

A STUDY OF THE INTENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANTS TO CONTINUE EMPLOYMENT

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## CHAPTER I: THE STUDY

### Introduction

Many organizations recognize that employee retention is a valued investment. Employees are vital not only in that they stay with their organization but also in that they produce results. Supervisors constantly strive to motivate employees to perform consistently at their peak. Researchers have contended that the key to employee retention, increased involvement and high motivation is to increase the level of organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990a; D. Caldwell & O'Reilly III, 1990; Gonzalez & Guillen, 2008; Meyer & Allen, 1987a; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982).

Three general themes of organizational commitment have emerged -- affective attachment, perceived costs and obligation (Allen & Meyer, 1990a; Mowday, et al., 1982; Turner Parish, Cadwallader, & Busch, 2008). Employees with strong affective commitment remain because they *want* to do so. Those with strong continuance commitment stay because they *need* to because of the perceived costs, and those with strong normative commitment stay because they feel they *ought* to do so (Allen & Meyer, 1990a; Meyer & Allen, 1987b; Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, & Jackson, 1989; Turner Parish, et al., 2008).

This study seeks to determine the relationship between career stages (age, organizational tenure and positional tenure) and the three-component commitment levels (Affective Commitment Scale – ACS, Continuance Commitment Scale – CCS

and Normative Commitment Scale – NCS) and the ability of this relationship to predict the intent to stay of presidential assistants in both private and public higher education institutions in the United States. Commitment theory provided the theoretical framework for the study, with the Three-Component Model (TCM) of organizational commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) as the measurement. This study includes a review of the theoretical and research literature that has relevance to organizational commitment as well as the model this study builds.

### Statement of the Problem

Organizational commitment has emerged as a central concept of employee attitudes and behaviors in the organizational psychology, organizational behavior and human resource management studies (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday, 1998; Mowday, et al., 1982; Mowday & Sutton, 1993). Attitudes and behaviors of employees associated with their intent to stay employed have been the major thrust of research. These attitudes and behaviors, known as the psychological linkage between employee and organization, have been quantified using various scales and measures. Such studies have shown that employee attitudes and behaviors vary over time spent on the job (Gonzalez & Guillen, 2008; Mowday, et al., 1982; Porter & Lawler III, 1968; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974; Steers & Mowday, 1987; Tomas & Manuel, 2008). As well, many studies pointed out that career stages predicted the relationships between work attitudes and behaviors (Allen & Meyer, 1990a; McElroy, Morrow, & Wardlow, 1999; Meyer & Allen, 1987b; Morrow & McElroy, 1987). However, other studies point out that the relationship between career stage

variables and work attitudes may be weak and may have been overstated (Morrow & McElroy, 1987).

The term *career stage* suggests a determined period; some researchers have treated age and tenure (organizational and positional) as continuous variables to define career stages. Career stage variables have been correlated in several studies; however, they were not identical constructs (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). Thus, analyses were needed to isolate the independent effects of age, organizational tenure and positional tenure. As well, since commitment to an organization can take multiple forms (Allen & Meyer, 1990a; Meyer, et al., 1993; Meyer, Bobocel, & Allen, 1991; Meyer, et al., 1989), career stages should be examined as predictors of the three-components of commitment on college and university presidential assistants in higher education institutions, both public and private, in the United States.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to examine the three-components of organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative) relative to the career stages (age, organizational tenure and positional tenure) of college and university presidential assistants in both public and private higher education institutions in the United States. This study will examine the likelihood of career stages (age, organizational tenure and positional tenure) to predict the commitment levels (affective, continuance and normative) which presidential assistants report. Moreover, the relative contributions isolated each career stage to each of the three-components of commitment for examination.

## Research Objectives

### *Research Questions*

This study will focus on the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between career stages and the three-components of commitment of college and university presidential assistants in both public and private higher education institutions in the United States?
2. Do career stages predict the commitment of presidential assistants to stay employed with their current institutions?

### *Hypotheses*

The following null hypotheses (Ho) will guide this study:

- Ho1: There is no significant relationship between career stages (age, organizational tenure and positional tenure) and three-component commitment levels (affective, continuance and normative commitments) of college and university presidential assistants in both public and private higher education institutions in the United States.
- Ho2: Career stages do not significantly predict the commitment of college and university presidential assistants to stay employed with their current institution.

### Theoretical Perspectives

Organizational commitment has been conceptualized and measured in various manners. This research takes the perspective of commitment based on a three-component model, incorporating the major conceptualizations described in the literature (Allen & Meyer, 1990b; Meyer & Allen, 1984, 1987b). Specifically, the Three-Component Model (TCM) Employee Commitment proposes that employees remain

with an organization because of their commitment to one of three approaches. These include: (1) *desire*, which results in an emotional commitment to the organization (affective commitment), (2) determination that the *costs* of disassociation with the organization to be too high (continuance commitment), and (3) the oppression of loyalty or feelings of *obligation* to remain with the organization (normative commitment).

Literature suggests that affective commitment developed because of work experiences, which increased the employees' feelings of challenge and comfort in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Meyer & Allen, 1987b; Meyer, Allen, & Gellatly, 1990; Meyer, et al., 1993). The employees felt that they had found their niche that benefited both them and the organization. Continuance commitment, on the other hand, developed as a cost factor analysis. The parameters of this commitment took into consideration the amount of the employees' investment in the organization for the position and the degree of loss encountered if they pursued other employment alternatives. It was argued in the literature that the antecedents of normative commitment, including the employees' moral and ethical standards, were overwhelmingly strong which influenced them to remain in their current position (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Meyer & Allen, 1984, 1991; Meyer, et al., 1990; Meyer, Srinivas, Lal, & Topolnytsky, 2007). Thus, it was believed that this strong stance of feeling obligated based on loyalty kept the employee committed to the organization (Heere & Dickson, 2008).

## Overview of the Methodology

### *Research Design*

The data were gathered through an online survey. Ritter and Sue (2007b) stated that an online survey solves many of the problems associated with traditional survey methods which have a known limited population. The online survey allows prompt responses directly from the identified population, which was specifically invited to participate through an online email.

### *Population, Participants and Sample*

The population defined for this study was all of the college and university presidential assistants in four-year degree-granting programs in both public and private higher education institutions in the United States. Participants were those who voluntarily chose to complete the online survey instrument. Those who met all the criteria of holding a position as a college and university presidential assistant in either public or private higher education institution, in the United States, and who successfully completed the online survey were defined as the sample of this study.

### Questionnaire Measures

*Organizational Commitment.* Organizational commitment was assessed using the Affective (ACS), Continuance (CCS), and Normative Commitment (NCS) Scales of the TCM, each of which is made up of eight items (Allen & Meyer, 1990a) (see Appendix D).

*Career Stage Variables.* Respondents were asked their age, how long they have worked for their organization and how long they have been in their current position in the organization.



### *Data Collection*

An online survey, patterned after Dillman (2007), was used to collect data from participants. All survey responses were collected in a Concurrent Versions System (CVS) file and the database management system housed on the Oklahoma State University server managed the collected data from the survey website. Data collected through the online questionnaire were downloaded into an Excel file and then imported into SPSS for Windows version 16.0. Each variable existed in SPSS as numerically coded data.

### *Analysis*

Following Allen and Meyer's (1993) division of career stage groups, presidential assistants were divided on the basis of three divisions: (1) age (< 31 years, 31 – 44 years, > 44 years), (2) organizational tenure (< 2 years, 2 – 10 years, > 10 years) and (3) positional tenure (< 2 years, 2 – 10 years, > 10 years). The means for the ACS, CCS and NCS scores of the presidential assistants across each career stage were found and presented. As well, summaries of the results of multiple regression analyses were presented, comparing each commitment component across each career stage.

### Significance of the Study

This study examined the three-component assessment of work attitudes and behaviors across career stages of presidential assistants in both public and private four-year degree-granting higher education institutions in the United States. The knowledge gleaned from this study will contribute to the understanding of organizational commitment of intent to stay within a career stage context, using a population for which there were limited studies. If particular organizational

commitments of presidential assistants over career stages could be identified, then optimization of effective work attitudes and behaviors could be applicable. If a presidential assistant's executive could identify his or her organizational commitment at a particular career stage, then the proper use of motivation to produce effective work attitudes and behaviors could be applicable. Creating a more effective work environment in the office of the president as a result of the analysis from this study would benefit higher education institutions.

### Definition of Terms

Several terms used throughout this document carry meanings specific to this research as it relates to higher education. The following terms are defined to offer a common understanding between the researcher and the reader.

*Career stage variables / Career stages.* Many studies have used a number of variables to define career stage in comparison to work attitudes. This research identifies three variables of career stages: employee age, organizational tenure and positional tenure, as noted by Morrow and McElroy (1987).

*Organizational commitment.* This term refers to a psychological link between the employee and his or her organization that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996).

*President.* This person is the executive officer of a higher education institution who holds the highest administrative position on campus. These individuals were included but not limited to the president of the university system, chief executive officer, campus president or chancellor. This does not include the provost, who serves

under a president and has an office on the same campus as the presiding executive officer.

*Presidential Assistant.* This is the executive assistant to the highest executive officer in the higher education institution. This individual is recognized as the “right hand” of the president (Lingenfelter, 2001, p. 72, 2004, p. 13); however, the amount of power, authority and responsibility differ from campus to campus. In general, the primary responsibility of the presidential assistant is to manage quality image control of the president (Lingenfelter, 2004, p. 14). Whether or not this professional is considered to have line authority depends entirely upon the particular president. Fisher (1984; 1996) characterized the presidential assistant as a vice president without a portfolio because without the president the assistant has no professional existence (1984, p. 83; 1996, p. 114).

Presidential assistants’ titles include assistant to the president, assistant to the president for – *specific area*, chief of staff, executive to the president, general counsel secretary, governing board secretary, president’s personal assistant or president’s personal secretary. Many presidential assistants have specialized duties and responsibilities. Nonetheless, as a profession, presidential assistants refuse to be segmented and would rather be defined as a congenial group who assist the executive officers (NAPAHE, 2007).

*Three-components of commitment.* The TCM of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997) measurements reflect the employee’s self-reported attitude toward remaining employed with the organization. The three-components of this measurement of organizational commitment are Affective Commitment Scales (ACS), Continuance

Commitment Scales (CCS), or Normative Commitment Scales (NCS). All three-components of commitment have straightforward implications for either leaving or staying with an organization. Meyer and Allen (1988) developed ACS to measure how strongly attached to the organization the employee feels. The authors developed CCS to measure disposition of an employee's perceived cost of leaving the institution, whereas NCS was developed to measure the employee's perceived obligation to the institution. The differences between the components provide a meaningful assessment regarding the commitment of the employee to remain at the institution. Each is scored separately to identify the "commitment profile" of the employee to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

#### Delimitations and Limitations

*Delimitations.* This study focuses on presidential assistants at four-year degree-granting, private and public colleges and universities in the United States who, according to the literature, have a wide range of duties that vary from institution to institution (Fisher, 1984, 1985; Malloy, 2003; McDade, Putnam, & Miles, 1996; McDade, Putnam, & Miles, 1999; O'Reilly Jr., 2000; Quatroche, 1990). As well, the position may encompass many different titles. Despite efforts to assure an accurate and complete list of participants, it is acknowledged that it is not possible to do so.

*Limitations.* Four limitations affect the generalizability of the findings in this study. First, this study did not gather information from the clerical pool staff of the president's office or executive assistants of other senior or middle staff administrators. The study's participants were only those who the president had been given authority to represent his or her post to other stakeholders of the educational institution and to serve

as a gatekeeper to the highest executive office of the higher education institution. Second, results of this study could not be generalized beyond the stated population, presidential assistants at four-year degree-granting, private and public colleges and universities in the United States. Applications from this research may reasonably be applied to all presidential assistants who serve in higher education institutions within the United States, but caution should be applied due to the limitation of this study. Third, the findings of the study were limited to the extent that the participants were willing to report their personal attitudes and behaviors. Fourth, presidential assistants responded to the survey from their individual perceptions that included personal definitions and life experiences, which could provide socially desired answers.

#### Summary

This study is organized into five chapters. This chapter introduces the problem of organizational commitment as an emerging central concept in the study of work attitudes and behavior. The research indicates a strong correlation between organizational commitment and work attitudes and behavior. The intent of this research was to examine the extent to which career stage variables (age, organizational tenure and positional tenure) predicted organizational commitment of college and university presidential assistants in both public and private higher education institutions in the United States.

The remaining four chapters are briefly summarized. Chapter II features an analysis of literature related to this study. Information about existing knowledge of presidential assistants, the three-component model of organizational commitment and career stage variables is presented. Chapter III outlines the methodology of how the

study participants were identified and selected, as well as describes the method of data collection, survey design and data analyzed. Chapter IV provides a presentation of the data. Finally, an analysis of the data, study conclusions and suggestions for future research are presented in Chapter V.

## CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Organizational commitment has been examined extensively (Allen & Meyer, 1993; Lee, Ashford, Walsh, & Mowday, 1992; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer, et al., 1990; Meyer, et al., 2007; Mowday, 1998; Steers, Mowday, & Shapiro, 2004). A comprehensive review of the organizational commitment literature will not be presented here because of its voluminous nature. However, organizational commitment, career stages and the model (TCM) upon which this study builds upon are discussed from the theoretical and research literature that has relevance to this research.

### Concepts of Organizational Commitment and Career Stages

Literature has revealed a link between organizational commitment and several outcomes, such as absenteeism, job satisfaction and turnover (Ambrose, Arnaud, & Schminke, 2008; Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mowday, et al., 1982; Tsai, Wu, Yen, Ho, & Huang, 2005). A number of studies have suggested that career stages predicted the relationship between work attitudes and behaviors (Allen & Meyer, 1993; McElroy, Morrow, Crum, & Dooley, 1995; McElroy, et al., 1999; Morrow & McElroy, 1987). Researchers suggest that when employers could identify the type of commitment their employees held at a particular age or tenure with the organization or position then an appropriate stimulus of incentives could be initiated to increase efficiency and productivity (Gonzalez & Guillen, 2008; Mowday, et al., 1982; Porter & Lawler III, 1968; Porter, et al., 1974; Steers & Mowday, 1987; Tomas &

Manuel, 2008). However, inconsistencies and diversity of career stages have hampered the comparisons across the examined variables of work attitudes and career stages (Morrow & McElroy, 1987).

Researchers have embraced the concept that links the relationship between the employee and organization as a psychological state – both attitudinally and behaviorally. This psychological state should not be restricted to value and goal comparisons as described by either attitudinal and/or behavioral approaches; rather, the relationship is a result of the employee’s personal desire, need and/or obligation to maintain membership in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Organizational commitment has emerged as a central concept in studies in which work attitudes, behaviors and career stage variables were examined (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday, 1998; Mowday, et al., 1982; Veiga, 1973, 1983). As organizational commitment studies have developed, both theoretical and practical constructs have advanced. Many of these studies have suggested that career stages moderated the relationship between work attitudes and behaviors (Burke, 1989; Morrow & McElroy, 1987; Mount, 1984; Raelin, 1985; Rush, Peacock, & Milkovich, 1980; Slocum Jr. & Cron, 1985; Smart, 1998; Stumpf & Rabinowitz, 1981). The following section introduces a review of the theoretical and research literature, which has relevance to organizational commitment and the model upon which this study, builds on.

### Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment and its relationship with various situational characteristics studied attitudes and behaviors of employees in the last 30 years. The



focus of past research has been on the specific negative attitudes and behaviors in which dissatisfied employees engaged as a result of their commitment or lack of commitment to the organization, effect on organizational outcomes and negative consequences on employees (Judge, Hanisch, & Drankoski, 1995).

Commitment has been operationally defined as involving an employee's loyalty to the organization, his or her willingness to exert some measure of effort on behalf of the organization, the degree of his or her goal and value congruency with the organization and his or her desire to maintain membership (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). The defined link between organizational commitment and various indicators, such as absenteeism, job satisfaction and turnover, has been established in the literature (Ambrose, et al., 2008; Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mowday, et al., 1982; Tsai, et al., 2005).

Historically, attitudinal or behavioral perspectives were the two approaches that defined and measured organizational commitment. Mowday and his colleagues (Mowday, et al., 1979; Porter, et al., 1974) defined, the most commonly known perspective of the two, the attitudinal approach:

The relative strength of an individual's identification is with an involvement in a particular organization. Conceptually, three factors have characterized this relationship: a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday, et al., 1982, p. 27).

Thus, organizational commitment, from an attitudinal perspective, was a result of the employee's belief system and attitude in the employed institution. The attitudes, which an employee reveals, will reflect a "bottom-line" of how well or how poorly the treatment from the organization was perceived (Judge, et al., 1995; Kinicki, Carson, & Bohlander, 1992; Spector, 1985, 1997).

