

**An Investigation of the Antecedents and Consequences of  
Affective Commitment in a U.S. Hospitality Organization**

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**(ABSTRACT)**

The notion of affective commitment has become important in the organizational sciences. This study focused on the antecedents and the consequences of affective commitment. The antecedents include organizational commitment to employees, perceived organizational support, employee empowerment, and job satisfaction; the consequence is represented by employee perceived service quality. Previous studies suggest that affective commitment has positive effects on employees' organizational behaviors, for instance, intention to quit and job performance. In today's competitive environment, retaining committed employees is not impossible but challenging, especially in the service industry. The objective of this study was to develop a theoretical model of affective commitment and to test the relationships between affective commitment and its antecedents and consequence.

The data set for this study contained related research information from more than 4000 employees at a U.S. resort organization. To minimize the effect of large sample size, the opinions on the scope of affective commitment from 400 randomly selected hourly employees were analyzed. Using structural equation modeling technique in a two-stage approach, the theoretical model was evaluated and the hypotheses were tested. Multiple

regression analysis was carried out to further identify whether employee empowerment could be used as an indicator to predict affective commitment. Additionally, 400 randomly selected cases were used to validate the model. The validation process confirmed that the initial theoretical model could be used to generalize to the population.

Results from the statistical analysis indicated that affective commitment was positively related to its antecedents and consequence: organizational commitment to employees, perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, and employee perceived service quality. In addition, organizational support to employees was found to have a positive effect on employee perceived service quality. Surprisingly, the expected relationship between employee empowerment and affective commitment was not statistically significant, neither was the expected relationship between employee empowerment and employee perceived service quality.

The findings brought some insight into the study of affective commitment. The managerial implications were explored. Additionally, limitations and future research suggestions were discussed.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Statement of the Problem*

In today's competitive business world, successful organizations have realized that people are their No. 1 asset (Leonard, 2007) and are the central resource in any organization and any society (Newstrom, 2007). Here, the nature of organizations can be interpreted by three key concepts: (1) organizations are social systems, whose activities are governed by social laws and psychological laws; (2) organizations are formed based on the mutual interests, through which management and employees work together to achieve organizational objectives and individual goals respectively; and (3) organizations must treat employees ethically in order to attract and retain good employees (Newstrom, 2007). An organization's success depends on having a stable and talented workforce who are productive and who can deliver high quality product/service (O'Malley, 2000). To achieve this goal, it is fundamental for the organization to implement its human resource management strategy. Compared to the traditional management approach of the early 1900s, the human resource approach emphasizes the growth and development of employees toward higher level of competency, creativity, and fulfillment. Adopting a resource-based view of the firm developed by Barney (1991), strategic human resource management proposes that an organization can gain a competitive advantage from the

human resources that the organization attracts and retains (Boxall, 1998; Delery, 1998), because employees, under the human resources approach, will operate more effectively and contribute to the limits of their improved abilities (Newstrom, 2007). Yet, because of the worker shortage and difficulty in replacing workers (O'Malley, 2000), organizations should realize that securing and maintaining talented employees is a priority, and developing employee organizational commitment is critically essential.

But what is commitment and why do organizations care about employee commitment in the first place? *Webster's Dictionary* defines *commitment* as “the state or an instance of being obligated or emotionally impelled.” Porter and Smith (1970) defined organizational commitment as “relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization.” Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) further identified three related factors to organizational commitment: (1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goals and values; (2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization. In other words, organizations can benefit from employee commitment because (1) committed employees look forward to going to work everyday and are motivated to perform better than uncommitted employees (Mowday, Porter, & Dubin, 1974; O'Malley, 2000); (2) committed employees act in the interests of the company (O'Malley, 2000); and (3) committed employees do not leave voluntarily (Koch & Steers, 1978; O'Malley, 2000; Porter & Crampon, 1976; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974; Steers, 1977).

Employee organizational commitment has different facets. Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) developed three components of commitment model: affective commitment,

continuance commitment, and normative commitment. According to Meyer and Allen, some employees only stay with their company because of the economic reasons, such as salary, benefit packages, etc. This type of commitment is called continuance commitment. Some employees do not leave for other companies, because they feel obliged to remain with the current organization. This kind of commitment is labeled as normative commitment. Employees who stay with the company because of the economic reasons and obligation may not really care about their work or the company (O'Malley, 2000). It is the affective commitment, getting employees attached to and involved in the organization, which strengthens the employer-employee relationship in association with positive performance outcomes (Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997).

However, employee commitment is waning. A study by the Hudson Institute of Indianapolis showed that only 42 percent of the surveyed employees were loyal and committed to their employers (Leonard, 2000). It is inevitable that employees are looking for a new job, because job security is not offered as it once was, and employees have their own trade asset – skills and knowledge – therefore they can easily move from employer to employer (O'Malley, 2000).

How can an organization improve employee affective commitment? DeCotiis and Jenkins (1986) noted commitment can be nurtured in the workplace over time through (1) organization's concern for employee satisfaction, (2) belief in employee integrity and competence, and (3) commitment to employee career growth. The study by the Hudson Institute of Indianapolis listed six factors that have the greatest influence on employee (affective) commitment, i.e., fairness at work, care and concern for employees,

satisfaction with day-to-day activities, trust in employees, organizational reputation, and work and job resources (Leonard, 2000).

