluated and highest loadings of indicators on their constructs provided more evidence for discriminant validity of the constructs.
Table 2: Discriminant Validity Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Affective Commitment</th>
<th>Idealized Influence Behavior</th>
<th>Identified Motivation</th>
<th>Intrinsic Motivation</th>
<th>Normative Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
<td>0.820</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence Behavior</td>
<td>0.635</td>
<td>0.855</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified Motivation</td>
<td>0.647</td>
<td>0.444</td>
<td>0.860</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation</td>
<td>0.603</td>
<td>0.302</td>
<td>0.638</td>
<td>0.877</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Commitment</td>
<td>0.602</td>
<td>0.573</td>
<td>0.548</td>
<td>0.500</td>
<td>0.877</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The diagonal element (in bold) are the square root of variance shared between the constructs and their measures (AVE). Non-diagonal elements are latent variable correlations.

3.5 Structural Model

Applying commitment profiles notion (Meyer, Stanley and Parfyonova 2012) we introduced the target construct of organizational commitment in our model which is a formative construct, formed of two reflective constructs of normative and affective commitment. According to Becker, Klein and Wetzels (2012) the most suitable method for a reflective-formative model with a formative endogenous construct is a two-stage approach. Therefore we employed the two-stage approach in which the basic model with two first-order constructs (Figure 2a) was run and latent variable scores were extracted to replace the two first-order constructs of normative and affective commitment with the higher-order construct (Figure 2b) of organizational commitment. Coefficient of determination R² value of 0.662 for the target construct of our model supported the predictive validity of our model (Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt 2012)
To evaluate hypothesis 1 we measured the total effect of idealized influence behavior on willing organizational commitment and hypothesis 1 was supported by the strong effect size (0.459***) of idealized influence behavior on organizational commitment.
We also tested the total effect size of idealized influence on identified motivation and intrinsic motivation by applying a bootstrapping procedure with subsamples of 4000 (Hair et al. 2013). 89 cases were selected with 5000 subsamples and the no sign changes option to measure the significance of the path coefficients (Henseler, Ringle and Sinkovics 2009). Strong effect size values of 0.458*** between idealized influence and identified motivation and 0.305*** between idealized influence and intrinsic motivation substantiated hypothesis 2a and hypothesis 2b.

We found that the significant relationship between idealized influence and intrinsic motivation decreased to the non-significant relationship of 0.024 with introduction of mediation effect of identified motivation. This finding provided evidence for hypothesis 3 which supports the notion of internalization in motivation process (Table 3). These results, supporting full mediation effect of identified motivation, revealed that employees who perceive their managers leadership style as idealized influence, experience identification with the values and goals of their organization and internalize those values and goals as their own values.

Table 3: Analysis of Mediation Effects of Identified Motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Effect</th>
<th>Direct Effect</th>
<th>Indirect Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence Behavior</td>
<td>0.305***</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>0.281***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01

4. Discussion

Our findings support the contention that employees who experience idealized influence when interacting with their managers are more likely to embrace the values underlying management assigned tasks as cohering with their self-values and thereby are more likely to experience self-determination when performing such tasks. In effect then, organizationally committed employees have come to identify with the organization’s values, accepting them as their own. More needs to be said however, about how that internalization process occurs. We believe that internalization and identification occurs when employees experience admiration of their leaders and agreement with the views and values of those leaders – which coheres with experiencing idealized influence. Such experiences emerge in accordance with the difference between leaders who explain what tasks have to be done, and leaders who explain why those tasks have to be done: particularly when the explanation of why appeals to a value-laden higher purpose. As (Herold et al. 2008) put it, transformational leaders provide followers with meaning for their work by articulating a compelling vision and mission for the organization and by encouraging followers to exert themselves toward accomplishing that higher vision.

If identification with the values and goals espoused by a leader is central to the internalization of motivation, then how convincingly the leader explains those values and goals will matter crucially to whether employees can agree with and accept those values and goals as their
own. Equally important to internalization however, is how employees experience the leader as a person. As Mastrangelo, Eddy and Lorenzet (2004) point out; a leader’s message is mediated by how followers experience that leader as a person: the personal dimension of leadership carries the professional message of leadership (Mastrangelo, Eddy and Lorenzet 2004, p. 442). If employees experience their leader as untrustworthy or uncaring, then they are significantly less likely to agree with and internalize that leader's views and values.

5. Conclusion

The originality of our paper lies in our identification of the antecedents which are most relevant to the development of organizational commitment, and in our uncovering of the underlying mechanisms involved in that process. The knowledge we contribute to the theory of organizational commitment is our extension of the general model previously proposed by Meyer et al (2012). Our findings also have practical implications because we have empirically identified and explained the need for workplace leaders to not only explain to employees what needs to be done, but also why those tasks have to be done. We do acknowledge however, that there are limitations to the knowledge we have created.

There is an unavoidable element of speculation in our analysis. Our survey data supports our hypotheses concerning the importance of idealized influence, identified motivation, and the internalization process in the development of organizational commitment; but that data does not provide sufficiently fine-grained information from which to construct a comprehensive and detailed theory. We have a model, but do not yet have a theory. To fully explain the antecedents and mechanisms which underlie the development of affective organizational commitment we need to extend upon the current investigation and engage in an interpretive research project based upon qualitative data.

A second concern we have with our paper is its focus on hypothesis testing through quantitative analysis of aggregated data: that approach has prevented the exploration of counter examples. Qualitative research would enable us to interview and seek to understand individuals who have not developed affective organizational commitment even though their colleagues in the same organization, with the same leader, have developed affective organizational commitment. Sometimes researchers can learn as much or more from attempting to understand a typical individuals as they can from understanding those who are typical. This is particularly important when the object of investigation is an outcome of objectively identified behaviors intersecting with the subjective perceptions and mind-sets of persons, many of whom bring deeply embedded agendas and values into organizational situations.

References


Afshari & Gibson