Employee attitudes have been evaluated through a variety of aspects, known as facets; these have included praise for accomplishments, medical benefits, human relations skills, coworkers, nature of the work and pay, among many others (Kinicki, et al., 1992; Spector, 1997; Spector, et al., 2007) from the construct of job satisfaction (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992). Some have referred to job satisfaction in organizational commitment a barometer of human resource management (Judge, et al., 1995).

Some to be an affective or emotional reaction to the job from the employee's evaluation of the circumstances to those desired has described job satisfaction (Cranny, et al., 1992; Locke, 1969, 1970; Spector, et al., 2007). Heider (1944, 1958) suggested that these reactions were a direct result of the employee's cognitive decisions based on (1) suffering, experiencing or being affected by others, (2) causation of circumstances or events, (3) ability or aptitude of the individual, (4) the will of the individual, (5) the desire of the individual, (6) the individual's sentiments, (7) the need to belong and connect and (8) an obligation of morality.

In contrast, the behavioral approach, based on the work of Becker (1960), defines organizational commitment as "a structural phenomenon which occurs as a result of individual – organizational transactions and alterations in side-bets or

investments over time” (Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972, p. 556). The individual gambles or invests himself or herself through action into the organization, believing in a positive return over time. Thus, the employee analyzes the personal investment placed into the institution in order to find value of commitment.

In the behavioral approach, research has focused on identifying conditions under which a behavior was repeated and the effects of such behavior on attitude change (O'Reilly III & Chatman, 1986). This approach measures the totality of person-job fit, person-job interaction and job performance as the organizational commitment of an employee through behavioral responses. The concept of person-job fit attempts to link individual characteristics and particular aspects of employee response to the workplace (Ambrose, et al., 2008; D. Caldwell & O'Reilly III, 1990). The person-job interaction examines the results of person-job fit to modify work performance and effectiveness of the employee (Dawis, 1992; Lofquist & Dawis, 1969; D. J. Weiss, Dawis, Lofquist, & England, 1967; H. M. Weiss, 2002). The job performance examines the mechanism of the workplace and the interaction between employees, the product or work and coworkers (Hammer & Avgar, 2005; Hulin, 1991; Judge, Bono, Thoresen, & Patton, 2001).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, researchers of the various definitions and measures of organizational commitment combined these two perspectives – specifically, the inclusion of the affective commitment and the perceived cost commitment of the attitudinal and behavioral approaches. This combination resulted in the conceptualization of an organizational commitment model, known as the Three-Component Model (TCM) of organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer,

1990a). Developed by leading researchers Natalie Allen and Allen Meyer from University of Western Ontario, TCM expands the incorporation of both attitudinal and behavioral approaches to a committed mindset. This particular approach embraces the concept that links the relationship between the employee and the organization as a psychological state (i.e., feelings and/or beliefs). Allen and Meyer contend that the attitudinal and/or behavioral approaches which described this psychological state should not be restricted to value and goal congruence (Mowday, et al., 1982); rather, the relationship reflected a desire, need and/or obligation to maintain membership in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Allen and Meyer (1990a) identified this relationship as a construct of commitments, which they labeled as affective, continuance and normative commitment. Allen & Meyer's (1993) construct emphasizes that an employee remains with an organization because of: (1) *affective commitment* or desire to remain, (2) *continuance commitment* or recognition that the costs associated with leaving would be high, and/or (3) *normative commitment* or feeling of obligation to remain.

Mowday and et al. (1982) believed the defining premise of organizational commitment was that an employee (1) felt a strong attachment and belonging with the organization; (2) believed in the goals and values of the organization; and (3) possessed a willingness to put forth effort on behalf of the organization. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) explained affective commitment as “a mind-set characterized by a desire to follow a course of action” (p. 308). Public agencies view this commitment as very important. Affective commitment explains more than 27% of the variation in a public employee's commitment to the organization (Reid, Riemenschneider, Allen, &

Armstrong, 2008). Mowday and Porter, with their colleagues, characterized affective commitment as a strong indicator of an employee's involvement in and membership with the organization (Mowday, et al., 1982; Mowday, et al., 1979; Mowday & Sutton, 1993; Porter, et al., 1974).

Prior to TCM, the most commonly used measure of an employee's affective commitment to the organization was the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ, see Mowday, et al., 1979). The OCQ was a 15-item scale designed to assess the employee's acceptance of the organization's values, the willingness to exert effort and the desire to maintain membership in the organization. Mowday and his colleagues provided strong evidence for the internal consistency, test-retest reliability and convergent, discriminant and predictive validity of the OCQ instrument, which have been built upon (Lee, et al., 1992; Mowday, 1998; Mowday, et al., 1982; Mowday, et al., 1979; Mowday & Sutton, 1993; Steers, et al., 2004).

Continuance commitment was believed to be developed on the basis of an "economic rationale" (Meyer & Allen, 1984; Stevens, Beyer, & Trice, 1978). The commitment was perceived as continuing an action after the employee considered the perceived costs associated with termination. Becker (1960) described the commitment as a disposition to engage in "consistent lines of activity" (p. 33) resulting in the accumulation of "side-bets" that would be lost if the activity were discontinued (Meyer & Allen, 1984). As an example, Becker used a man who bets a friend that he will not pay more than his first offer for a house. To pay more then would result in a substantial loss, the possibility of which commits him to his initial bid (Meyer & Allen, 1984). To state it in a different way, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), explained that "individuals

can become committed to a course of action because of the perceived cost of failing to do so” (p. 308). Thus, a perceived lack of alternatives may have intensified the perceived cost of leaving.

Several different measures were developed to assess continuance commitment; however, each had its problems. For example, Ritzer and Trice (1969) and Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972) developed measures which respondents identified as various inducements that would result in their termination with the organization (e.g., increases in pay, status, freedom and promotional opportunity upon remaining with the organization). Other researchers challenged whether these measures truly reflected a perceived cost-induced commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1984; Stebbins, 1970). Results indicated that when the employee scored high in both ACS and CCS, the employee was unwilling to leave the organization despite the availability or attractiveness of alternative employment.

Normative commitment, the least common but equally viable approach, was developed from the generational emphasis on loyalty to an employer as an obligation to remain with the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990a, 1993; Meyer & Allen, 1991). This loyalty perspective was the result of the individual’s belief that to remain was an obligation of the right and/or moral thing to do (Marsh & Mannari, 1977; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Wiener, 1982).

Marsh and Mannari (1977) developed a four-item measure of lifetime commitment which examined the employee’s intention to remain with the organization until retirement. The internal consistency estimate of coefficient alpha for this scale was 0.38 for all employees. Meyer and Allen (1991) questioned the certainty of this

explanation for the employee's intention to remain employed or whether there were more influencing factors which were hidden and unknown.

Wiener and Vardi (1980) developed a three-item scale to measure normative commitment. Respondents' scores indicated the extent they believed individuals should be loyal to their organizations, make sacrifices on the organization's behalf and not criticize the organization. The internal consistency was 0.60 for coefficient alpha; however, no psychometric properties of the scale were reported.

Development of career stages was a direct result of an attempt to measure organizational commitment. Through such construct developments, researchers have attempted to treat age, organizational tenure and positional tenure as continuous variables to define career stages (Morrow & McElroy, 1987). Through the development of career stages, many researchers have advocated one independent variable over another as an operational definition of career stage; however, the advocated variables were not identical constructs (Table 1). For instance, the criterion Age has been divided into at least five different categories, and organizational tenure and positional tenure both have been divided into at least two different categories.

Researchers have examined individual differences of career stages (i.e., age, organizational tenure and positional tenure) correlated to organizational commitment. These studies have attempted to isolate the independent variables and examine each separately (Allen & Meyer, 1993). Thus, through the development of these constructs, the career stage variables have been correlated in several studies with researchers advocating one over another as an operational definition for career stage (Meyer, et al., 1993; Morrow & McElroy, 1987).

Three major perspectives have emerged. In the first perspective, the use of age to define career stages was advocated (D. T. Hall & Nougaim, 1968; T. Hall & Mansfield, 1975; Rabinowitz & Hall, 1981; Rush, et al., 1980; Slocum Jr. & Cron, 1985; Veiga, 1973, 1983). In the second perspective, the use of categorical stages, such as occupational, organizational or positional tenure and/or the combination of tenures, was advocated (Katz, 1978, 1980; Stumpf & Rabinowitz, 1981). In still another perspective, the concept that career stages needed to be inclusive of age and categorical stages was advocated (Allen & Meyer, 1990a; Gould, 1979; Gould & Hawkins, 1978; Morrow & McElroy, 1987).

Age has been the most commonly employed operationalization of career stages and has a more expansive empirical research base upon which to draw (McElroy, et al., 1995; McElroy, et al., 1999; Veiga, 1983). Three post-entry career stages were suggested based on Levinson et al. (1978) four seasons of a man's life – *getting into the world, settling down, becoming one's own man, and midlife transition* – or Super's (1957) theory of career stages – *biosocial life cycles, work/career cycles and family or procreation cycles*. The categorical stages were broad enough to encompass different work experiences but functional with age and psychological concerns (e.g., Rush, et al., 1980; Stumpf & Rabinowitz, 1981). Unfortunately, these perspectives did not always appear to coincide with the reality of a corporate career (Veiga, 1983). International research argued that a contributing factor could have been the workforce has aged and the labor force has declined which has encouraged the older workers to extend years in the workforce (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006;



Vodopivec & Dolenc, 2008). This study has subdivided age into five divisions: < 31 years; 31 – 40 years; 41 – 50 years; 51 – 60 years and > 60 years.

Table 1

*Operationalizations of Career Stage*

Criterion for defining career stage	Time frames used	Career stage labels	Utilizers and sample
Age	20-33	Early career	Hall & Mansfield, 1975 (Research scientists); <sup>a</sup>
	34-49	Mid career	Rabinowitz & Hall, 1981 (Mixed public sector); <sup>b</sup>
	≥50	Late career	Raelin, 1985 (Professionals) <sup>c</sup>
Age	≤30	Trial	Gould, 1979 (Managers & administrative employees, public sector); <sup>d</sup>
	31-44	Stabilization	Slocum & Cron, 1985 (Salespeople);
	≥45	Maintenance	Morrow & McElroy, 1987 (Mixed public sector)
Age	25-29	Establishment	Hall & Nougaim, 1968 (Managers, private sector)
	30-44	Advancement	
	45-65	Maintenance	
Age	29-37	Corporate learning stage	Veiga, 1973, 1983 (Managers, private sector)
	38-55	Corporate maturity	
	56-64	Preretirement/gold watch	
Age	20-29	Getting into adult world	Rush, Peacock & Milkovich, 1980 (Mixed public sector)
	30-34	Settling down	
	35-39	Becoming one's own man	
	40-45	Midlife transition	
Occupational/ professional tenure	≤2	Establishment	Stumpf & Rabinowitz, 1981 (Faculty); Mount, 1984 (Managers)
	>2 to ≤10	Advancement	
	>10	Maintenance	
Organizational tenure	≤2	Establishment	Gould & Hawkins, 1978 (Mixed public sector); Morrow & McElroy, 1987
	>2 to ≤10	Advancement	
	>10	Maintenance	
Postional tenure	11 frames	Not labeled	Katz, 1978 (Government employees)
Postional tenure	≤2	Orientation	Morrow & McElroy, 1987
	>2 to ≤10	Growth	
	>10	Plateau	

<sup>a</sup> Hall and Mansfield (1975) also report data on age groups of 20-29, 30-39, 40-49 and 50+

<sup>b</sup> Rabinowitz and Hall's (1981) time frames were all one year later.

<sup>c</sup> Raelin's (1985) time frames were 25-34, 35-44 and 45-65. Subsequent to his analysis, Raelin labels these "finding a niche," "digging in," and "entrenched."

<sup>d</sup> Gould's (1979) trial stage was defined as less than age 30.

Understanding the construct of career stages has been considered important. Morrow and McElroy (1987) noted that until agreement is achieved regarding the conceptualization of career stages, research involving career stages was apt to yield patchwork findings. If this is true, then it is imperative to conduct research which furthers the understanding of career stages.

#### Controversy over Organizational Commitment and Career Stages

As organizational commitment has emerged as a central concept in studies in which work attitudes, behaviors and career stage variables were examined (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), the definition of career stages as a moderator has engendered controversy (McElroy, et al., 1999; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). Several studies have produced divergent results. The nature of the samples studied, the analytical strategies used to test this relationship and/or the tenure and occupational level of the subjects might explain the discrepancies in the findings (Slocum Jr. & Cron, 1985). Still a substantial number of studies has indicated that further analyses were needed (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

This controversy to advocate one career stage variable over another as an operational definition for career stage of either age, organizational or positional tenure (Meyer, et al., 1993; Morrow & McElroy, 1987), which resulted from correlation studies, seems to stem from the strength of career stage variables as they relate to organizational commitment (McElroy, et al., 1999).

It has been argued that age has been the best operational definition of career stages; however, some occupations restrict employment entry to a particular age that was two to five years older than other occupations (i.e., firefighters, law enforcement officers, and politicians). Likewise, some of these occupations have the option of retirement or may have a mandatory retirement age prior to normally accepted retirement age (i.e., athletes, fashion models and law enforcement officers).

Based on Levinson's (1978) work of occupational service (i.e., organizational tenure and positional tenure), the divisions have been advocated due to the clarity defined as the four seasons of years of service (i.e., getting into the world, settling down, becoming one's own man and midlife transition). This perspective, however, does not always appear to coincide with the reality of career life or to be relevant to each occupation (Veiga, 1983). Consequently, several researchers have attempted to partition the tenures into thirds rather than quarters (Morrow & McElroy, 1987). The attempt was to pinpoint specific transitional periods that result from age-related biological changes or powerful cultural norms identified as *life crises*. Each career stage may serve as an individual characteristic which can explain differences in the behaviors and attitudes among employees in the organization, such as the employee's age, needs, expectations, abilities and behavior change (Rush, et al., 1980; Stumpf & Rabinowitz, 1981).

According to Meyer and his colleagues (2002), there was an expectation that career stages would be weakly correlated to organizational commitment due to the fact that such variables were expected to be generally low. Given the inconsistency which exists with respect to the operational definition of career stage, it should not be

surprising that comparisons across studies were tenuous at best. It has been documented that individuals differ in numerous ways even within the same categorical settings (e.g., their attitudes, beliefs, values and needs) according to their personal interests (Mount, 1984).

Several studies have suggested that affective commitment declined in the first year of employment (Meyer & Allen, 1987a, 1988; Mowday, et al., 1982). Allen and Meyer (1993) speculated that the explanation was that newcomers enter organizations with unrealistic expectations. As they learn about their work, roles and tasks, many experience a *reality shock*, resulting in affective commitment changes. According to the literature, many leave the organization during this early period. Mowday and colleagues (1982) argued that affective commitment developed during this early period set precedent for future work experiences. Affective commitment correlated positively with age and tenure in several studies (Allen & Meyer, 1993; Angle & Lawson, 1993; Meyer, et al., 2002; Morrow & McElroy, 1987; Raelin, 1985). The literature suggested that correlations between age and commitment might exist because of three reasonable explanations: (1) aging predisposed older employees to be more committed to organizations – a *maturity explanation*; (2) older employees perceived they have experiences that are more positive than younger employees – a *better experience explanation*; or (3) there were generational differences in organizational commitment – a *cohort explanation* (Allen & Meyer, 1993; Morrow & McElroy, 1987; Raelin, 1985).

The relationship between organizational tenure and commitment has been shown to be positive (Allen & Meyer, 1993). It was reasoned that more experienced employees have the more attractive positions in organizations. A much more likely

explanation was that over time those less committed employees left the organizations (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

The relationship between positional tenure and commitment has received little attention. Some speculated that employees who remained in the same position for a long period of time were passed over for promotions and had little commitment to their organizations (Allen & Meyer, 1993). This would indicate a need for further study.

A wise researcher proverbially stated, “You cannot put right by statistics what you have wrong by design” (Light, Singer, & Willett, 1990, p. viii). The need for a congruent definition of career stages across research studies is needed. This controversy of career stages as a weak variable to moderate organizational commitment will not dissipate without more research and forethought. This study does not propose to inappropriately or haphazardly determine the particular divisions of career stages. Therefore, great thought in the categorical divisions of career stages has been considered.

### The Commitment Scales and Career Stages

Any research on organizational commitment would be incomplete without accounting for the moderating effects of career stage. Several studies exist which depicted stages of life from birth to death (Levinson, et al., 1978; Marsh & Mannari, 1977; Rabinowitz & Hall, 1981; Raelin, 1985; Rush, et al., 1980; Slocum Jr. & Cron, 1985; Veiga, 1983; Wiener & Vardi, 1980). Specific age ranges identified commitments to the organization at major periods of an individual’s years of service in each study. This section will review the literature concerning the construction of a measuring instrument of organizational commitment and career stages.