In this particular study, the employees working in an American service organization was used as the research unit to explore employee affective commitment and its antecedents and consequences. As it is well known, the economy of the United States is dominated by the service sector, which accounts for three-quarters of GDP (Triplett & Bosworth, 2004). The service sector has become a major contributor in terms of employment in the United States. As of April 2007, about 115 million people were employed in service producing industries, compared to 22 million in goods-producing industries. In the leisure and hospitality sector alone, 13 million were employed. In food services and drinking establishments alone, employment has increased by 336,000 in 2006 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007).

For the last two decades, customers have been complaining that service is poor, and “that service employees are too busy, underpaid, undertrained, and undermotivated to provide good service” (Kurtz & Clow, 1998). Durkin (2005) suggested that customers are willing to pay more for better service, and loyal customers are likely to shop more often, spend more on each visit, and refer the service/product to others. Companies do need loyal customers to grow their businesses, but they can’t have loyal customers without having loyal employees (Durkin, 2005; Reichheld, 1996). According to Reichheld, there are several practical reasons behind this. First, it takes time to build an inventory of customers. Loyal employees tend to stay with the company longer and are able to build solid personal relationships with customers. Second, employees with long tenure learn to increase their efficiency and provide better service as they gain experience

on the job. Third, loyal employees are sometimes a major source of customer referral and employee referral.

However, service organizations have a difficult time to retaining loyal and committed employees because service industries are portrayed as sources of low-wage, low-skill jobs (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 1998). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2007) reported that U.S. workers earned \$19.29 per hour on average in June 2006. Earnings varied by occupational group. The average hourly earnings for service workers was \$11.31, which was the lowest compared to that of the other four major occupational groups; the average earnings for production and transportation workers was \$14.78; the average hourly earnings for sales and office workers were \$15.46, while for natural resources, construction, and maintenance workers, the average was \$19.49; and the average for management, professional, and related employees was \$31.45.

In order to understand the essence of this study, one question should be asked: “What drives an employee to go to work everyday?” An employee chooses a course of action and engages in certain behaviors on the job because of a set of internal and external forces – work motivation (Newstrom, 2007). According to Herzberg’s two-factor model of motivation (1959), there are two separate sets of factors which influence motivation: (1) hygiene factors, such as pay, status, job security, working conditions, fringe benefits, policies and procedures, etc.; and (2) motivational factors, such as feeling of achievement, meaningful work, opportunities for advancement, increased responsibility, recognition, opportunities for growth, etc. Hygiene factors must not be ignored. Employees are dissatisfied with their job if hygiene factors are absent. However, the presence of hygiene factors only brings employees to a neutral state.

Therefore, hygiene factors are necessary but not sufficient. It is the motivational factors that truly have the potential for improving employee effort.

In service organizations, management should understand the importance of motivational factors in order to motivate service employees to perform better. Benoy (as cited in Ashill, Carruthers, & Krisjanous, 2006) noted that front line service employees are the representatives of their organizations and perform the role of “boundary spanning.” How the service front line employees interact with the customers will directly have an impact on the customers’ perception of service quality which influences the profitability of an organization. Therefore, organizations should recognize that employees, i.e., human capital, are the ultimate foundation of the value proposition (Reichheld, 1996).

### ***Objective of the Study***

This study investigates the relationship between affective commitment and its antecedents and consequences. Specifically, organization’s commitment to employees, perceived organizational support, employee empowerment, job satisfaction, and employee perceived service quality are explored with respect to their relationship with affective commitment. Therefore, the objective of this study is to develop a theoretical model of employee affective commitment as well as its antecedents and consequences.

## *Research Questions*

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Is an organization's commitment to an employee an antecedent of the employee's affective organizational commitment?
2. Is perceived organizational support an antecedent of employee affective organizational commitment?
3. Is employee empowerment an antecedent of employee affective organizational commitment?
4. Is job satisfaction an antecedent of employee affective organizational commitment?
5. Is employee perceived service quality a consequence of employee affective organizational commitment?
6. Is job satisfaction related to employee perceived service quality?
7. Is employee empowerment related to employee perceived service quality?

## *Definitions of the Terms*

**Employee affective commitment** is defined as an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in his/her organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

**Organizational commitment to employees** is defined as an organization's actions toward and treatment of its employees reflected in its care for the employees' wellbeing and satisfaction (Lee & Miller, 1999; Muse et al., 2005).



**Perceived organizational support** is defined as the degree to which an employee perceives his/her employer to be concerned with his/her well-being and to value his/her contributions to the organization (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986).

**Employee empowerment** is defined as a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness, and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

**Job satisfaction** is defined as the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values (Locke, 1969).

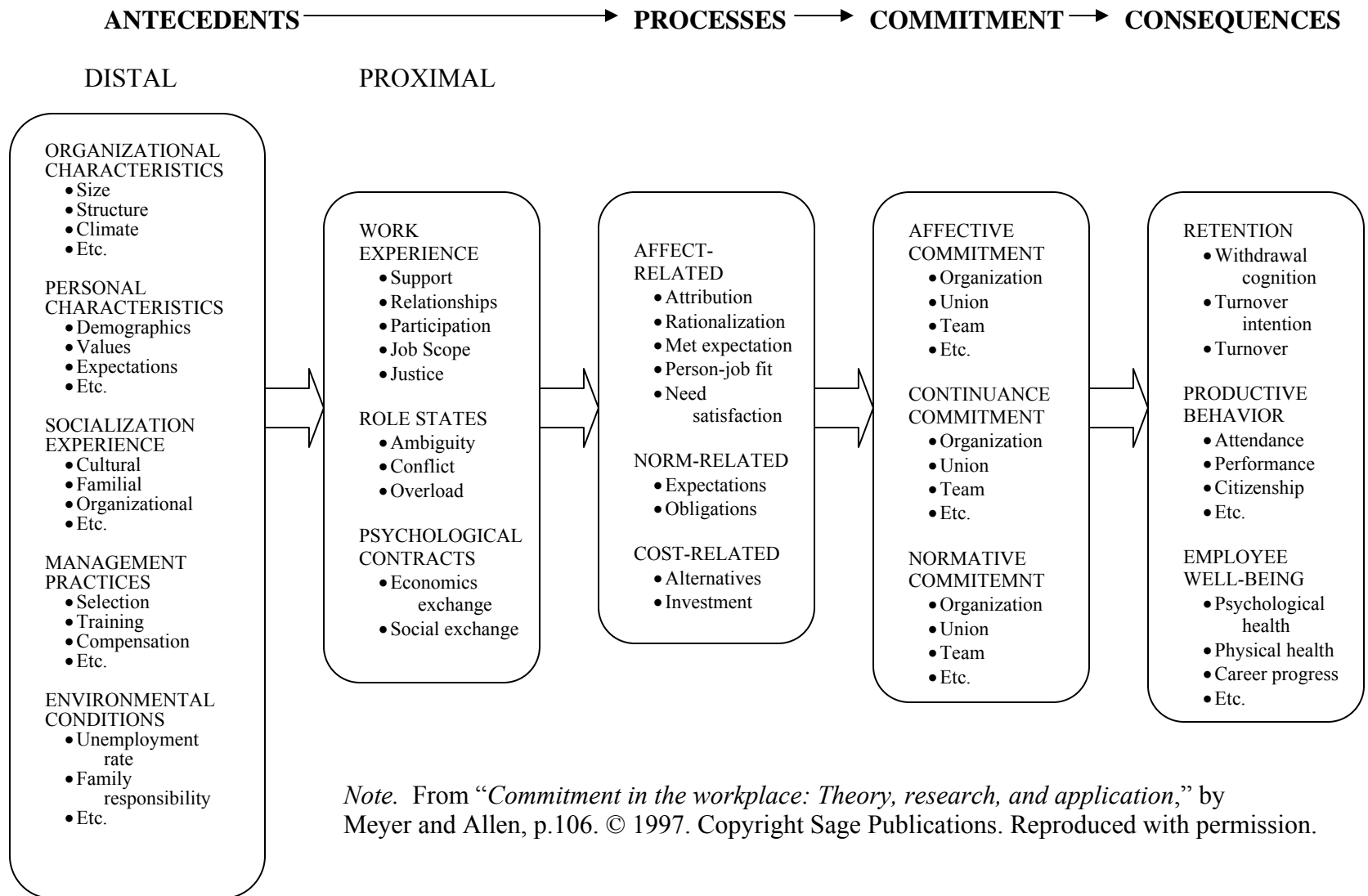
**Employee perceived service quality** is defined as the employee's judgment about the overall excellence or superiority of a service.

### *Theoretical Foundation*

The theoretical foundation of this research rests upon the work of Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997, see Figure 1.1). Meyer and Allen developed a three-component model of organizational commitment; affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Affective commitment is, in particular, important to

organizations because of its effect on employee retention, productivity behavior, and well-being. Chapter II provides additional information regarding the evolvement of affective commitment and its relevance and relationship to the present study.

**Figure 1.1. A multidimensional Model of Organizational Commitment, Its Antecedents, and Its Consequences**



### *Contribution to the Literature*

This study explores employee affective commitment and provides readers with insight by bringing in a new construct in the affective organizational commitment model and developing appropriate measurement scales.

### **Contribution in the Theoretical Model**

Organizational commitment, especially affective commitment, has been studied extensively in the organizational sciences. Previous studies have linked affective commitment to its antecedents (e.g., perceived organizational support, employee empowerment, etc.) and consequences (e.g., absenteeism, turnover, performance, etc.). For instance, organizational support is found to be positively related to affective commitment (e.g., Aubé, Rousseau, & Morin, 2007; Lee & Peccei, 2007). However, few studies related affective commitment to organizational commitment to employees. This study explores this relationship and brings the construct – organizational commitment to employees – to researchers' attention.

Previous studies concentrated on investigating two, three, four, or more constructs at a time. Vandenberghe, Bentein, Michon, Chebat, et al. (2007) studied four constructs; perceived organizational support, affective organizational commitment, commitment to customers, and service quality. Ugboro (2006) focused on job redesign, employee empowerment, intention to quit, and affective commitment. Although numerous studies investigated the antecedents and consequences of affective commitment, no studies have

tested the relationship among the following five constructs at the same time: affective commitment, organization's commitment to employees, employee empowerment, job satisfaction, and employee perceived service quality. This study explores established constructs in order to bring insight into the study of affective commitment.