### *Nature of Development*

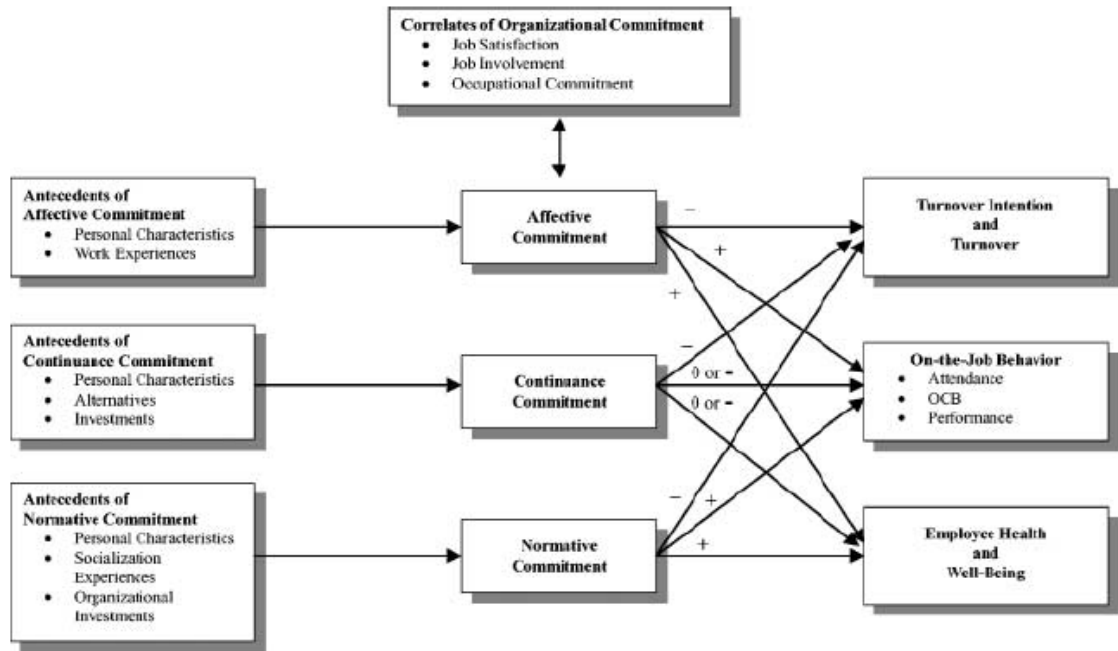
Allen and Meyer (1990a) conceptualized and proposed a model of organizational commitment. The development of their conceptualization of organizational commitment expanded the incorporation of both the attitudinal and behavioral approaches to a committed mindset. The particular approach embraced the concept that the linked relationship between the employee and the organization was a psychological state (i.e., feelings and/or beliefs). This psychological state should not be restricted to value and goal congruence as described by attitudinal and/or behavioral approaches (Mowday, et al., 1982); rather the relationship reflected a desire, need and/or obligation to maintain membership in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

The *Three-Component Model (TCM)*, considers three commitments – affective, continuance and normative commitment – to be components rather than types of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). Types implies that the psychological state characterizing the three forms of commitment were mutually exclusive (Meyer & Allen, 1991, pp. 67-68); rather, these three commitment variables were not mutually exclusive but worked together and had common effects on organizational consequences, such as job satisfaction, turnover intentions, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and performance (Park & Rainey, 2007).

Allen and Meyer (1990a) indicated that an employee experienced all three forms of commitment to varying degrees which, in turn, influenced behavior. One employee, for example, might feel both a strong desire and a strong need to remain but little obligation to do so, whereas another employee might feel little desire and a moderate need to remain but a strong obligation to do so, etc. The various forms of commitment

interaction have influenced different behavioral responses from individual to individual. Figure 1 presents a summary of the hypothesized links between the three-components of commitment and variables considered their antecedents, correlates and consequences.

Figure 1. Three-Component Model (TCM) of Organizational Commitment



From “Affective, Continuance and Normative Commitment to the Organization: A Meta-analysis of Antecedents, Correlates and Consequences,” by J. P. Meyer, D. J. Stanley, L. Herscovitch and L. Topolnytsky, 2002, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 61, p. 22.

The TCM proposed that employees remained with an organization because of their (1) *desire* to remain (affective commitment), (2) recognition that the *perceived costs* associated with leaving would be high (continuance commitment), and/or (3) feelings of *obligation* to remain (normative commitment). Although an employee could experience all three components to varying degrees, each component was considered to



develop independently and to exert different effects on work behavior (Allen & Meyer, 1993).

Jackson (1970) outlined the scale construction principles the development of the Affective, Continuance and Normative Commitment Scales (ACS, CCS and NCS, respectively) of the TCM was based. ACS and CCS were first used in published research by Meyer and Allen (1984) and NCS, by Allen and Meyer (1990a). Since then, Allen and Meyer as well as others, (e.g., Battistelli, Mariani, & Bello, 2006; Carson & Carson, 2002; Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Jaros, Jermier, Koehler, & Sincich, 1993; Johnson & Chang, 2006; Ozag, 2006; Reid, et al., 2008; Stephens, Dawley, & Stephens, 2004; Tsai, et al., 2005) have administered the measures in several studies. These studies have resulted in the accumulation of a considerable amount of evidence regarding the psychometric properties of TCM and the relations to various organizational and personal variables.

The TCM instrument had primarily been focused on the public and corporate sectors. The instrument was developed to assess a longitudinal study of business university graduates who entered the job market (Allen & Meyer, 1990b) and a nursing student's commitment to remain in the nursing program (Meyer, et al., 1991). The instrument has also been used in other fields, such as service professionals (e.g., utility workers, railroad workers, police officers, office personnel and nursing staff), corporate and business (e.g., resource management specialists, office managers, public accountants, factory workers, plant managers and corporate executives) and education (e.g., professors, university students and employees, and nursing students) (David & Matthew, 2008; Deborah & John, 2004; Ed, Carlos Wing-hung, & Tom, 2008; Ed &

Tom, 2003; Frederique, Frank, & Leo, 2007; Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994a; Harvir, Irving, & Shirley, 2004; Huo-Tsan, Nai-Wen, & Min-Chih, 2007; Irving, Daniel, & Christine, 1997; Jaros, 1995; John, Srinivas, Jaydeep, & Laryssa, 2007; Jong-Wook, James, & Charles, 1997; Lemaster, 2004; Lynne & John, 2002; Merkies & Van der Meer, 1989; Omar, Woody van, & Robert, 2008; Saadia & Mah Nazir, 2004; Suliman & Iles, 2000; Wells, Fuller, Wright, Fewtrell, & Cole, 2003). These studies have been conducted in several countries, including the United States, Canada, Great Britain, China, Taiwan, India, South Korea and Pakistan.

#### *Evidence of Construct Validity*

The TCM was found to be psychometrically sound because of three important research facts. First, the statistical reliability of the measurement was examined. Second, factor analyses of the measurement were examined through both exploratory and confirmatory analyses studies in order to determine whether the TCM measures were distinguishable from related constructs. Finally, the nomological net was examined through the measurement's correlations of previous studies' variables.

*Reliability of the measure.* Internal consistency of the measures has been estimated using coefficient alpha. Reliabilities associated with each study were shown in Table 2. Median reliabilities, across both versions of the ACS, CCS and NCS were 0.85, 0.78 and 0.74, respectively. All reliability estimates exceed 0.70 with very few exceptions. Correlations between the ACS and OCQ typically exceed 0.80 (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990a; Meyer & Allen, 1984; Randall, Fedor, & Longenecker, 1990).

Although most studies using the commitment measures have been cross-sectional, some longitudinal data are available. Test-retest reliabilities are shown in

Table 3 (Allen & Meyer, 1996). The duration between administrations ranged from seven weeks to 11 months. Allen and Meyer pointed out that in all but one study (Blau, Paul, & St. John, 1993), longitudinal data were collected from organizational newcomers (Allen & Meyer, 1996). The test-retest reliabilities were within the statistical acceptability and were consistent with those reported in the OCQ (Mowday, et al., 1979).

*Factor Analytic Results.* The factor structure of the three-component measure of organizational commitment has been found to be psychometrically sound. Both exploratory analyses (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990a; Blau, et al., 1993; Carson & Carson, 2002; Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994b; McGee & Ford, 1987; Reilly & Orsak, 1991) and confirmatory factor analyses (Duham, Grube, & Castaneda, 1994; Hackett, et al., 1994b; Meyer, et al., 1990; Meyer, et al., 1993; Moorman, Niehoff, & Organ, 1993; Somers, 1993) have shown that ACS, CCS and NCS measured relatively distinct constructs. The findings indicated an unclear determination as to whether or not one of the measures, CCS, represented a unidimensional construct. McGee and Ford (1987), the first to examine the measure, inquired whether or not CCS measures a unitary commitment construct or two separate commitment constructs, one from the employee's recognition that alternatives were few or the other from a recognition that the employee's investments were too great to sacrifice. Hackett, et al. (1994b) found that a four-factor model provided the best fit to the data, supporting Dunham, et al. (1994) findings of a two-dimensional CCS structure rather than a unidimensional model. Across all the studies, there were modest results, and the two factors were agreed to be highly related (Allen & Meyer, 1996).

Table 2

## Internal Consistency Reliabilities for the TCM

Commitment Measure <sup>a</sup>			Reference/sample
ACS	CCS	NCS	
0.86	0.81	0.76	Allen & Meyer (1993) Allen & Meyer (1990)
0.87	0.75	0.79	Sample 1
0.86	0.82	0.73	Sample 2
0.82	0.81	0.74	Allen & Smith (1987)
-	0.84	-	Aven (1988)
0.75	-	0.76	Battistelli, Mariani & Bello (2006) <sup>b</sup> Blau, Paul & John (1993)
0.80	-	-	time 1
0.81	-	-	time 2
0.89	-	-	Carson & Bedeian (1994)
0.89	-	-	Carson & Carson (2002)
0.79	0.69	0.65	Cohen (1993) Dunham, Grube & Castaneda (1994)
0.81	0.69	0.74	Finegan (1994)*
0.86	0.72	-	Gellatly (1995)
0.85	-	-	Greenberg (1994) Hackett, Bycio & Hausdorf (1994)
0.86	0.79	0.73	Sample 1
0.84	0.75	0.75	Samples 2
0.79	0.81	0.69	Iverson & Buttigieg (1999)
0.94	0.77	-	Jaros, Jermier, Koehler & Sincich (1993)
0.88	0.81	-	Jayne (1994)
0.74	-	-	Jenkins (1993)
0.82	0.87	-	Johnson & Chang (2006)*
0.85	-	-	Kelloway & Barling (1992)
0.89	0.85	-	Konovsky & Cropanzano (1991)
0.86	0.78	0.67	Lee (1992)
0.88	0.81	0.78	Lynn (1992)
0.83	0.84	0.71	McDonald (1993)
0.84	0.75	-	Magazine, Williams & Williams (1996)
0.88	0.70	-	McGee & Ford (1987)
0.82	0.74	0.83	Meyer, Allen & Smith (1993)*

Commitment Measure <sup>a</sup>			Reference/sample
ACS	CCS	NCS	
			Meyer, Bobocel & Allen (1991)
0.82	0.82	-	1 month
0.84	0.79	-	6 months
0.77	0.73	-	12 months
			Meyer, Irving & Allen (1998)
			<i>Study 1</i>
0.77	0.71	0.74	6 months
0.83	0.74	0.85	12 months
			<i>Study 2*</i>
0.85	0.69	0.86	6 months
0.85	0.75	0.85	12 months
			Meyer, Irving & Allen (1993)
0.77	0.73	0.68	1 month
0.83	0.74	0.69	6 months
0.85	0.72	0.74	12 months
0.74	0.69	-	Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin & Jackson (1989)
0.85	0.71	-	Moorman, Niehoff & Organ (1993)
0.85	-	0.68	Morrison (1994)
0.88	0.83	0.52	Randall, Fedor & Longenecker (1990)
0.84	0.80	0.76	Reilly & Orsak (1991)
0.90	0.83	-	Shore & Tetrick (1991)
0.81	0.74	0.71	Somers (1993)
0.68	-	0.75	Stephens, Dawley & Stephens (2004)
			Vandenberg & Self (1993)
0.76	0.75	-	1 day
0.86	0.83	-	3 months
0.89	0.79	-	6 months
-	0.83	-	Wahn (1993)
0.86	0.81	-	Whitener & Walz (1993)
0.89	0.76	-	Withey (1988)
0.85	0.88	0.79	Yousef (2000)

*Note:* ACS, Affective Commitment Scale; CCS, Continuance Commitment Scales; NCS, Normative Commitment Scale.

<sup>a</sup> The four studies indicated with an asterisk (\*) used the six-item versions of the commitment scales. All others used the original eight-item scales.

<sup>b</sup> Research conducted by Battistelli, Mariani & Bello (2006) used five items of the ACS and four items of the NCS.

Table 3

*Test-Retest Reliabilities for Commitment Measures*

Measure	Reliabilities			Timing of measures	Reference
	rt <sub>1t<sub>2</sub></sub>	rt <sub>1t<sub>3</sub></sub>	rt <sub>2t<sub>3</sub></sub>		
ACS	0.94			7 weeks apart (average tenure = 5.5 years)	Blau, Paul & John (1993)
ACS	0.68	0.62	0.78	1, 6 and 11 months post-entry	Meyer, Bobocel & Allen (1991)
CCS	0.71	0.63	0.72		
ACS	0.66	0.61	0.73	1, 6 and 12 months post-entry	Meyer, Irving & Allen (1993)
CCS	0.56	0.58	0.67		
NCS	0.61	0.62	0.73		
ACS	0.48	0.38	0.77	1 day and 3 and 6 months post-entry	Vandenberg & Self (1993)
CCS	0.44	0.44	0.63		

*Note.* From “Affective, Continuance and Normative Commitment to the Organization: An Examination of Construct Validity,” by N. J. Allen and J. P. Meyer, 1996, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 49(3), p. 258.

Three specific criteria determined the original selection of the items for inclusion on the final scales. Items were eliminated if (a) the endorsement proportion was greater than 0.75 on the seven-point Likert scale, (b) the item correlated less with its keyed scale than with one or both of the other scales, and (c) the content of the item was redundant with respect to other items on the scale. Eight items were then selected for inclusion in each scale. The 24 items comprising the TCM were subjected to the principal factor method of factor analysis. Three factors, accounting for 58.8%, 25.8%

and 15.4% of the total variance, respectively, were extracted and rotated to a Varimax criterion (See Table 4).

A revised version of the TCM was developed in 1993 (Meyer, et al., 1993). The difference between the two versions was noticed in NCS measurement of the employees' feeling of obligation to remain with the organization. Allen and Meyer pointed out that this obligation can arise from two primary sources: (a) socialization experiences and (b) receipt of "benefits" from the organization that requires reciprocation from the employee. In the original NCS, the items included information about the basis for the obligation, whereas in the revised version, the items focused on the feeling of obligation without specifying the basis. This study used the original version of the TCM.

*Correlations between the Commitment and Other Variables.* Allen and Meyer (1996; Meyer & Allen, 1991) examined patterns of findings across studies then reported a nomological net (Cronbach & Maeehl, 1955) used to evaluate the construct validity of the commitment measures. This was due in part because too few studies were reporting correlations between the commitment scales and many of the antecedent, correlate or consequence variables to justify the application of a meta-analysis. Since then a meta-analysis study of the three-component model of commitment has been conducted (e.g., Meyer, et al., 2002).

Allen and Meyer (1996; Meyer & Allen, 1997) reported patterns of correlations between measures of the variables included in the model. Specifically, the patterns of correlations of the three-component model of commitment: (1) exhibited strong relations between OCQ and the ACS that were consistent with expectation and provided

evidence for convergent validity, (2) the ACS correlated to measures which reflected affective reactions to other foci (e.g., job satisfaction, job involvement and career commitment), (3) the CCS and NCS had weak correlation, as expected, to other attitudinal measures; and (4) the ACS was positively correlated to positive affect and negatively correlated to negative affect, as expected, after examination of commitment and dispositional affect.

Allen and Meyer (1996; Meyer & Allen, 1997) identified a few issues that required further attention. First, further investigation was warranted concerning the strength of relation between the components of commitment, specifically between affective and normative commitment. Second, further investigation was needed concerning the dimensionality of the CCS. Third, further study was needed to examine the generalization of the model outside North America.