In terms of the relationship between affective commitment and performance, employees with higher levels of organizational commitment are expected to perform better (Hunter & Thatcher, 2007; Meyer & Allen, 1997). However, there are mixed results. A number of studies have demonstrated that affective commitment has been positively related to performance (e.g., Bycio, Hackett, & Allen, 1995; Ingram, Lee, & Skinner, 1989; Luchak & Gellatly, 2007; Sager & Johnston, 1989). Oppositely, a study on the nurses in Belgium showed no effect of affective commitment on job performance (Vandenberghe, Bentein, & Stinglhamber, 2004). Vandenberghe et al. (2007) conducted another study in twelve fast-food restaurants in Belgium and found that affective commitment had a negative relationship with service quality. The aim of this study is to clear up confusion in this area.

Although a number of studies have tested the relationship between affective commitment and job performance, only a few studies used service quality as the indicator of job performance (e.g., Vandenberghe et al., 2004; Vandenberghe et al., 2007). Furthermore, service quality in the previous studies was measured by the customers' perception. Steers and Porter (1991) pointed out that employee perceived service quality was more direct and suitable consequence of role clarity since perceptions drive behavior. Schneider, Parkington, and Buxton (1980) established the linkage between customers' perceived service quality and employee perceived service practices and procedures

related to service quality. They suggested that employee voice should be listened to as well while evaluating and diagnosing service organizations. So far, few studies have shed light in this area. Mukherjee and Malhotra (2006) studied employee perceived service quality in an Indian call center. Yet, few studies have analyzed the relationship between affective commitment and employee perceived service quality. This study brings the construct – employee perceived service quality – into the model of affective commitment.

### **Contribution in the Measurement Scales**

The measurement on job performance varies from study to study. Hunter and Thatcher (2007) examined the relationship between affective commitment and job performance by studying 419 sales employees in the banking industry. They measured performance by combining the mean monthly financial products sold (e.g., certificates of deposit, annuities, and investment accounts) and mean monthly revenue points.

Vandenberghe et al. (2004) measured nurses' job performance based on the supervisor-rated performance appraisals on the following criteria: (a) quality of care, (b) quality of contacts with patients, (c) work-related helping behavior directed toward colleagues, and (d) work-related helping behavior directed toward the head nurse. Ratings were provided using a 10-point scale anchored "extremely poor" (1) and "outstanding" (10).

Vandenberghe et al.(2007) designed a 12-item measurement scale to measure the fast-food service employees' job performance based on the customers' perception of

service quality by adapting the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988).

From the above, it can be concluded that there is no consensus on the measurement scale of job performance. Since this study examines the service employees in a hospitality organization, service quality is a good indicator of how well service employees performed. Although it is widely accepted that service quality can be measured by the customers' perception of service quality, this study measures service quality from the employees' perspective. Still, five dimensions - tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy - of SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988) are adopted in this study. Instead of focusing on the customers' perception of service quality, this study uses service employees' perception to evaluate service quality. Measuring employee perceived service quality gives other researchers new perspective in the study of service quality.

### ***Organization of the Study***

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter I begins with the statement of the problem, and then provides a broad view of the research direction with a brief elaboration. Research questions are addressed in this chapter and the potential contribution to the existing body of knowledge is assessed.

Chapter II comprehensively reviews the literature of various paradigms, theories and models on organizational commitment and its antecedents and consequences from

the areas of organizational behavior, psychology, management, marketing, human resource management, and service management.

Chapter III begins with an introduction of proposed model followed by the related propositions and hypotheses. Measurement scales are discussed. Research design and methodology pinpoint how the research is carried out. This chapter also explains how the data was collected.

Chapter IV focuses on the interpretation of the statistical results. In this study, reliability and validity of the constructs are assessed. Four hundred randomly selected cases are used to examine the theoretical model. Measurement model and structural model are tested to determine if the models have a good fit. The theoretical model is then validated by analyzing another 400 randomly selected cases.

Chapter V draws conclusions based on the findings. Implications are discussed. Limitation of the study and suggestions for future research are addressed as well.

### *Summary*

The first chapter of this dissertation provided an introduction to the research topic of affective commitment, and asserts that employee affective commitment is the key to organizational success. Adopting the three-component model developed by Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997), this exploratory research defined related terms and addressed the research questions.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### ***Introduction***

This chapter reviews the literature pertaining to the constructs of the proposed model in this study. Various studies in the areas of organizational behavior, management, marketing, human resource management, and service management will be analyzed to form the rationale of the proposed model.

#### ***The Evolvement of Affective Commitment (AC)***

##### **Historical Development of Organizational Commitment**

Whyte (1956) invented the term of “organization man,” who not only worked for the organization, but also belonged to it. Since then, organizational commitment has become a widely studied term in the organizational sciences (Bateman & Strasser, 1984; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Porter & Crampon., 1976; Porter, et al., 1974; Randall, 1987; Steers, 1977). Meyer and Allen (1991) noted that there were three major broad themes reflect organizational commitment defined by various scholars and researchers; affective orientation, cost-

based, and obligation or moral responsibility. By acknowledging the different definitions, Meyer and Allen developed a three-component model of commitment.

### *Theme I – Affective Orientation*

Under this approach, organizational commitment occurs when an individual actively identifies with and involves in supporting the firms' organizational goals and values (Mowday et al., 1979). Similarly, Kanter (1968) defined organizational commitment as the attachment of an individual's fund of affectivity and emotion to the group. Sheldon (1971) defined organizational commitment as an attitude or an orientation toward the organization which links or attaches the identity of the person to the organization.

Mowday et al. (1982) distinguished commitment between an attitude and a behavior. Attitudinal commitment reflects "a state in which an individual identifies with a particular organization and its goal and wishes to maintain membership in order to facilitate these goals." Behavioral commitment represents "sunk costs in the organization where individuals forgo alternative courses of action and choose to link themselves to the organization." Mowday et al. suggested that attitudinal commitment is the desired organizational commitment. Porter and Smith (1970) defined organizational commitment from the aspect of attitudinal commitment; organizational commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. Organizational commitment has three related factors: (1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; (2) a willingness to exert

considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday et al, 1982).

The most popular measurement instrument of organizational commitment from this approach is *The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)* (see Table 2.1) developed by Porter et al. in 1974. This mechanism was widely adopted by a number of scholars and researchers (e.g., Angle & Perry, 1981; Bateman & Strasser, 1984; Morris & Sherman, 1981; Mowday et al., 1982; Porter & Crampon, 1976; Porter et al., 1974; Stumpf & Hartman, 1984; Welsch & LaVan, 1981).

Steers (1977) carried out a study among two groups of people, i.e., group 1-hospital employees, and group 2-scientists and engineers. Results showed that the respondents from both groups had the desire and intent to remain with an organization when they were committed to the organization. Commitment was also found to be significantly and reversely related to employee turnover. This study suggests that organizations can benefit from committed employees by gaining a more stable work force.

In addition, organizational commitment has been related to job involvement (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965), job satisfaction (Steers & Braunstein, 1976; Williams & Hazer, 1986), turnover (Hom, Katerberg, & Hulin, 1979; Porter & Steers, 1973; Steers, 1977; Williams & Hazer, 1986), absenteeism (Mowday et al., 1974; Steers & Rhodes, 1978), and job performance (Somers & Birnbaum, 1998). However, Dunham, Grube, and Castaneda (1994) pointed out that OCQ assesses primarily the affective dimension of organizational commitment. Reichers (1985) criticized that OCQ should not include “behavioral intentions that are supposed to be the result of commitment and not

necessarily part of the construct.” Therefore, Reichers suggested future conceptualization of commitment need to separate the construct from its effects.

**Table 2.1. Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)**

---

1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.
  2. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.
  3. I feel very little loyalty to this organization. (R)
  4. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.
  5. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.
  6. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.
  7. I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar. (R)
  8. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.
  9. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization. (R)
  10. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.
  11. There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely. (R)
  12. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees. (R)
  13. I really care about the fate of this organization.
  14. For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.
  15. Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part. (R)
- 

*Note.* Responses to each item are measured on a 7-point scale with scale point ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. An "R" denotes a negatively phrased and reverse scored item. From "The measurement of organizational commitment," by R. T. Mowday, L. W. Porter, and R. M. Steers, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 14 (2), p.228. © 1979. Copyright Elsevier Limited. Reproduced with permission.

## *Theme II – Cost-Based*

Reichers (1985) reviewed commitment in this theme as “a function of the rewards and costs associated with organizational membership.” Becker (1960) stated that commitment comes into being when an employee, by making side bet, links extraneous interests with a consistent line of activity. Becker further suggested that an individual will develop personal commitment to the organization, if he/she has at stake in that organization. The more stakes he/she has, the greater loss by leaving the employing system. Similarly, Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972) defined organizational commitment as a structural phenomenon which occurs as a result of individual-organizational transactions and alterations in side bets or investments over time. Some researchers have adopted the side bet behavioral approach (e.g., Alutto, Hrebiniak, & Alonso, 1973; Farrell & Rusbult, 1981; Grusky, 1966; Rusbult & Farrell, 1983).

Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972) studied school teachers and registered nurses concerning their intentions to change jobs under certain circumstances, i.e., pay increase/no pay increase, freedom in creativity/no freedom, status gain/no gain in status, and friendlier co-worker/no friendlier co-worker. The results showed that role tension, years of experience in the organization, and dissatisfaction with the organization lead to an exchange phenomenon, depending on the ratio of the rewards to the costs. Hrebiniak and Alutto also noted that personal characteristics, such as gender, age, and marital status, have an influence on organizational commitment. It was found that male employees were more likely to switch jobs than female; single employees were more likely to do so than

married employees; and younger employees outpaced older employees in terms of switching jobs.

Grusky (1966) suggested that the rewards and the costs (the experience an individual must undergo to receive the rewards) are two factors that influence the strength of a person's attachment to an organization. From the investigation on more than 1,600 corporate managers, Grusky found that the managers who experienced maximum career mobility were more committed to the organization than those who were less mobile. Females and less educated managers were more committed to the organization, because they overcame bigger hurdles (costs) to achieve the career mobility (rewards) than did the male and the managers possessing more formal education.