The meta-analysis study, however, examined the true correlations between the constructs, which undergirded the measures. Meyer, et al., (2002) reported that the corrected correlation<sup>1</sup> between affective and normative commitment was substantial ( $\rho = .63$ )<sup>2</sup>, suggesting considerable overlap in the two constructs. In separate analyses for the revised (Meyer, et al., 1993) and the original version (Allen & Meyer, 1990a) of the commitment scales, a considerably larger correlation was found for the revised version measure ( $\rho = .77$ ) than for the original version measure ( $\rho = .54$ ).

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<sup>1</sup> Percentage of  $SD_0$  accounted for by sampling error is more than 60%.

<sup>2</sup> Confidence interval constructed around the uncorrected  $N$ -weighted mean correlation does not include zero.



Table 4

*Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix Based on the TCM Correlations*

<i>Affective Commitment Scale items</i>				
1.	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization	<u>.55</u>	<u>.47</u>	-.07
2.	I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it	<u>.56</u>	.10	-.07
3.	I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own	<u>.52</u>	.39	-.06
4.	I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one (R)	<u>.45</u>	.21	.18
5.	I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization (R)	<u>.63</u>	.15	-.04
6.	I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization (R)	<u>.81</u>	.23	.03
7.	This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	<u>.79</u>	.19	.02
8.	I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization (R)	<u>.82</u>	.18	-.05
<i>Continuance Commitment Scale items</i>				
1.	I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up (R)	-.10	.02	.39
2.	It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to	.22	.14	<u>.58</u>
3.	Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now	.33	.27	<u>.44</u>
4.	It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organization now (R)	.18	.12	<u>.46</u>
5.	Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire	-.24	-.01	<u>.39</u>
6.	I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization	-.14	.00	<u>.67</u>
7.	One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives	-.17	-.07	<u>.60</u>
8.	One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice - another organization may not match the overall benefits I have here	.15	-.01	<u>.50</u>

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
<i>Normative Commitment Scale items</i>			
1. I think that people these days move from company to company too often.	.14	<u>.67</u>	-.06
2. I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organization (R)	.29	<u>.43</u>	.00
3. Jumping from organization to organization does not seem at all unethical to me (R)	.07	<u>.63</u>	.01
4. One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that I believe that loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain	.17	<u>.59</u>	.07
5. If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere I would not feel it was right to leave my organization	.17	<u>.49</u>	.10
6. I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization	.15	<u>.49</u>	.10
7. Things were better in the days when people stayed with one organization for most of their careers	.05	<u>.56</u>	.11
8. I do not think that wanting to be a "company man" or "company woman" is sensible anymore (R)	.17	<u>.47</u>	-.03
Percent of variance accounted for	58.8	25.8	15.4
<i>Note.</i> (R) = reverse keyed items.			

Modest correlations were found between continuance commitment, measured using the full scale CCS, and both affective ( $\rho = .05$ ) and normative ( $\rho = .18$ ) commitments. The correlations between affective commitment and the alternatives ( $\rho = -.24$ ) and sacrifice ( $\rho = .06$ ) subcomponents of continuance commitment were low and opposite in sign, as expected. Normative commitment found the same with the exception of strength and was greater for the sacrifice component ( $\rho = .16$ ) than for the alternatives component ( $\rho = -.02$ ).

Separate analyses for studies conducted within versus outside North America found a higher correlation outside ( $\rho = .69$ ) than within ( $\rho = .59$ ) North America. Meyer and colleagues (2002) reported there were too few studies available to make systematic comparisons across cultures. The study pointed out that geographic location and language were largely confounded due to translation. It was revealed that 72% of the studies conducted outside of North America used translated versions of the scales. As Allen and Meyer (2000) pointed out in another publication, differences observed could reflect cultural differences and/or translation problems.

Meyer and et al. (2002) compared computed correlations with commitment measured using the OCQ (Mowday, et al., 1979), which revealed a high correlation using ACS ( $\rho = .88$ ). This also revealed, correlations with normative commitment ( $\rho = .50$ ) and continuance commitment ( $\rho = - .02$ ) were comparable to those for affective commitment using the ACS.

The results of the meta-analysis by Meyer, et al. (2002) provided estimates of the true relations between the components of commitment and variables identified as antecedents, correlates and consequences in the three-component model. Strong correlations were found between affective commitment and correlate variables (i.e., job satisfaction, job involvement and occupational commitment). The strongest correlation reported was between affective commitment and overall job satisfaction. However, correlations between affective commitment and satisfaction with other specific factors of employment were revealed as weaker. Studies showed that job satisfaction and affective commitment should be considered in efforts to understand an employee's behavior (Meyer, et al., 1993). As well, there was a strong positive correlation between

affective commitment and occupational commitment, which suggested practical implications of organization-relevant outcome (i.e., retention and OCB) were plausible (Meyer, et al., 1993).

The meta-analysis found that antecedents such as demographic variables contribute very little in the development of organizational commitment, as Mathieu and Zajac's (1990) study revealed. Correlations with the demographic variables were generally low. Meyer, et al. (2002) reported that age and tenure (organization and position) correlated positively with all three components of commitment. In contrast, work experiences were found to have stronger relations, especially with affective commitment.

In regard to the consequences of commitment, Meyer, et al. (2002) reported that all three components correlated negatively with withdrawal cognition, turnover intention and turnover, but each correlated differently with other work behaviors (i.e., attendance, job performance and OCB). The meta-analysis revealed that affective commitment had the strongest positive correlation with these desirable work behaviors; whereas, continuance commitment was unrelated or negatively related to these behaviors.

#### New Population for Organizational Commitment

Literature suggested that organizational culture encompassed institutional values, beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, meanings, behavioral norms, artifacts, symbols and patterns of behavior (Ott, 1989; Rector, 2005; Tierney, 1999, 2001), which were processed in an organization through the daily workings of the organization's participants and had undergone constant re-interpretation recreating the organizational

culture as unique (Rector, 2005; Tierney, 1999). Some have argued that the aspects of organizational culture which make an organization unique were present in higher education as well (Clark, 1997; Rhodes & Trevor, 2000).

Studies in organizational commitment in higher education in the United States have been limited to university students (Allen & Meyer, 1990b; Meyer & Allen, 1984; Meyer, et al., 1991), faculty (Lemaster, 2004) and executives (Britt, 2002). There is no or very little literature beyond these populations in higher education.

Meyer and Allen (1984) studied university students to determine their level of commitment to remain through the academia program. Their findings were that students had an affective attachment to the object of their commitment rather than a continuance commitment. Contrary to Becker (1960) who suggested that individuals become committed due to the costs of disassociation associated with continuance commitment, Meyer and Allen found that students correlated more strongly to affective commitment measures than with continuance commitment measures. Thus, this study established the fundamental development of the TCM.

Several researchers used TCM to investigate the relationship of institutional culture and commitment. For example, Lemaster (2004) implemented the TCM as an instrument to measure the cultural impact of faculty in selected Christian colleges and universities in South California. In these studies, Lemaster suggested that Christian college and university settings foster the development of affective and normative commitment, while an individual culture may have a stronger influence on continuance commitment within the subculture.

Regarding leadership positions in higher education, Britt (2002) studied the organizational commitment of higher education executives (e.g., Chancellors, Presidents, Provosts, Vice-Presidents, Deans, Executive Directors, College Officers, etc.) as well as women who advanced in these positions. This study was useful because, as Britt suggested, if individuals are able to manage their own careers, they will be a continued commitment to the organization and will not leave regardless of the gender. Affective, continuance and normative commitment were each significant and influenced the leaders' advancement in their positions.

The above studies indicated that TCM has been useful in examining commitment levels in a variety of higher education positions. However, the literature also revealed an absence of research in other important higher education positions. For instance, the position of presidential assistant has been considered as one of the most influential positions in a university, yet no research has been conducted on the commitment levels of presidential assistants.

#### *Presidential Assistant Position*

The position of a college or university president was argued as one of the toughest as well as one of the most important jobs in higher education (Fisher, Tack, & Wheeler, 1988). Literature suggested that every president needed a reliable sounding board – someone who was trustworthy and confident in the designated position and to whom the president can express roughly formed versions of thoughts and ideas. This individual must have the ability to express himself or herself with complete honesty when responding to the president's inquiries (Fisher, 1985; Giddens, 1971; Lingenfelter, 2004).

Considered as a second set of eyes and ears on campus presidential assistants aid the president to understand every aspect of the institution's challenging issues (Malloy, 2003). Some posit that the presidential assistant has been the most important staff member in a higher education institution (Fisher, 1985; Fisher & Koch, 1996; Giddens, 1971; Lingenfelter, 2004; Montell, 2000; Richman & Farmer, 1974). McDade, Putnam & Miles (1999) reported that presidents believed the position of the presidential assistant was a leadership role, even though no two positions were alike, and each had a specific set of responsibilities that varied between institutions. The most effective and efficient assistants performed every imaginable task, ranging from the most menial to the most skilled, such as running errands, opening doors, chauffeuring and entertaining important guests of the president, serving as ambassador of the president and acting as a vice president without a portfolio (Fisher & Koch, 1996).

*Historical development.* Prior to the Civil War, most colleges and universities in the United States had an average of three administrative positions: the president, a treasurer, and a librarian, which was a voluntary position (O'Reilly Jr., 2000; Rudolph, 1990). In 1860, the median number of administrative officers in United States colleges was four, compared to the 30.5 college administrative officers in 1933 (McGrath, 1938).

As the higher education institution matured, more administrative responsibilities became specialized. The offices that emerged beyond the president and faculty were the registrar, a vice president, deans, chief business officer, director of admissions and several administrative assistants to the president (Rudolph, 1990).

One of the first recorded positions of assistant to the president was in Oberlin College. The annual reports of the president and treasurer from Oberlin College record

the creation of the position on November 16, 1904. The trustee board elected Charles W. Williams to the position. The primary tasks of the assistant were fund raising and public relations (as cited in Giddens, 1971).

Over time, administrative offices have splintered from the form in which they first appeared in the Office of the President. They emerged as a multifunctional title in a department all to themselves (e.g., President, Chancellor, University Chief Executive Officer, President of the University System, etc.). The president's executive assistant was not an exception to this splintering, as that office was subdivided. Titles such as assistant to the president for planning, public relations or even community relations commonly appear in colleges and universities today (O'Reilly Jr., 2000). As the titles have increased, so have the numbers in the position.

By the academic year of 1969, there were at least 225 presidential assistants recorded. Giddens' (1971) study presented a demographic composite picture of the typical presidential assistant as a white male, 39.9 years of age, with an earned bachelors or masters degree, and with previous administrative and teaching experience in the college. The presidential assistant was predominantly employed by public higher education institutions in the liberal arts and professional studies with enrollments from 2,000 to 4,999 students. The annual salary exceeded \$15,000. However, among these presidential assistants, there were no two job descriptions identical nor were the assistants afforded faculty tenure.

In 1978, a study by the Office of Communications Services of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) reported that women held 2,905 of the 13,638 positions in 106 major public universities. The study



found there were 428 presidential assistants, of which 131 positions were held by women (30.6%) and 297 by men (69.4%).

Quatroche's (1990) study revealed the Office of the President employed one assistant and three to four clerical staff personnel, a shift in the composite picture of assistants depicted in the Giddens' study. The analysis of Quatroche's data (response rate of 70%, N = 650) showed that the typical presidential assistant was white and between the ages of 40 and 49 and had served in the present position full time between two and five years and that the positions were evenly divided between the genders. The data also revealed that some presidential assistants had worked in higher education for over 16 years and earned an average annual salary of \$40,000. In addition, the presidential assistant held multiple titles with numerous roles and responsibilities.

Carlson (1991) studied New England college presidential assistants based on selected personal, educational and institutional characteristics. Carlson's analysis showed the typical New England college presidential assistant was between 40 and 49 years of age (35%), white (100%), female (54%) and well educated (79% holding at least a master's degree and 41% holding a doctoral degree). Carlson also reported that the New England presidential assistant worked at a four-year (95%) private university (57%).

Another finding Carlson(1991) reported that the annual salary of presidential assistants in New England to be \$40,000 to 50,000 (24%), \$50,000 to \$60,000 (22%), \$60,000 to \$70,000 (16%), and greater than \$70,000 (11%). Whereas, O'Reilly (2000) reported that the annual salary of presidential assistants in specialized institutions to be less than \$20,000 (2.5%), \$20,000 to \$39,999 (22.5%), \$40,000 to \$49,999 (10.0%),

\$50,000 to \$59,999 (20.0%), \$60,000 to \$69,999 (15.0%), \$70,000 to \$89,999 (17.5%), and more than \$90,000 (12.5%).

A national survey built on the Quatroche (1990) study was developed (McDade, et al., 1996) and commissioned by the National Association of Presidential Assistants in Higher Education (NAPAHE), and then was later used in dissertations by Miles (2000)<sup>3</sup> and O'Reilly (2000)<sup>4</sup>. McDade, Putnam & Miles' (1999) study was the first attempt to identify all presidential assistants at all colleges and universities with the exception of specialty institutions. The study yielded a 50% response rate (941 respondents to 1,882 usable addresses). The study resulted in a final response of 801 presidential assistants after 140 responses were eliminated due to self-describing their position as secretarial.

The composite picture of the participants revealed that the presidential assistant was a white (85.7%, n = 617, N = 723) female (67.1%, n = 485, N = 723) with a master (26.3%, n = 187, N = 711) or doctoral degree (24.9%, n = 177, N = 711), employed at a public institution (61.0%, n = 443, N = 726) with an enrollment from 1,000 to 4,999 full time enrollment (44.4%, n = 320, N = 720) (Miles, 2000). These results somewhat changed the previously seen composite picture of presidential assistants.

The study reported other descriptive data that was of interest. For example, the percentage of participants (N = 726) from private institutions (39.3%, n = 283) were subdivided into private/independent (20.8%, n = 151) and private/religious (18.2%,

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<sup>3</sup> Miles used the survey (McDade, et al., 1996) data collected (McDade, et al., 1999) under the sponsorship of Sharon McDade to examine primary career paths of presidential assistants.

<sup>4</sup> O'Reilly used the survey instrument (McDade, et al., 1996) as a subsequent study of presidential assistants at specialized higher education institutions.

n = 132). The male presidential assistants (32.9%, n = 238, N = 723) comprised about one third of the study population. The percentages of respondents that were not white comprised of 9.6% African American/Black (n = 69, N = 720) and 4.7% the combined group of Hispanic/Latino, American Indians/Native Alaskans, Asian/Pacific Islanders and Multiracial (n = 34, N = 720). The study also revealed that salaries were dependent upon roles, responsibilities and multi-titled positions. Three levels of the position these presidential assistants (N = 738) held were categorized as senior management (52.7%, n = 389), professional (33.1%, n = 244) and middle management (14.2%, n = 105). Some presidential assistants held faculty status, and most were considered senior management, with a significant difference in the number of positions held with relation to gender (45% male and 34% female).

O'Reilly's (2000) dissertation study examined presidential assistants at specialized institutions using the McDade, Putnam and Miles (1996) survey instrument. The study focused on institutions that were classified as specialized institutions by the Carnegie Classification Codes of 1994, colleges or universities in the United States that are degree granting and accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. These institutions offered at least 50% of available degrees in a single discipline, ranging from the bachelor degree to the doctoral degree. These specialized institutions included theological seminaries, health profession schools, schools of business and management, schools of art, music and design, law schools, teachers colleges, tribal colleges and universities and other specialized institutions of graduate centers, maritime academies, military institutions and institutions that do not fit any other classification category.

O'Reilly's study yielded a sample of 40 respondents and a random sample of 10 non-respondents from a telephone survey. The composite picture from this small study revealed that the typical presidential assistant (N = 50) at specialized higher education institutions was white (80%, n=32), middle-aged (46-55 years, 42%) and female (66%, n=33), holding a master degree (33.3%, n=13). The assistant was typically employed at a master and/or doctoral degree granting (72%, n=36), specialized private/independent institution (64%, 32), with an enrollment of less than 499 students (34%, n=17).

*Path to the Position.* Miles' (2000) dissertation study used the data collected by McDade, Putnam & Miles' (1999) study under the direction of Professor Sharon A. McDade at Columbia University Teachers College and examined the primary career path that presidential assistants took to reach their position. The most commonly held primary career path to the position of presidential assistant in higher education through Miles' study consisted of four positions – beginning from an outside higher education secretarial/clerical position (n = 4, 0.5%) to a higher education secretarial/clerical position (n = 27, 3.6%) to an associate director/assistant director/ professional staff position (n = 166, 22.5%) to becoming a presidential assistant (n = 738). Selecting the career path that had the highest percentage of individuals who held a first prior position in common, then a second prior position and then a third prior position was established as the primary career path. Cohen and March (1974) established this trajectory of normative career in their study of higher education presidential assistants' career paths.