### *Theme III – Obligation or Moral Responsibility*

Commitment behaviors are the socially accepted behaviors that exceed formal and/or normative expectations relevant to the object of commitment (Wiener & Gechman, 1977). Marsh and Mannari (1977) suggested that a committed employee considers it morally right to stay in an organization, regardless of how much status enhancement or satisfaction the company gives him/her over the years.

Wiener and Gechman (1977) surveyed school teachers about their commitment behaviors and job satisfaction. The researchers suggested that job behaviors, e.g., job involvement, indicated the level of commitment to work. Based on the behavioral definition, commitment was measured by the amount of personal time that each individual devoted to the work-related activities beyond the required working day. The results showed that job satisfaction had a moderate correlation with commitment.

## The Three-Component Model

Based on the common view of organizational commitment as a psychological state that shapes an employee's relationship to his/her organization and propels continuance membership, Meyer and Allen (1997) suggested that organizational commitment is a multi-dimensional construct that is composed of three components: affective, continuance, and normative commitment.

Affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue employment with the organization because they *want* to do so. Continuance commitment refers to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization. Employees whose primary link to the organization is based on continuance commitment remain because they *need* to do so. Finally, normative commitment reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment. Employees with a high level of normative commitment feel that they *ought* to remain with the organization. (p.67)

After precisely defining the three constructs, Meyer and Allen (1991, 1993) developed the measurement scales to measure each commitment (see Table 2.2). Although there are three different organizational commitment employees may develop in the employment relations, it is affective commitment that can truly motivate employees to contribute meaningfully to their organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). Meyer and Allen predicted that "continuous commitment will be either unrelated or negatively related to attendance and other performance indicators – except in cases where job



retention is clearly contingent on performance,” because employees of this kind make decisions on whether they should stay or leave an organization based on weighing the costs against the rewards. Another group of employees may be tied with the organization simply because of the feelings of obligation and duty (normative commitment). These employees are expected to contribute to the organization in job performance, work attendance, and organizational citizenship. However, due to the obligation, they are less enthusiastic about and involved with the organization than those who have the emotional attachment with the organization. Hence, less contribution is expected from employees with normative commitment than that from employees with affective commitment.

Snape and Redman (2003) demonstrated that both affective commitment and normative commitment were significantly related to the intention to participate in professional activities. However, affective commitment had the stronger effect. Compared to continuance commitment and normative commitment, affective commitment is the most important component of organizational commitment that employees are expected to develop and possess by their employer. The summary of the research found in the literature indicates a need for an investigation on affective commitment.

**Table 2.2. Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment Scales**

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Affective Commitment Scale Items

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1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in 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 I could easily become attached to another organization as I am to this one. (R)
5. I do not feel "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 Items

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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 of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization right now.
4. It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organization in the near future. (R)
5. Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.
6. I believe that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.
7. One of the few negative 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.
9. If I had not already put so much of myself into this organization, I might consider working elsewhere.

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Normative Commitment Scale Items

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1. I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer. (R)
2. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now.
3. I would feel guilty if I left my organization right now.
4. This organization deserves my loyalty.
5. I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.
6. I owe a great deal to my organization.

---

*Note.* Responses to each item are made on a 7-point scale with anchors labeled from (1) *strongly disagree* to (7) *strongly agree*. R indicates a reverse-keyed item. From "Commitment in the workplace: Theory, research, and application," by Meyer and Allen, p.118. © 1997. Copyright Sage Publications. Reproduced with permission.

### *Antecedents of Affective Commitment*

Meyer and Allen (1997) identified three major sources for the development of affective commitment: organizational characteristics, personal characteristics, and work experience. Although studies have shown that gender, tenure, and other personal characteristics have been correlated with organizational commitment (Steers, 1977; Marsh & Mannari, 1977), organizational commitment in those studies was not measured as a multi-dimensional construct but rather as a simplistic one. Mottaz (1988) noted that the demographic variables, such as age and education, have little effect on organizational commitment. Meyer and Allen (1997) also suggested that the personal characteristics, which can be measured by the demographic variables (e.g., gender, age, tenure) and the dispositional variables (e.g., personality, values), has little to do with affective commitment. Hence, organizational characteristics and work experience are mainly focused on in this study because of the significant expected relationship with affective commitment.

#### **Organizational Characteristics**

Meyer and Allen (1997) reviewed previous studies and found organizational characteristics, such as organizational justice (Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991), pay and procedural justice (Schaubroeck, May, & Brown, 1994; Paré & Tremblay, 2007), strategic decision making (Kim & Mauborgne, 1993), and upward communication (Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991; Greenberg, 1994) have been positively related to

affective commitment. By studying 195 laboratory employees, Konovsky and Cropanzano (1991) confirmed that procedural justice can be used to predict employees' actions, for instance, affective commitment, towards drug testing programs. Employees were reported to have higher affective commitment if they were given adequate explanation for a new drug-testing policy. Schaubroeck et al. (1994) noted the level of employee affective commitment in the control group decreased as economic hardship as a result of the implementation of the pay freeze increased. However, when the employees in the treatment group were explained thoroughly about the company pay freeze policy, their affective commitment remained relatively unchanged.