Different trajectory paths to the presidential assistant position were taken according to gender. Females held true to the principal career path which moved from a secretarial/clerical position outside of higher education (n = 4, 0.8%) to a

secretarial/clerical position within higher education (n = 26, 5.4%) to associate director/assistant director/professional staff (n = 121, 24.9%) to a presidential assistant (n = 485). However, males began as a K-12 teacher (n = 4, 1.7%) then moved to an associate director/assistant director/professional staff position (n = 22, 9.2%) to a non-academic dean or director post (n = 57, 23.9%) until employed as a presidential assistant (n = 238).

There was no significant difference between whites and blacks in the principal career path; however, both differed greatly from the combined group of Hispanic/Latinos, Asian/Pacific Islanders, or American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Multiracial individuals. As well, those with doctoral degrees differed significantly from those without doctoral degrees. Those with doctoral degrees moved from positions within academia, while those without doctoral degrees came from outside higher education (Miles, 2000).

*Tenures of Presidential Assistants.* Carlson (1991) examined the tenures of presidential assistant in higher education in higher education, specifically, the tenure in higher education and the tenure in current position. Carlson reported that presidential assistants (N = 42) were employed in the higher education 0 to 2 years (3%), 2 to 5 years (3%), 5 to 8 years (14%), 8 to 12 years (16%), 12 to 16 years (22%), over 16 years (38%). The positional tenure of the reported presidential assistants were 0 to 2 years (16%), 2 to 5 years (35%), 5 to 8 years (14%), 8 to 12 year (27%), 12 to 16 years (5%) and over 16 years (3%).

O'Reilly (2000) reported contrasting figures for presidential assistants (N = 50) which were employed in specialized institutions. Presidential assistants that were

employed in their current position 0 to 2 years (28%), 3 to 5 years (20%), 6 to 8 years (16%), 9 to 11 years (18%), 12 to 15 years (12%), over 16 years (6%). These reflections could have been due to the newly developed position of presidential assistant in specialized institutions.

*Personality Types of Presidential Assistants.* Personality has been argued the characteristic patterns of an individual's thought, attitude, emotion and behavior that which are exhibited in a social setting (Funder, 1999, 2004). Saucier and Simonds (2006) believed that personality influences the role individuals assume or the status they had achieved in society, which included their outward appearance and reactions to other individuals, defended as "social stimulus value" (MacKinnon, 1944). Researchers have attempted to measure personality through which have narrowed the topical field to personality temperaments (Buss & Plomin, 1975; Feldman-Summers & Kiesler, 1974; Goldberg, 1981; Goldberg & Digman, 1994; Jackson, 1970; Jung, 1959; Locke, 1967; Marvin, 1972; Matzler & Renzl, 2007; I. B. Myers, 1956; Ones, Mount, Barrick, & Hunter, 1994; Rothbart & Bates, 1998). One of the most popular and influential measurement was the personality preference type developed by Isabel Myers (I. B. Myers, 1956) and further developed into the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (I. B. Myers, 1998; I. B. Myers & McCaulley, 1985; I. B. Myers, McCaulley, Quenk, & Hammer, 1994, 1998, 2003; K. D. Myers & Kirby, 1994).

The personality preferences type indicator developed by Myers-Briggs described a 16 dynamic energy system symbolized by four-letters (e.g. ESTJ, INFP) which identified the poles preferred by each individual. The system was based on the conceptual idea of typologies (e.g. sensing, intuiting, thinking or feeling) by Swiss

psychiatrist Carl G. Jung (1959). Briggs found Jung's work fascinating, and believed in the power of Jung's typologies, applied the concepts to an instrument to assist women entering the workforce for specific duties in employment during World War II. (I. B. Myers, 1956, 1998; I. B. Myers & McCaulley, 1985; I. B. Myers, et al., 1994, 1998, 2003; K. D. Myers & Kirby, 1994).

The measurement employed Jung's concept of four functions that individuals use to process their surroundings and situations. These basic functions, or process, were called Sensing (S), Intuition (N), Thinking (T) and Feeling (F). There were four attitudes or orientations that individuals exercised to cope with surroundings and situations. These were subdivided into the kinds of energy (i.e., Extraverted (E) and Introverted (I) attitudes) and orientations (i.e., Judging (J) and Perceiving (P) attitudes) the individual exercised. The combination of each function with each energy and attitude developed into four dichotomies and 16 different *types* (K. D. Myers & Kirby, 1994). Practical insights were discovered through observation of these types in research.

Two studies on presidential assistants had examined personality preference types through the Myers-Briggs Typology (McDade, et al., 1999; O'Reilly Jr., 2000). There were mixed results between the two studies, which the personality preference type presidential assistants exhibited. McDade, et al. (1999) reported that the Myers/Briggs Topology scores of presidential assistants (N = 801) were predominately an extravert (60.0%) as opposed to an introvert (40.0%), more a sensor (60.0%) as opposed to an intuitive (40.0%), more a thinker (59.0%) as opposed to a feeler (41.0%), and more a judger (61.0%) as opposed to a perceiver (39.0%). O'Reilly (2000) reported that personality preferences of presidential assistant (N = 50) in specialized institutions

were more an extravert (62.5%) than an introvert (37.5%), more an intuitive (75.0%) than a sensor (25.0%), equal between a thinker (50.0%) and a feeler (50.0%), and more a judger (64.3%) than a perceiver (35.7%).

*Roles and responsibilities.* Literature showed that the presidential assistant job description varied from institution to institution. According to McDade, *et al.* (1999), the most common tasks among presidential assistants were:

- Preparing and overseeing office budget (49%)
- Coordinating special projects (42%)
- Overseeing office administration (41%)
- Preparing social correspondence (39%)
- Interacting with the governing board (36%)
- Preparing external academic correspondence (31%)
- Coordinating policy with senior officers (29%)
- Establishing agendas and policy (28%)
- Overseeing grievances from students, faculty and staff (21%)
- Writing and editing speeches (21%)

*Position and Power.*

The assistant must work behind the scenes and in the shadow of the president (Carlson, 1991; Gilmour, 1995). The presidential assistant was also the final gatekeeper to the college president. The power to limit access to the president empowers the presidential assistant, but it has been argued that this power must be exercised with extreme caution (Carlson, 1991; Fisher, 1984; Fisher & Koch, 1996; Fisher & Tack,



1988; Fisher, et al., 1988; Gilmour, 1995; O'Reilly Jr., 2000). Carlson noted that a presidential assistant's "proximity to the president confers power where none has actually been delegated" (Carlson, 1991, p. 97). The power conferred to a presidential assistant had depended upon the leader, their style of leadership and their power in leading (Fisher, 1984).

Most theorists agreed that leadership influences, however, the type of influence tremendously differed (French Jr. & Raven, 1959; McLaughlin, 2004; Rottweiler, 2005; Smith, Carson, & Alexander, 1984). For some, leadership influence was the behavior of a leader as defined by the boundaries of an individual's given office, position, title or rank (e.g., Fisher, 1984; Fisher & Tack, 1988; McLaughlin, 2004; Ogawa & Bossert, 2000; Vaughan, 1990). Yet others believed it was the result of leadership thrust upon the individual to which he or she had no alternative but to become successful (e.g., Boapimp, 1983; C. Caldwell & Hayes, 2007; Dale & Fox, 2008; Jacobs, 1972). For the most part, leadership consisted of attributes or characteristics held by the individual to perform unique transactions for the group. Literature suggested that a source of power accompanied these characteristics, whether specified or implied, and that the culture and symbolism judged whether the influence of a leader was strong or weak (Clark, 1997; Dahl, 1997; Rottweiler, 2005).

Concerning transition, turnover and migration of college university presidents, Moore and Burrows (2001) indicated that the rate of turnover of the highest position on campus was increasingly alarming. It was reported that the average length of presidential longevity was between five and eight years (ACE, 2007; AGB Task Force, 2006; M. D. Cohen & March, 1974, 1997; Corrigan, 2002; Green, Ross, & Holmstrom,

1988), which challenged the once-held belief that the post was for life (A. M. Cohen, 1998; Gray, 1998; Ikenberry, 1998). In other words, the number of years presidents served as the leader of a single institution was less than the number of years required for an assistant professor to earn academic tenure (Korschgen, Fuller, & Gardner, 2001). The power and influence then thrust upon the office of the president during this transitional period, specifically the presidential assistant, has been exemplary of such power (Martin, Samuels, & Associates, 2004).

Several studies on presidential transition have contributed to the broader picture of how presidential transitions reshaped institutions through organizational change (e.g., ACE, 2007; AGB Task Force, 2006; Alton & Dean, 2002; M. D. Cohen & March, 1974; Corrigan, 2002; Green, et al., 1988; Martin & Samuels, 2004; Martin, et al., 2004; Moore & Burrows, 2001; Padilla, 2004; Wilson, 2000). However, there was little discovery of how the presidential transition affected the president's office, in particular, those with whom the president entrusted great loyalty and confidentiality and who remained to serve the new president.

The need to study this population is crucial. McDade, Putnam & Miles (1999) found that presidents consider their presidential assistants to be leaders, not managers. This empowerment of a leadership role in higher education was dependent upon the line authority and was different from institution to institution and from president to president (Lingenfelter, 2004). The ability for a president to determine the commitment level of an assistant would be beneficial in maintaining an effective workplace in the highest office in the university – the president's office.

## Summary

In this chapter, literature was reviewed concerning an overview of the nature of organizational commitment and career stages, the construct over career stages and organizational commitment, and the controversy of career stage. Allen and Meyer (1993) stated that “the way the career stage variable was operationalized influences the observed effects” of organizational commitment (p. 51). If this is true, then it is important to conduct further research in order to advance the understanding of the influences of career stage variables on organizational commitment.

Literature also was reviewed concerning the organizational commitment construct of Allen and Meyer’s *TCM Employee Commitment Survey* (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The nature of development of the TCM and evidence of construct validity were discussed. The examined literature revealed that the measures were developed based on theoretical frameworks from integrated views of attitudinal and behavioral commitment and were used in a wide variety of samples and settings.

The gap for which TCM has been applied as the instrument of assessment in higher education was reviewed and the lack of literature of organizational commitment in higher education was discussed. A need to examine presidential assistants’ organizational commitment was presented.

## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The purpose of this study was to examine the three-components of organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative) relative to the career stages (age, organizational tenure and positional tenure) of both public and private college and university presidential assistants regardless of their ages and levels of organizational tenure and positional tenure. The Three-Component Model (TCM) of commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990a; Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997) measured the organizational commitment of these presidential assistants. The following questions and hypotheses guided this research.

#### *Research Questions*

This study focused on the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between career stages and the three-components of commitment of college and university presidential assistants in both public and private higher education institutions in the United States?
2. Do career stages predict the commitment of presidential assistants to stay employed with their current institutions?

#### *Hypothesis*

The following null hypotheses (Ho) guided this study:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between career stages (age, organizational tenure and positional tenure) and three-component commitment levels (affective, continuance and normative commitments) of college and university presidential assistants in both public and private higher education institutions in the United States.

Ho2: Career stages do not significantly predict the commitment of college and university presidential assistants to stay employed with their current institution.

The population informed this study through an online survey by the TCM instrument and statistical analysis (i.e., correlation and multiple regression) were methodologically conducted.

#### Population, Participants and Sample

The target population for this study was all of the presidential assistants from both public and private, four-year degree-granting higher education institutions in the United States. The following were used to compile a listing of presidential assistants.

1. *National Association of Presidential Assistants in Higher Education (NAPAHE) Directory* (2007).
2. *College Board College Handbook 2007* (2007).
3. *2008 Higher Education Directory* (2008).
4. *Digital Higher Education Directory* (2008).
5. Websites of the colleges and universities listed by the Carnegie Classification.

A list of telephone and electronic mail (email) contacts of 1,423 presidential assistants was compiled. Data collection was accomplished through an electronic invitation letter to an online survey instrument.

The sample of this study was defined as those participants who voluntarily completed the online survey and who met the criteria as previously defined. Data collection from the sample included institution profile, namely the Carnegie Classification of size and setting for the participant's institution. A jump link was provided within the survey, <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications/index.asp?key=782> produced a popup window in order for the participants to confirm their institution's size and setting classification.

#### Data Collection

This study was conducted according to the strict guidelines of the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) pursuant to the Federal regulations Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 46 (45 CFR 46 "Basic HHS Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects"). The proposed study was submitted to the Office of University Research Compliance in accordance to the accepted *IRB Guidelines*. A letter of approval for this study from the IRB has been added as an addendum (Appendix A).

#### *Process*

An email invitation that introduced and encouraged presidential assistants to participate in the online survey was sent to the compiled list of presidential assistants. A brief description of the study, a Web link, <http://frontpage.okstate.edu/coe/shawnbassham>, to the online survey, and research compliance information (Appendix B-1) were provided in the invitation. The survey questions were clear and concise and the designed format was unambiguous and

consistent as recommended by literature (Dillman, 2000, 2007; Ritter & Sue, 2007a, 2007b).

One week after the introductory email was sent, a second email encouraging participation in the survey was sent. This email reminded them that an online survey was being conducted and their participation was appreciated (Appendix B-2). A copy of this message was posted on the NAPAHE listserv at [NAPANET@LISTSERV.IUPUI.EDU](mailto:NAPANET@LISTSERV.IUPUI.EDU) with the approval of the listserv coordinator.

The online survey was posted for five weeks, and then a final email notice announced the deadline of the online survey on the Monday prior to the closure of the online survey (Appendix B-3).

#### *Instrumentation*

Participants were directed to an index page, which gave an introduction and informed them of the voluntary nature of the survey. Those who agreed to complete the survey consciously decided to do so by choosing a hyperlink to the survey instrument from the index page (Appendix C). However, those individuals who declined to take the survey were directed to a declination page by a hyperlink. Those participants who successfully submitted their responses after completing the survey were directed to a confirmation page that expressed the researcher's appreciation.

*Organizational Commitment.* The online survey, patterned after Dillman (2007), was used to collect data from participants. The online instrument used the *TCM Employee Commitment Survey* (Appendix D) by licensed agreement with Western Ontario University and instrument inventors Drs. John Meyer and Natalie Allen (Appendix E).

The TCM survey scales were the Affective (ACS), Continuance (CCS), and Normative Commitment (NCS) Scales. Each scale had eight items, for a total of 24 items, randomly organized in the questionnaire to eliminate recognition of a distinct scale (see Appendix D). All items had a six-point Likert scale response format (e.g., 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree) so that the participants needed to decide definitively concerning each item (Light, et al., 1990). Some of the items were worded such that strong agreement reflected a lower level of commitment. These items, referred to as reverse-keyed items, were to persuade participants to think about the statements carefully (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Nine items were reverse-keyed (questions 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 14, 16 and 18) and recoded to reflect 6 = strongly disagree to 1 = strongly agree.

Meyer and Allen (1996) advised that it was plausible to sum the item scores rather than on averaging, but this could create problems if employees fail to respond to some items. However, for this study, participants' responses for each component were summed to yield an overall score due to the small number of the sample. In addition, items not answered were not calculated in the sum; rather, they were calculated according to standard methodology of reporting Likert scale findings (Spector, 1992).

*Career Stage Variables.* Participants were asked their age; how long they had worked for their current institution; how long they had been in their present position in the institution; whether they had previously experienced a presidential transition and, if so, the number of transitions and whether the transitions were at the current institution; and whether they remained in their current position.



*Demographic Profile.* Participants were asked their gender, race/ethnicity, personality preferences, degrees earned, salary, employment status, position title, and region of the country employed.

#### *Storage of Data*

All survey responses were stored in a Concurrent Versions System (CVS), housed on the university server secured by password-protected firewalls, and maintained by the Oklahoma State University. Data collected through the online questionnaire were downloaded directly to an Excel file by the statistical analysis program. SPSS for Windows version 16.0 was the statistical analysis program utilized by this researcher. Each variable existed in SPSS as numerically coded data.

#### Data Analysis

The collected data from the online survey were analyzed using SPSS for Windows version 16.0. Following Allen and Meyer (1993), presidential assistants were divided into categorical groups in the three divisions of career stages: (1) age (< 31 years, 31 – 40 years, 41 – 50, 51 – 60, and > 60 years), (2) organizational tenure (< 2 years, 2 – 10 years, > 10 years) and (3) positional tenure (< 2 years, 2 – 10 years, > 10 years). The means for the ACS, CCS and NCS summed scores of the presidential assistants across each career stage were found and presented to ensure accuracy of data entry. Data analysis preceded by (1) finding correlation and (2) multiple regressions to answer the research questions of the study.