### **Work Experiences**

Meyer and Allen (1997) reviewed that affective commitment has been positively related to job characteristics, such as job challenge, task identity, degree of autonomy, job context, variety of skills the employee uses, fairness, etc. (e.g., Bateman & Strasser, 1984; Colarelli, Dean, & Konstans, 1987; Dunham et. al., 1994; Steers, 1977). Affective commitment has been linked with the employee's "role" in the organization as well, such as role conflict and role ambiguity (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). In addition, affective commitment is influenced by the relationship between the management and the employees. Eisenberger et al. (1986) found that organizational commitment is attributed to perceived organizational support. Loi, Hang-yue, and Foley (2006) demonstrated the same result. Other factors regarding the relationship between employees and their leaders have been linked to affective commitment as well, for instance, supervisor

supportiveness (Joiner & Bakalis, 2006; Mottaz, 1988; Withey, 1988), transformational leadership and transactional leadership (e.g., Bycio et al., 1995), leader-member exchange (Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995), and employee empowerment (Paré & Tremblay, 2007; Ugboro, 2006). In addition, job satisfaction has been found to be positively related to affective commitment (e.g., Alexandrov Babakus, & Yavas, 2007; Brown & Peterson, 1993; Chen, 2007; Marsh & Mannari, 1977; Scott-Ladd, Travaglione, & Marshall, 2006; Williams & Hazer, 1986).

### *Consequences of Affective Commitment*

Employees with strong affective commitment work harder and perform better than those with weak affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). A number of studies found that affective commitment has been positively related to work effort and performance (e.g., Bycio et al., 1995; Ingram et al., 1989; Luchak & Gellatly, 2007; Sager & Johnston, 1989; Vandenberghe et al., 2004). On the other hand, affective commitment is negatively related to absenteeism, intention to leave, and turnover (Alexandrov et al., 2007; Loi et al., 2006; Paré & Tremblay, 2007; Steers, 1977; Ugboro, 2006; Vandenberghe et al., 2004).

### *Organizational Commitment to Employees (OCE)*

Employees are valuable human capital in any organization. According to the resource-based view of the firm (Barney, 1991), strategic human resource management proposes that an organization can gain a competitive advantage from the human resources that the organization attracts and retains (Boxall, 1998; Delery, 1998). Based on the social exchange theory (SET, Blau, 1964), interdependent transaction may generate high-quality relationships under certain circumstances, which evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The notion of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) implies that employees and their organization are interdependent. Their combined efforts lead to ultimate outcomes. Gergen (1969) pointed out if one party supplies a benefit, the other receiving party should respond in kind. Therefore, if an organization wishes to have the committed employees, the organization itself should make the commitment to its employees as well.

Lee and Miller (1999) defined an organization's commitment to its employees (OCE) as what is reflected in its care for employee wellbeing and satisfaction, in the fairness and compassion of its rewards, and in its investment in competence development and compensation. OCE is also defined as an organization's actions toward and treatment of its employees (Muse, Rutherford, Oswald, & Raymond, 2005). Other researchers (e.g., Roca-Puig, Beltrán-Martín, Escrig-Tena, & Bou-Llusar, 2005) interpreted organizational commitment to employees as a process of social exchange between management and employees, based on the development and systematization of a series of visible actions that facilitate communication and the exchange of ideas and information between employees and management. In this particular study, organizational

commitment to employees is defined as an organization's actions toward and treatment of its employees reflected in its care for the employees' wellbeing and satisfaction (Lee & Miller, 1999; Muse et al., 2005).

Lee and Miller (1999) found that there was a positive relationship between OCE and return on assets (ROA). They measured OCE in two steps, OCE1 and OCE2. OCE1 were measured with four items in a 5-point scale in terms of organization's caring about its employees. OCE2 were measured with profit sharing, fair pay, organization caring for employees' well-being, and money spent on education and competence development and compensation (see Table 2.3). Muse et al. (2005) noted that there was a significant positive relationship between OCE and firm performance. OCE was measured by three variables: average compensation per employee, whether a health plan was offered, and whether a pension plan was offered. Roca-Puig et al. (2005) analyzed the relationship between strategic flexibility and OCE. They measured OCE with five indicators, focusing on the existence of communication with the employees and active participation by the employees.

However, very few studies have related OCE to affective commitment. Furthermore, it seems that there is currently no universal scale to measure OCE. Although each measurement scale in the above studies varies from one to another, it can be noted that OCE is reflected upon in an organization's care for its employees' well-being and satisfaction, and in its investment in the employees' career development.

**Table 2.3. Organizational Commitment to Employees**

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OCE1

1. The organization really cares about its employees' well-being.
2. The firm is really concerned about paying everyone that they deserve.
3. The firm cares about workers' overall satisfaction at work.
4. If the firm earned more profit, it would consider increasing salaries.

OCE2

Compared to your principle competitors,

5. How much do you (the company) invest in education and competence development for your employees?
  6. How much do you invest in total employee compensation (including all benefits and pensions)?
- 

*Note.* OCE1 items are measured in a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 = do not agree to 5 = strongly agree. OCE2 items are measured in a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 = much less to 5 = much more. From "People matter: commitment to employees, strategy and performance in Korean firms," by J. Lee, and D. Miller, *Strategic Management Journal*, 20 (6), p.593. © 1999. Copyright John Wiley & Sons Limited. Reproduced with permission.