To answer the first research question, (what is the relationship between career stages and the three-components of commitment?) multivariate correlations for the three-components of organizational commitment variables – affective, continuance and

normative commitment – as well as the career stage variables – age, organizational tenure and positional tenure – were obtained. The significant correlations among these variables were presented.

To answer the second research question – do career stages predict the commitment of presidential assistants to stay employed with their current institution – semi-partial correlation of multiple regression was conducted to determine if the commitment levels of presidential assistants, the criterion variables – affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment – could be adequately predicted by their career stages, the predictor variables – age, organizational tenure and positional tenure. The multiple regression statistical compilations were reported.

#### Summary

This chapter described the population of the study, the participants, data methodology (the process and instrument) variables and data analysis. Presidential assistants in public and private higher education institutions in the United States were the targeted population. The data and an analysis of the data are presented in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the study and provides the necessary data to address the research questions. Respondents completed an online survey regarding organizational commitment and career stages and submitted directly to an internet database survey facility operated by the Oklahoma State University. The data are delineated further and discussed in the following sections.

### Sample Characteristics

#### *Response Rate*

After extensive research to compile a population of presidential assistants, a total of 1,334 potential college and university presidential assistants was identified. Two hundred ninety-three persons submitted responses for an overall response rate of 21.96%. The respondents were filtered by two criteria: (1) If the presidential assistant reported directly to the college or university president, and (2) if their organization was a four-year degree-granting college or university according to the *Carnegie Classification Of Higher Education Institutions*. Of these 293 responses, 279 were considered usable for this research, resulting in a usable response rate of 20.91%.

This response rate fell within acceptable online survey response rates (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000; Krosnick, 1999). Literature suggested that online surveys have commonly fell below the response rate of traditional surveys of 55.6% (Baruch, 1999; Dillman, 2000, 2007; Dillman & Christian, 2003) but provide a quicker response (Dillman, 2007; Ritter & Sue, 2007b). Various factors which can affect online survey

have included non-contact of face to face interviewing, non-cooperation (e.g., too busy, self absorbed and erecting barriers), inability to provide data (physically or mentally) and unfavorable societal developments (e.g., lack of civic engagement, obligations and intrusions) (Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000). Another concern was the listserv phenomenon where the survey was distributed through a multiple list on a server and response of no value are returned, and then quality response had become the focus concerned with online survey. Thus, a sample of less than 1% of the population may accurately represent the population (Cook, et al., 2000).

### *Demographics*

The demographic composition of the study sample is reflected in Table 5. Data from the survey provided insight into the composition of presidential assistants in higher education. A greater number of females (79.9%,  $n = 223$ ) participated than did males (19.7%,  $n = 55$ )<sup>5</sup>. This is comparable to the literature concerning the gender ratio of presidential assistants in higher education (Carlson, 1991; McDade, et al., 1999; Miles, 2000; O'Reilly Jr., 2000; Quatroche, 1990; Stiles, 2008).

The two most populous groups identified in the sample were 51 to 60 years of age (44.0%,  $n = 123$ ) and 41 to 50 years of age (28.3%,  $n = 79$ ) of the sample. Only 3.6% ( $n = 10$ ) were identified in the under-31-years-of-age category, the least populous group. The age groups 31 to 40 years of age (12.9%,  $n = 37$ ) and over-60-years-of-age (10.5%,  $n = 30$ ) were relatively close in the sample.

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<sup>5</sup> All missing responses are reported in Table 5.

Table 5

*Demographics from Survey Responses*

Variables <sup>a</sup>	Frequency	Valid Percent
<b>Gender</b>		
Missing	1	.4
Female	223	79.9
Male	55	19.7
Total	279	100
<b>Age</b>		
Under 31 yrs.	10	3.6
31-40 yrs.	37	13.3
41-50 yrs.	79	28.3
51-60 yrs.	123	44.0
Over 60 yrs.	30	10.8
Total	279	100
<b>Race &amp; Ethnicity</b>		
White	236	84.6
African American	24	8.6
American Indian / Alaskan Native	2	.7
Hispanic	10	3.6
Asian / Pacific Islander	5	1.8
Other	2	.7
Total	279	100
<b>Education</b>		
High School Diploma	18	6.5
Associates Degree	31	11.1
Bachelor Degree	88	31.5
Master Degree	86	30.8
Doctoral Degree	41	14.7
Other	15	5.4
Total	279	100
<b>Full / Part Time</b>		
Full Time	263	94.3
Part Time	4	1.4
Missing	12	4.3
Total	279	100
<b>Salary</b>		
Below \$20,000	1	.4
\$20,000 – \$39,999	32	11.5
\$40,000 – \$59,999	79	28.3
\$60,000 – \$79,999	68	24.4
\$80,000 – \$100,000	43	15.4
Over \$100,000	56	20.0
Total	279	100

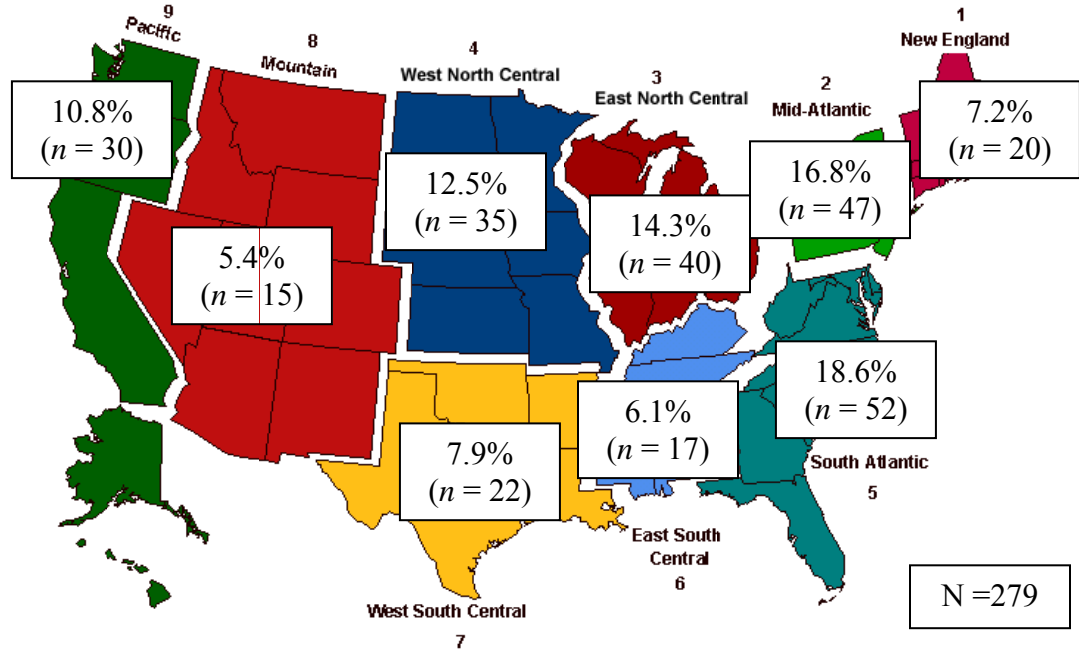
Variables <sup>a</sup>	Frequency	Valid Percent
<b>Public/Private Institution</b>		
Public	146	52.3
Private	131	47.0
Missing	2	.7
Total	279	100
<b>Region of the USA</b>		
New England	20	7.2
Mid-Atlantic	47	16.8
East North Central	40	14.3
West North Central	35	12.5
South Atlantic	52	18.6
East South Central	17	6.1
West South Central	22	7.9
Mountain	15	5.4
Pacific & Islands	30	10.8
Missing	1	.4
Total	279	100
<b>Career Tenure in Higher Education</b>		
Less than 2 years	24	8.6
2 to 10 years	61	21.7
10 to 15 years	37	13.3
15 to 20 years	52	18.6
Over 20 years	104	37.3
Missing	1	.5
Total	279	100
<b>Organizational Tenure</b>		
Less than 2 years	35	12.5
2 to 10 years	86	30.8
More than 10 years	156	55.9
Missing	2	.8
Total	279	100
<b>Positional Tenure</b>		
Less than 2 years	66	23.7
2 to 10 years	137	49.1
More than 10 years	72	26.9
Missing	1	.3
Total	279	100

<sup>a</sup> N = 279.

Other characteristics of the sample revealed the majority of the presidential assistants was ethnically white (84.6%,  $n = 236$ ), with a bachelor degree or higher (77.0%,  $n = 215$ ), working full time (94.3%,  $n = 263$ ) in a public college or university (52.3%,  $n = 146$ ). Salaries reported by the survey showed that the largest grouping was \$40,000 - \$59,999 (28.3%,  $n = 79$ ) followed by \$60,000 - \$79,999 (24.4%,  $n = 68$ ). In addition, more presidential assistants earned in excess of \$100,000 (20.0%,  $n = 56$ ) than less than \$40,000 (11.9%,  $n = 33$ ).

Geographically, as depicted below, a higher percentage of respondents are employed in the regions of the South Atlantic (18.6%,  $n = 52$ ), the Mid-Atlantic (16.8%,  $n = 47$ ), the East North Central (14.3%,  $n = 40$ ), the West North Central (12.5%,  $n = 35$ ) and the Pacific & Islands (10.8%,  $n = 30$ ) of the United States (see *Figure 2*). The lower percentages who reported are employed in the regions of the Mountain (5.4%,  $n = 15$ ), the East South Central (6.1%,  $n = 17$ ), the New England (7.2%,  $n = 20$ ) and the West South Central (7.9%,  $n = 22$ ) of the United States.

Figure 2. Regional Proportions Reported in Sample



Average age, tenure and time in the institution were examined. The average age of presidential assistants was 41–50 years. For organizational tenure and positional tenure, they averaged 2-10 years of employment with the institution. The majority had worked in higher education for more than 15 years (55.91%,  $n = 156$ ). Presidential assistants had also worked for the same institution for more than 10 years (55.9%,  $n = 156$ ); and while in their current position, they had worked between 2-10 years (49.1%,  $n = 137$ ). More presidential assistants had held their current position longer than ten years (26.9%,  $n = 75$ ), than those who had held the position for less than two years (23.7%,  $n = 66$ ).

The preferred personalities types of the sample reported ( $N = 209$ ) are extraverts 62.68% ( $n = 131$ ), as compared to introverts 37.32%. Comparable to McDade’s (1999) study, this study reported more sensors (57.89%,  $n = 121$ ) than intuitive (42.11%,



n = 88) and more thinkers (58.85%, n = 123) than feelers (41.15%, n = 86). This study reported higher percentages concerning Judging/Perceiving than the literature with more judges (75.60%, n = 158) than perceivers (24.88%, n = 52). As well this study reported Sensing/Judging (50.72%, n = 106) personality types dominated the field, while a remnant of Sensing/Perceiving personality types (7.18%, n = 15) were represented are reflected in Table 6. The largest group reported in the sample was the ESTJ (21.05%, n = 44), followed by ISTJ (15.79%, n = 33) and ESFJ (10.53%, n = 22).

Table 6

*Myers Briggs Personality Preference Types*

Variables <sup>a</sup>	Frequency	Valid Percent
ISTJ	33	15.8%
ISFJ	7	3.3%
INFJ	7	3.3%
INTJ	13	6.2%
ISTP	1	0.5%
ISFP	4	1.9%
INFP	10	4.8%
INTP	3	1.4%
ESTP	2	1.0%
ESFP	8	3.8%
ENFP	14	6.7%
ENTP	10	4.8%
ESTJ	44	21.1%
ESFJ	22	10.5%
ENFJ	14	6.7%
ENTJ	17	8.1%

<sup>a</sup>. N = 209.

### Descriptive Statistics

Univariate descriptive statistics were determined for all the variables used in the study. Table 7 presents the means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum score values obtained by the presidential assistants, possible score range values for each of the

variables, and reliability scores. Shown in Table 8 are the means for the ACS, CCS and NCS scores of presidential assistants within each career stage

To ensure the quality of the commitment component scales, all 24 items from the TCM were retained and the data re-analyzed for internal reliability. The results of the coefficient alpha analysis for the 24 items, eight items for each of the three-components, are summarized in Table 7. Coefficient alpha is sensitive not only to the sampling of items but also to sources of measurement error that are present within the testing (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The Cronbach's coefficient alphas for the committed component scales dimensions ranged from .658 to .848. These coefficient alpha values are comparable to Allen and Meyer study (1996, p. 545).

Presidential assistants' averaged affective commitment score was 37.91. The standard deviation of the affective scale among presidential assistants in this study was 7.303. The average normative commitment score for presidential assistants was 31.44, with a standard deviation of 7.694. The average continuance commitment score by presidential assistants was 31.77, with a standard deviation of 6.412.

The patterns of means were similar to the literature that affective and normative commitment were higher in older than younger employees, however, unlike Allen and Meyer's (1993) study the affective and normative commitment were as high among 31 – 40 years old presidential assistants as the over 60 years. Continuance commitment had higher means with the two middle groups (31 – 40 years and 41 – 50 years), however were significant across the age groups. Contrary to the literature, in this study, normative commitment was not significant across age groups only affective commitment was significant.

Table 7

*Descriptive Statistics for Variables*

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min - Max	Range	Cronbach's alpha
Criterion						
ACS	279	37.91	7.303	8 – 48	40	.848
CCS	279	31.44	7.694	13 – 48	35	.746
NCS	279	31.77	6.412	13 – 48	35	.658
Predictors						
Age	279	3.45	.973	1 – 5	4	----
Organizational						
Tenure	277	2.44	.707	1 – 3	2	----
Positional						
Tenure	278	2.03	.713	1 – 3	2	----

Similar to the literature, normative increased significantly across positional tenure. Unlike Allen and Meyer's study, affective, continuance and normative commitment levels, all significantly increased across organizational tenure and positional tenure. Similar information is presented in Table 10 in the form of correlations between each commitment component and each career stage variable.

Table 8

*Organizational Commitment Components at Career Stage Levels*

	Levels of the Career Stage Variables										
	(N = 279)					(N = 277)			(N = 278)		
	AG1 (n = 10)	AG2 (n = 37)	AG3 (n = 79)	AG4 (n = 123)	AG5 (n = 30)	OT1 (n = 35)	OT2 (n = 86)	OT3 (n = 156)	PT1 (n = 66)	PT2 (n = 137)	PT3 (n = 75)
ACS	33.50	38.22	36.70	38.49	39.80	34.57	36.02	39.76	35.74	37.43	40.84
CCS	26.70	32.73	32.29	31.24	30.00	28.66	30.44	32.66	30.39	30.80	33.73
NCS	31.70	32.62	31.06	31.72	32.80	30.43	30.52	32.72	30.11	31.58	33.56

*Note:* For age: AG1 = < 31yrs., AG2 = 31-40 yrs., AG3 = 41-50 yrs., AG4 = 51-60 yrs., AG5 = > 60 yrs. For organizational tenure and positional tenure: OT1/PT1 = < 2 yrs., OT2/PT2 = 2-10 yrs., OT3/PT3 = > 10 yrs.

The skewness value for the affective scale's distribution was -1.492. The skewness value for the continuance scale's distribution was -0.072. The skewness value for the normative scale's distribution was -0.249. The skewness value for the age variable's distribution was -0.536. The skewness value for the organizational tenure variable's distribution was -0.857, whereas the skewness value for the positional tenure variable's distribution was -0.047.

The values of variance of inflation (VIF) and tolerance for each performance factor were used to test the extent of multicollinearity and collinearity. There is no well-defined critical value to indicate a large VIF. Some authors suggest that 10 was large enough to indicate multicollinearity error (Chatterjee & Price, 1991; Stine, 1995). The VIF values for organizational tenure (1.873) and positional tenure (1.861) in this study did not exceed 10, which would indicate a multicollinearity error, thus, there is no error to report (see Table 9).

Table 9

*Descriptive Statistics for Skewness and Kurtosis and Multicollinearity*

Variables	N	Skewness	Std. Error Skewness	Kurtosis	Std. Error Kurtosis	Collinearity Statistics	
						Tolerance	VIF
Criterion							
ACS	279	(1.492)	.146	2.793	.291	----	----
CCS	279	(.072)	.146	(.489)	.291	----	----
NCS	279	(.249)	.146	.409	.291	----	----
Predictors							
Age	279	(.536)	.146	(.109)	.291	.809	1.236
Organizational							
Tenure	277	(.857)	.146	(.550)	.292	.534	1.873
Positional							
Tenure	278	(.047)	.146	(1.021)	.291	.537	1.861

## Analysis of Hypotheses

As previously stated, two related issues were addressed in this study. The first involved the relationships between the three-components of commitment and the career stage variables and the second examined the ability of career stage variables could predict the commitment levels of presidential assistants.

The first issue of this study was guided by the following null hypothesis (Ho):

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between career stages (age, organizational tenure and positional tenure) and three-component commitment levels.

Hypothesis 1 (Ho1) examined the relationship between career stages and the three-component commitment levels. Within each career stage grouping, partial correlations were calculated between the three-component commitment levels. Correlations between ACS and all career stage variables were found to be significant. CCS and NCS were significantly correlated to Organizational Tenure and Positional Tenure (Table 10). Like Allen and Meyer (1993), this study found no evidence of a curvilinear relationship between the three-component commitments and either career stage variables.

Ho1 is rejected because the correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was statistically significant. The Pearson bivariate correlation coefficients reached statistical significance. It may be concluded that affective commitment was positively correlated to age ( $r = .133$ ;  $p < 0.05$ , two-tailed), positional tenure ( $r = .252$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , two-tailed) and most strongly to organizational tenure ( $r = .282$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , two-tailed). Continuance commitment was positively correlated to positional tenure ( $r = .159$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , two-tailed) and most strongly to organizational tenure ( $r = .190$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , two-tailed). As well, normative commitment was positively correlated to organizational tenure ( $r = .157$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , two-tailed) and most strongly to positional tenure ( $r = .193$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , two-tailed). Thus, organizational commitment of presidential assistants is correlated to career stages (see Table 10). As the literature reviewed indicated presidential assistants have an emotional attachment to the organization influenced by

age; an obligation commitment to the organization due in part because of the length of time they had held their position; and consider remaining due to cost of disassociation due in part because of the length of time they have served the organization.

Table 10

*Correlations Between Career Stages and TCM*

Variables		ACS	CCS	NCS
Age	Pearson Correlation	.133*	(.031)	.015
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.027	.612	.804
	N	279	279	279
Organizational Tenure	Pearson Correlation	.282**	.190**	.157**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.009
	N	277	277	277
Positional Tenure	Pearson Correlation	.252**	.159**	.193**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.008	.001
	N	278	278	278

\* $p < 0.05$ , two-tailed. \*\* $p < 0.01$ , two-tailed.

The second issue of this study was guided by the following null hypothesis:

Ho2: Career stages do not significantly predict the commitment of college and university presidential assistants to stay employed with their current institution.

Each predictor was assessed individually, but only the tests of the partial regression coefficients for Organizational Tenure ( $t = 2.531$ ;  $p = .012$ ) reached



statistical significance ( $p < .05$ ) for ACS. As well, Organizational Tenure ( $\beta = .200$ ) was the stronger predictor of ACS. Age ( $t = -1.982$ ;  $p = .048$ ) and Organizational Tenure ( $t = 2.340$ ;  $p = .020$ ) both reached statistical significance for CCS. However, Organizational Tenure ( $\beta = .189$ ) was the stronger predictor of CCS. Positional Tenure ( $t = 2.148$ ;  $p = .033$ ) reached statistical significance and was the stronger predictor ( $\beta = .173$ ) of NCS (see Table 11).

Table 11

*Coefficients*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	
ACS (Constant)	30.129	1.815	----	16.597	.000*
Age	.137	.483	.018	.284	.776
Organizational Tenure	2.065	.816	.200	2.531	.012*
Positional Tenure	1.138	.809	.111	1.408	.160
CCS (Constant)	28.250	1.944	----	14.535	.000*
Age	(1.025)	.517	(.130)	(1.982)	.048*
Organizational Tenure	2.044	.873	.189	2.340	.020*
Positional Tenure	.866	.866	.081	1.004	.316
NCS (Constant)	28.863	1.637	----	17.628	.000*
Age	(.583)	.435	(.088)	1.338	.182
Organizational Tenure	.703	.736	.077	.955	.340
Positional Tenure	1.567	.729	.173	2.148	.033*

\*  $p < 0.05$ .

Hypothesis 2 (Ho2) was rejected because the F-statistics for the three regressions were statistically significant. Multiple regression analysis was used to

analyze the relationship between dimensions of commitment (criterion variables) and career stages (predictor variables), and to test the hypotheses. The F-statistics [ACS  $F(3,273) = 8.667$ , ( $p = .000$ ); CCS  $F(3,273) = 4.923$ , ( $p = .002$ ); and NCS  $F(3,273) = 4.200$ , ( $p = .006$ )] for the three regressions were significant ( $p < .05$ ) indicating that career stages were a good predictor of each commitment level (see Table 12).

Table 12

*Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)*

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
ACS	Regression	1276.549	3	425.516	8.667	.000 <sup>a*</sup>
	Residual	13402.527	273	49.094		
	Total	14679.076	276			
CCS	Regression	831.009	3	277.003	4.923	.002 <sup>a*</sup>
	Residual	15361.916	273	56.271		
	Total	16192.924	276			
NCS	Regression	503.194	3	167.731	4.200	.006 <sup>a*</sup>
	Residual	10903.117	273	39.938		
	Total	11406.310	276			

<sup>a</sup> Predictors: (Constant), Positional Tenure, Age, Organizational Tenure

\*  $p < 0.05$ .

The beta coefficients were tested to see if they were significantly different from each other. The coefficient of determined ( $R^2$ ) was also examined to explain the explanatory power of the regression equation or how well career stages predict

commitment to employment. The variance sum of the commitment levels was unlike the literature in this study. The beta coefficients differ among themselves in magnitude. The beta coefficient allowed for direct comparison between the regression coefficients and their explanatory power on the dependent variable [three-component commitment levels (ACS, CCS and NCS)] (see Table 13). The affective commitment held the most strength ( $R^2 = .087$ ) but was not significant.

Table 13

*Model Summary*

Model	<i>R</i>	$R^2$	Adjusted $R^2$	Std. Error of the Estimate
ACS	.295 <sup>a</sup>	.087	.077	7.007
CCS	.227 <sup>a</sup>	.051	.041	7.501
NCS	.210 <sup>a</sup>	.044	.044	6.320

<sup>a</sup> Predictors: (Constant), Positional Tenure, Age, Organizational Tenure

Summary

This chapter presented the data analysis addressing two research questions. Correlation matrices were used to assess the first research question. Results showed that career stages and the three-components of commitment were correlated. TCM was tested, with career stage variables predicting commitment. Each of the three career stages (age, organizational tenure and positional tenure) was found to be statistically a significant predictor differentially to the three-component model commitments (ACS, CCS and NCS). Organizational tenure was the strongest predictor of ACS and CCS, with age significant only to CCS and positional tenure significant only to NCS.

Discussions of this study's findings, implications and further research are presented in Chapter V.

## CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the study's findings, its implications and further research that are needed. The research findings of this study include an overview of the empirical research that was conducted. Attention is also given to the study's implications for theory, research and practice. Finally, recommendations for future studies are presented along with a general conclusion.

### Research Study Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between career stages (age, organizational tenure and positional tenure) and the three-component commitment levels (Affective Commitment Scale – ACS, Continuance Commitment Scale – CCS and Normative Commitment Scale – NCS) as well as their ability to predict the intent to stay of presidential assistants in higher education institutions, both private and public, in the United States. The major objectives of this study were to:

1. Determine the relationship between career stages and the three-components of commitment of college and university presidential assistants in both public and private higher education institutions in the United States.
2. Determine whether career stages predict the commitment of presidential assistants to stay employed with their current institutions.

This online questionnaire was developed through a literature review and permission to use the TCM (Three-Component Model) instrument granted by the authors Meyers and Allen (Appendix E). The survey was divided into two major

sections. The first section incorporated the TCM instrument using a six-point Likert scale that asked questions related to the respondents' commitment to the position in the institution in which he or she was currently employed. The second section integrated a set of demographic questions related to gender, age, educational level, personality preference type, and geographical region employed in the United States.

According to the literature reviewed attitudes and behaviors of employees associated with their intent to remain employed has been an increasing concern (Steers, et al., 2004). It was strategically important to understand this psychological linkage between employee and organization predicted by career stages because presidential assistants have a longer positional tenure than their executives do. For this reason, the TCM instrument was adapted in this study in order to gain insight of college and university presidential assistants regarding their commitment to remain employed in their position.

### Results and Findings

The purpose of this research study was to examine the three-components of organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative) relative to the career stages (age, organizational tenure and positional tenure) of college and university presidential assistants in both public and private higher education institutions in the United States. This study examined the ability of career stages (age, organizational tenure and positional tenure) to predict the commitment levels (affective, continuance and normative) reported by presidential assistants.

This study focused on two research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between career stages and the three-components of commitment of college and university presidential assistants in both public and private higher education institutions in the United States?
2. Do career stages predict the commitment of presidential assistants to stay employed with their current institutions?

These questions led to the formation of the following two null hypotheses (Ho) that guided this empirical research:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between career stages (age, organizational tenure and positional tenure) and three-component commitment levels (affective, continuance and normative) of college and university presidential assistants in both public and private higher education institutions in the United States.

Ho2: Career stages do not significantly predict the commitment of college and university presidential assistants to stay employed with their current institution.

### *Study Response*

The population of this study consisted of college and university presidential assistants. The sample used in this study was a census of presidential assistants from both public and private college and universities in the United States. There were 1,334 subjects contacted and 293 responded, for an overall response rate of 21.96%. Of these 293 responses, 279 were considered usable for this research, resulting in a usable response rate of 20.91%. This is an acceptable internet response rate according to internet survey responses although not as high as more traditional forms of survey according to the literature (Cook, et al., 2000; Dillman, 2000, 2007; Dillman &



Christian, 2003). The responses appear to be high quality according to the statistical analysis of this study which results in an accurate reflection of the population as previously argued (Cook, et al., 2000; Krosnick, 1999).

### *Demographic Profile*

Analysis of the demographic data collected revealed that a typical composite picture of those in the position of assisting the highest executive officer of colleges and universities are white (84.6%) females (79.9%) between the ages of 51 to 60 years of age (44.0%) with a bachelors degree or higher (77.0%). This was comparable to the national study of McDade, et al., (1999) concerning the composite picture of presidential assistants. This study reported an older typical presidential assistant compared to the national study's 41 to 50 years of age. A 12.8% higher rate of females was reported. A reported change in the percentage of minorities employed as presidential assistants was also noted. There was a decrease in the percentage of black assistants, 8.6% reported in this study compared to 9.6% of the national study. However, there has been a significant increase in the combined minority groups of American Indian/Alaskan Native, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander and other from 4.7% of the national survey to 15.5% of this study.

There was a notable increase in the education level of presidential assistants reported in this study compared to the national study (McDade, et al., 1999; Miles, 2000). The education level of this study reported a 4% to 17% increase in all degree programs with one exception, doctoral degrees. The reported education level of presidential assistants was high school diploma and associate degree 17.6% to 13.9%, bachelor degree 31.5% to 19.5% and master degree 30.8% to 26.3%, with the exception

of the doctoral degree 14.7% to 24.9%, which was about a 10% decrease. The educational level attained by presidential assistants is still a primary focus this may explain why salaries the increase in salaries for this profession as suggested in the literature.

It was reported in this study that the salaries of presidential assistants have increased compared to previous studies of Carlson (1991) and O'Reilly (2000). Presidential assistants that earned annual salaries of less than \$39,999 were 11.9%, \$40,000 to \$59,999 were 28.3%, \$60,000 to \$79,999 were 24.4%, \$80,000 to \$100,000 were 15.4% and 20.0% that had earned more than \$100,000 annually. This study revealed a conservative 4% to 6% increase in each category of reported income, as well, identified that 20% of the reported presidential assistants earned more than \$100,000 in an annual salary.

The majority of presidential assistants were employed in a public (52.3%) higher education institution in the United States comparable to previous studies. This study introduces new data concerning the regions of the United States where presidential assistants are primarily employed. The majority of presidential assistants, according to the respondents, are in the Atlantic and Central regions of the United States, (i.e., South Atlantic (18.6%), the Mid-Atlantic (16.8%), the East North Central (14.3%) and the West North Central (12.5%). More study is needed to confidently suggest if regional culture is a factor to the commitment of presidential assistants.

The last area in the demographic profile was the reported personality preference type of presidential assistants. This study found an overwhelming percentage were extraverts (62.68%) even larger than percentage found in the literature. All

16-personality preference types were reported, several below 5%, even one less than 1%. As well this study reported Sensing/Judging (50.72%) personality types dominated the field, while a remnant of Sensing/Perceiving personality types (7.18%,  $n = 15$ ) were present. The largest group reported in the sample was the ESTJ (21.05%,  $n = 44$ ), followed by ISTJ (15.79%,  $n = 33$ ) and ESFJ (10.53%,  $n = 22$ ).

Literature characterized ESTJs as individuals that like to organize projects, operations, procedures, and people, and then act to get things done. They accept a set of clear standards and beliefs, make a systematic effort to follow these, and expect the same from others (I. B. Myers, et al., 2003, p. 88). This preference type would seem to be appropriate for the roles and responsibilities of presidential assistants. The second populous group reported, ISTJs are characterized as individuals that have a strong sense of responsibility and great loyalty to organizations, families and other relationships. They work at a steady pace in the workplace to fulfill commitments on time. As well, they will go to any trouble to accomplish what they deem as important and necessary as long as it makes logical sense (I. B. Myers, et al., 2003, p. 65). The third largest group of indicated presidential assistants was ESFJ. These individuals are characterized by the literature to organize people and situations, then work with others to complete tasks accurately and on time (I. B. Myers, et al., 2003, p. 96). The difference between the ESTJs and the ESFJs is that ESTJs use their Thinking primarily to organize their lives and work, whereas, ESFJs use experiential facts and value emotional stability and security in the environment and will work to ensure no conflict or tense situations. The informed personality preference types lend to question how these professionals remain in the background to accomplish their roles and responsibilities, as literature suggested,

while more than a majority reported their energy was extraverted. The organizational skills and cognitive thinking associated with Sensing-Thinking-Judging supports the literature of leadership role.

### *Research Objectives*

This study addressed two related issues. The first examined the relationship between the three-components of commitment and the career stage variables; the second examined if career stage variable could predict the commitment of presidential assistants.

Built upon the previous study by Allen and Meyer (1993), this study employed the TCM to collect the respondent's commitment levels to the institution where he or she was currently employed. The study further supported the reliability of the instrument with the new population. As well, confirmed that career stages have a positive relationship with the three-component commitment of presidential assistants. These career stages were also found to predict the commitment levels of presidential assistants to their current institution.

Affective commitment is positively correlated to age ( $r = .133, p < 0.05$ , two-tailed) and positional tenure ( $r = .252, p < 0.01$ , two-tailed) but is most strongly related to organizational tenure ( $r = .282, p < 0.01$ , two-tailed). Continuance commitment is positively correlated to positional tenure ( $r = .159, p < 0.01$ , two-tailed) and most strongly to organizational tenure ( $r = .190, p < 0.01$ , two-tailed). As well, normative commitment is positively correlated to organizational tenure ( $r = .157, p < 0.01$ , two-tailed) and most strongly to positional tenure ( $r = .193, p < 0.01$ , two-tailed). Thus, organizational commitment of presidential assistants is related to career stages. As the

literature reviewed indicated, presidential assistants have an emotional attachment to the organization influenced by age; an obligation commitment to the organization due in part because of the length of time they had held their position; and consider remaining due to cost of disassociation due in part because of the length of time they have served the organization.

Age is seen as a predictor only to affective commitment. As with the literature, this study found that affective commitment increased with presidential assistant's age. As indicated earlier, maturity, better experiences and/or cohort explanations could all be the reasoning for this study's findings. However, unlike the literature, age is not the more strongly linked career stage variable to the three-component commitment.

Organizational tenure is seen as a predictor for each of the three-component commitments. The stronger predictor for affective and continuance commitment, which was not seen in literature, previous studies have indicated affective and normative commitment were predicted more strongly by organizational tenure. The employee may have learnt about the significance of the institution, as previously indicated in the literature review, which they made an investment to remain throughout the length of time thus served their current institution.

Normative tenure is more strongly related to positional tenure, unlike any previous literature. The nature of the commitment of obligation by the employee could be associated to their understanding of the importance of their work, roles and tasks, had long since overcome the reality shock, resulting in affective commitment changes within the confines of the organization.

## Implications

The results of this study have important implications in all the areas of theory, research and practice.

### *Theory*

The literature reviewed in this study suggests there is a relationship between affective, continuance and normative commitment to the career stages of employees (Allen & Meyer, 1993). The findings in this study reinforce the concept that career stages of an employee are related to the Meyer and Allen (1991) multidimensional construct of affective, continuance and normative commitment. A major contribution of this study is that it tested the theory base of the TCM (Allen & Meyer, 1990b; Meyer & Allen, 1984, 1987b) with a new population, presidential assistants. The theory base of TCM is organizational commitment that combines the attitudinal approach defined by Mowday and his colleagues (Mowday, et al., 1979; Porter, et al., 1974) and behavioral approaches developed by Howard Becker (1960), which Allen and Meyer tested in their own study (1993). This combination resulted in the inclusion of the affective commitment and the perceived cost commitment of the attitudinal and behavioral approaches to define and measure organizational commitment of employees.

This research took the perspective of organizational commitment based on the three-component model and found that the presidential assistants' commitment levels significantly influence their intent to stay employed with their institution. The TCM Employee Commitment proposed that presidential assistants would remain with an organization because of their commitment of three approaches. This study found that presidential assistants' *desire*, an emotional commitment to the organization (affective

commitment), influenced them to remain at their organization. The study also found that presidential assistants did consider the *costs* of disassociation with the organization to be too high (continuance commitment); therefore, they remain employed in their current position. Lastly, presidential assistants did exhibit feelings of *obligation* to remain with the organization (normative commitment). As a result, the TCM could be applied as a measurement tool with confidence to presidential assistants at four-year degree-granting, private and public colleges and universities in the United States whether they would remain employed in their current position. Application of the TCM to other relevant higher education employees to determine their intention of remaining employed may reasonably be applied, but caution should be exercised due to the limitation of this study.

### *Research*

It was clear from the correlations that commitment to the organization was related to age, the organization tenure and the positional tenure. The results of the correlation analyses provide evidence for the utility of using career stages as predictors of organizational commitment with university presidential assistants. The fact that the three-components of organizational commitment were differentially related to each of the career stages provides a greater understanding of the commitment of presidential assistants in their position and occupation where they are employed.

There was a link between organizational commitment and career stages. The relationship between the organizational commitment and career stages were found to be comparable to previous studies. The ability for career stages to successfully predict employee commitment to remain in their position was as mentioned in the above

section, the population of administrative assistants has not been researched using TCM, and this study contributes to the literature by adding a fresh perspective to understanding presidential assistants and their commitment to the field.

The study further supported the reliability of the TCM instrument with the new population in higher education. As well, confirmed that career stages have a positive relationship with the three-component commitment of presidential assistants. These career stages were also found to predict the commitment levels of presidential assistants to their current institution. Their executive could identify the implication that commitment levels of presidential assistants could be predicted with of the career stages (age, organizational tenure and positional tenure). This would imply, as suggested by researchers previously mentioned in the literature review, that as executives identify the type of commitment their assistants hold at a particular age or tenure with the organization or position then an application of appropriate stimulus incentives would increase workplace efficiency and productivity (Gonzalez & Guillen, 2008; Mowday, et al., 1982; Porter & Lawler III, 1968; Porter, et al., 1974; Steers & Mowday, 1987; Tomas & Manuel, 2008).

### *Practice*

The results of the regression analyses indicated that career stages did make a significant, albeit small, contribution to the prediction of occupational commitment. Thus, it appears that the length a presidential assistant was employed with an organization influences the commitment level he or she had with the organization. It would seem important to executives that as commitments change (e.g., affective commitment transition to normative commitment) implantation of specific motivational



strategies should change. Presidents that are able to identify the particular organizational commitment held by the most trusted employee, their assistant, would continue to afford effective opportunities of job satisfaction. The reverse would indicate that the college and university president's office would be in continued chaos of new hires and basic training sessions due to constant turnover of dissatisfied presidential assistants.

This study found that presidential assistants' *desire*, an emotional commitment to the organization (affective commitment), influenced them to remain at their organization and their consideration toward the *costs* of disassociation with the organization to be too high (continuance commitment), as well, they remain employed in their current position when they felt an *obligation* to remain with the organization (normative commitment). As a result, the TCM could be applied as a measurement tool with confidence to higher education employees to determine whether they intend to stay employed. College and university presidents maintain confidence in the administrative assistant through continued close training. The key mediating elements of this relationship are loyalty and trust as suggested by Heere and Dickson (2008) in the literature review. The benefit to understand presidential assistants' commitment will benefit the college administrators in maintaining that close confidante in those who make an investment to continued employment. This application could be a valuable tool for new presidents, new and tenured, in their position to determine the commitment of their assistant, whether his or her tenure in the position has been one year or thirteen years, to identify the motivational commitment to the college or university and more specifically their position.

## Future Research

The research findings suggest that commitment levels of presidential assistants in an organization have an effect by career stages, but the data are limited. More research is needed to examine the organizational impact of the commitment of presidential assistants concerning the magnitude of variance. The use of more demographic variables of presidential assistants would lead to a stronger variance of individual commitment (e.g., gender, ethnicity, education, personality preference, salary, career tenure and president's tenure). It would seem reasonable that higher education institutions are likely to employ fewer people, but the office of the president is expected to maintain an assistant who will continue to be the gatekeeper and his or her right hand. College and university presidents are more likely to invest a great deal in these employees and to be in competition with other organizations for their services.

Similarly, higher education institutions are also likely to examine the impact of the commitment of presidential assistants due in part to the decreasing tenure of presidents, while presidential assistants' tenure continues to increase. Colleges and universities are seeking means and ways of making presidential transitions more efficient and effective. If commitment has benefits to employees as well as to organizations, higher education institutions will seek focus for their commitment.

Qualitative methodology would also be helpful in future studies. Such studies could better address the organizational culture of the various university settings as well as offer thick description of those settings. Using such methodology as interviews, document analysis and participant observations, researchers could better identify and

explain the various factors that might lead to administrative assistants' effectiveness and satisfaction.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, since most of the organizational commitment research using the TCM has been conducted among business and limited professions, this study provides support for the model to be applicable among educational professionals. Results from this study may assist college and university presidents in examining the motivation of their executive assistants for remaining employed using career stages as predictors of such commitment.

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APPENDIX A: INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL

**Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board**

Date: Wednesday, December 10, 2008  
IRB Application No ED08184  
Proposal Title: A Study of the Intent to Stay of Presidential Assistants at Different Career Stages in Higher Education

Reviewed and Exempt  
Processed as:

**Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 12/9/2009**

Principal Investigator(s):

Larry S Bassham	Edward Harris
P.O. Box 1705	308 Willard
Cushing, OK 74023	Stillwater, OK 74078

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The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Sheila Kennison, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

## APPENDIX B – 1: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

To: Presidential Assistants  
From: Larry Shawn Bassham, Oklahoma State University  
Date: (Current Date)  
RE: Opportunity to participate in a study of presidential assistants

My name is Larry Shawn Bassham from Oklahoma State University and beginning the Fall of 2008, I am conducting my dissertation research on the organizational commitment of presidential assistants. I had the opportunity to introduce myself to several of you the past two years at the National Association of Presidential Assistants in Higher Education (NAPAHE) Conferences held in Washington, DC and San Diego, CA. I would like to invite you to become a participant in this dissertation study. Your participation is important and will be appreciated greatly.

*Study Title: A Study of the Intent of Higher Education Presidential Assistants to Continue Employment at the Institution*

The purpose of this research study is to examine the three-components of organizational commitment in relation to the career stages of presidential assistants in both public and private higher education institutions in the United States as an Undergraduate Instructional Program institution. These three-components of commitment are affective, continuance and normative. This study will compare the commitment levels reported by presidential assistants by differing ages and levels of organizational tenure and positional tenure. Moreover, the relative contributions of each career stage to each of the three-components of commitment will be isolated for examination.

If you decide to participate in this study, you may access the online survey instrument at <http://frontpage.okstate.edu/coe/shawnbassham>. If the link does not load the survey, you may copy the link and paste it into your browser.

The information collected cannot in any way be traced to participants, as the survey design program used to build this instrument is not capable of tracking respondents or tying information to individual participants. All responses will be voluntary and anonymous to meet stringent standards of confidentiality concerning the anonymity of participant's name and institution affiliation.

It is my hope the study will produce results that are publishable beyond the dissertation. Interested participants will be provided with a copy of the final study results upon written request.

If you have any questions and/or concerns that may help you decide to participate in this research study, please contact me. Inquiries concerning the dissertation process may be directed to my dissertation chair, Dr. Ed Harris. For information on your rights as a volunteer in this research, you may contact Dr. Shelia

Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, (405) 744-1676 or [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu).

Thank you for your consideration of this study. You are making a difference in the profession of presidential assistants. Your contribution to your profession is appreciated greatly.

Principal Investigator:  
Larry Shawn Bassham  
918-306-1398  
[larryshawn.bassham@okstate.edu](mailto:larryshawn.bassham@okstate.edu)

Dissertation Chair:  
Dr. Ed Harris, Ph.D.  
405-744-7932  
[ed.harris@okstate.edu](mailto:ed.harris@okstate.edu)

## APPENDIX B – 2: FOLLOW-UP NOTICE

To: Presidential Assistants  
From: Larry Shawn Bassham, Oklahoma State University  
Date: (Current Date)  
RE: Reminder of an opportunity to participate in a study of presidential assistants

I am conducting my dissertation research on the organizational commitment of presidential assistants in both public and private higher education institutions in the United States as an Undergraduate Instructional Program institution. I would like to invite you to become a participant in this study. The focus of this study is on presidential assistants. Your participation is important and will be appreciated greatly.

Study Title: *A Study of the Intent of Higher Education Presidential Assistants to Continue Employment at the Institution*

I have recently emailed you an invitation to take the online survey that is currently being conducted at <http://frontpage.okstate.edu/coe/shawnbassham>. The information collected cannot in any way be traced to participants, as the survey design program used to build this instrument is not capable of tracking respondents or tying information to individual participants. All responses will be voluntary and anonymous to meet stringent standards of confidentiality concerning the anonymity of participant's name and institution affiliation.

It is my hope the study will produce results that are publishable beyond the dissertation. Interested participants will be provided with a copy of the final study results upon written request.

Thank you,

Larry Shawn Bassham  
College of Education  
Oklahoma State University



## APPENDIX B – 3: FINAL NOTICE

To: Presidential Assistants  
From: Larry Shawn Bassham, Oklahoma State University  
Date: (Current Date)  
RE: Final Notice of online survey on presidential assistants

In one week, the online survey website on presidential assistants in higher education will be removed. I would like to thank all those presidential assistants who have taken the survey for their participation. If you are a presidential assistant, either in a public and private higher education institution in the United States, as categorized in Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education's Undergraduate Instructional Program and have not taken the survey, I encourage you to do so.

The focus of this research study is to examine the three-components of organizational commitment in relation to the career stages of presidential assistants in both public and private higher education institutions in the United States as an Undergraduate Instructional Program institution. You may take the survey at <http://frontpage.okstate.edu/coe/shawnbassham>.

All responses will be voluntary and anonymous to meet stringent standards of confidentiality concerning the anonymity of participant's name and institution affiliation. The information collected cannot in any way be traced to respondents, as the survey design program used to build this instrument is not capable of tracking respondents or tying information to individual participants. Any association made between the name of the participant and this survey will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Larry Shawn Bassham  
College of Education  
Oklahoma State University

APPENDIX C: SURVEY INTRODUCTION & IMPLIED CONSENT STATEMENT

**Presidential Assistants in Higher Education**  
**Please read before proceeding.**

The purpose of this research study is to examine the three-components of organizational commitment in relation to the career stages of presidential assistants in an undergraduate higher education institution, either public or private, in the United States, as categorized by Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. These three-components are affective, continuance and normative commitment. This study uses the *TCM Employee Commitment Survey* developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) as the measuring instrument.

This survey will take approximately five to ten minutes to complete. Your participation is strictly voluntary, and your anonymity as a participant will be protected. Data from this study will be stored with the primary investigator on compact disk for ten years from the beginning date of the study, and will be destroyed at the end of that period if no longer useful for research.

There is no risk to those responding to this survey. The information collected cannot in any way be traced to respondents, as the survey design program used to build this instrument is not capable of tracking respondents or tying information to individual participants.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact, either my dissertation advisor or me. Our contact information is listed below. It is recommended that you please print a copy of this page for future reference.

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-1676 or email request to [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu).

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research study.

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## APPENDIX D: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

### PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

#### **Answer the following with the Likert Scale 1 - 6.**

1. Strongly Disagree; 2. Moderately Disagree; 3. Slightly Disagree; 4. Slightly Agree; 5. Moderately Agree and 6. Strongly Agree.

#### *Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) items*

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization
2. I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it
3. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own
4. I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one (R)
5. I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization (R)
6. I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization (R)
7. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me
8. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization (R)

#### *Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS) items*

1. I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up (R)
2. It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to
3. Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now
4. It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organization now (R)
5. Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire
6. I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization
7. One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives
8. One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice – another organization may not match the overall benefits I have here

#### *Normative Commitment Scale (NCS) items*

1. I think that people these days move from company to company too often
2. I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organization (R)
3. Jumping from organization to organization does not seem at all unethical to me (R)
4. One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that I believe that loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation

to remain

5. If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere I would not feel it was right to leave my organization
6. I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization
7. Things were better in the days when people stayed with one organization for most of their careers
8. I do not think that wanting to be a 'company man' or 'company woman' is sensible anymore (R)

Note: (R) = reverse keyed items

*Career Stage items*

1. What year were you born:
2. How long have you been employed with the current organization:
3. How long have you served in the current position in this organization:

*Demographic items*

1. Gender:
2. Age:
3. Race/Ethnicity:
4. Highest degree held:
5. Employed:
6. Position title:
7. Directly report:
8. Total length of time you have served in higher education:
9. Total length of time worked at this institution:
10. Total length of time you have served as Presidential Assistant at this institution:
11. Total length of time the current President has served at this institution:
12. Total number of Presidents you have served at this institution as Presidential Assistant:
13. Personal Myers-Briggs Personality Preference Indicator:
14. Region of the United States employed:
15. Institution's Current Enrollment:
16. Institution's Carnegie Classification:
17. Public or Private Institution:
18. Salary range:
19. Have you experienced a Presidential transition at this institution:
20. Total number of Presidential transitions you have experienced:
21. Disposition of respondent upon departure of previous President:

## APPENDIX E: TCM EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT SURVEY LICENSE AGREEMENT

– For Student Use



Licensee: Larry Shawn Bassham

Oklahoma State University

College of Education

Po Box 1705

Cushing, Oklahoma

74023

USA

918-306-1398

Project: TCM Employee Commitment Survey - Academic Package - Student License for Use  
of the Survey in a Single Student Research Project (Academic Users Guide - Dec  
2004.pdf)

Date: 24 November 2008 8:33 PST

# TCM EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT SURVEY LICENSE AGREEMENT

## – FOR STUDENT USE

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TCM EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT SURVEY LICENSE AGREEMENT – FOR STUDENT USE

As posted on November 10, 2008

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VITA

LARRY SHAWN BASSHAM

CANDIDATE FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

DISSERTATION: A STUDY OF THE INTENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANTS TO CONTINUE EMPLOYMENT

MAJOR FIELD: HIGHER EDUCATION

BIOGRAPHICAL:

EDUCATION:

Completed the requirements for the Doctorate of Education in Higher Education at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July 2009.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in Christian Education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas in May 2000.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Theology at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College, Moore, Oklahoma in May 1990.

EXPERIENCE:

Graduate Assistant in the College of Education at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma from August 2005 to May 2007.

Adjunct Instructor in the Adult Education Program (ABLE) at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College, Moore, Oklahoma from August 1998 to May 2006.

Adjunct Instructor in the Communication Arts at Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, Oklahoma from August 1999 to May 2002.

Math Teacher and Girls Basketball Coach at Jenks Road Christian Academy, Jenks, Oklahoma from August 1999 to May 2000.

Assistant Vocational Agriculture Teacher at Drumright Public High School, Drumright, Oklahoma from August 1997 to May 1999

Name: Larry Shawn Bassham

Date of Degree: July 2009

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: A STUDY OF THE INTENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANTS TO CONTINUE EMPLOYMENT

Pages in Study: 135

Candidate for the Degree of Doctorate of Education

Major Field: Higher Education

Scope and Method of Study:

The purpose of this study was to examine three-components of organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative) relative to the career stages (age, organizational tenure and positional tenure) of college and university presidential assistants in both public and private higher education institutions in the United States. This study examined the ability of career stages (age, organizational tenure and positional tenure) to predict the commitment levels (affective, continuance and normative) reported by presidential assistants.

Organizational commitment theory provided the framework for this study, with the Three-Component Model (TCM) of organizational commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1991).

Findings and Conclusions:

Building upon the work of Allen and Meyer (1993), this study employed the TCM to collect the respondent's commitment levels to the institution where he or she was currently employed. The study further supported the reliability of the instrument with the new population, as well as, confirmed that career stages have a positive relationship with the three-component commitment of presidential assistants. These career stages were also found to predict presidential assistants' commitment levels to their current institution.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: \_\_\_\_\_