### *Perceived Organizational Support (POS)*

To understand the construct of perceived management team support, perceived organizational support (POS) should be brought to our attention. Perceived organizational support is a perception of the various aspects of an employee's treatment by an organization. The perception will influence the employee's interpretation of the organization's motives. Perceived organizational support is defined as the degree to which an employee perceives his/her employer to be concerned with his/her well-being and to value his/her contributions to the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). In other words, perceived organizational support refers to the degree to which an individual believes that the organization cares about him/her, values his/her input, and provides his/her with help and support (Erdogan & Enders, 2007).

According to Eisenberger et al. (1986, 2001), perceived organizational support is positively related to employees' obligation to care about the organization, thus to increase employee affective attachment. Explained by the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), employees would reciprocate perceived organizational support, altering their effort to meet the organizational goals, e.g., less absenteeism. Employees with high level of POS are more likely to evidence high levels of organizational commitment than employees with low level of POS (Jawahar & Hemmasi, 2006). Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) reviewed more than 70 studies concerning perceived organizational support. They concluded that POS was associated with four major categories of beneficial treatment received by the employees; fairness, supervisor support, and organizational rewards and favorable job conditions. Ultimately,

POS contributed to outcomes which were favorable to the employees (e.g., job satisfaction, positive mood) and the organization (e.g., affective commitment, performance, and lessened withdrawal behavior).

### **Perceived Organizational Support and Affective Commitment**

Perceived organizational support has long been studied, particular in the relationship with organizational commitment (e.g., Alexandrov et al., 2007; Aubé et al., 2007; Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Guzzo, Noonan & Elron, 1994; Hutchison, 1997; Hutchison & Garstka, 1996; Joiner & Bakalis, 2006, Jones, Flynn, & Kelloway, 1995; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Lee & Peccei, 2007; Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Vandenberghe et al., 2004; Vandenberghe et al., 2007). After reviewing more than 70 studies, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) noted that POS has a strong positive relationship with affective commitment. Supported by the organization, the employees develop their affective commitment to the personified organization through the obligation to exchange caring for caring (Foa & Foa, 1980), as well as affiliation and emotional support (Eisenberger et al., 1986), and a sense of purpose and meaning (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

The popular measurement scale for perceived organizational support was developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986), which contains 36 items. A short version with 17 items is widely in use, such as in Lee and Peccei's study (2007). Other researchers try to develop their own scales as well. Jawahar and Hemmasi (2006) developed their own 12-item scale to investigate the relationship between POS and job satisfaction among the female managers.

### ***Employee Empowerment (EMP)***

Power is the probability that a person can carry out his or her own will despite resistance (Weber, 1974). Dunham (1984) defined power as the ability to influence others or maintain control over his/her own fate. Power in organizations is acquired; therefore, everyone has the potential to increase or decrease their own total power base. However, there are always a number of employees in organizations, who feel that they are powerless and that their own effort will have little contribution on job performance (Newstrom, 2007). This leads to feelings of low self-efficacy which can be raised through employee empowerment.

One of the most frequently referenced definitions of employee empowerment was offered by Conger and Kanungo (1988). They defined empowerment as a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification of conditions which foster powerlessness, and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information. Empowering management style, so called the participatory management practice, enables subordinates to be involved and participate in the process of decision-making and problem-solving together with their managers. This practice can even out the hierarchical unbalance between management and employees (Wagner, 1994).

When employees are empowered in the service industry, they are very likely to engage in activities to meet or exceed customers' expectations, such as (1) taking initiatives beyond what is expected of (the service employee) to please customers; (2) being independent in terms of relying on his/her own judgment to make decisions

required in the job; (3) having a sense of ownership to resolve customers' complaint; (4) making financial concessions to customers if necessary to deal with a customer's complaint or problem; (5) bending rules to please customers; and (6) being creative in order to delight customers (Klidas, Van Den Berg, & Wilderom, 2007).

Thomas and Velthouse (1990) suggested that the concept of empowerment is much more complex and should manifest itself in four dimensions: *meaningfulness*, *competence*, *impact* and *choice or self-determination*, which reflect an individual's orientation to his or her work roles. Spreitzer (1995) developed a 4-dimension measurement scale for employee empowerment; *meaning* taken from Tymon (1988), *competence* adapted from Jones (1986), *self-determination* adopted from Hackman and Oldman's (1975) autonomy scale, and *impact* taken from Ashford's (1989) helplessness scale. Each dimension is measured with three items respectively (see Table 2.4).

**Table 2.4. Measurement Scale for Employee Empowerment**

---

Meaning

1. The work I do is very important to me.
2. My job activities are personally meaningful to me.
3. The work I do is meaningful to me.

Competence

1. I am confident about my ability to do my job.
2. I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities.
3. I have mastered skills necessary for my job.

Self-determination

1. I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job.
2. I can decide on my own how I can go about doing my work.
3. I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.

Impact

1. My impact on what happens in my department is large.
  2. I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department.
  3. I have significant influence over what happens in my department.
- 

*Note.* The items are measured with Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* , 7 = *strongly Agree*). From “Individual empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement, and validation,” by G. M. Spreitzer, *Academy of Management Journal*, 38 (5), p.1465. © 1995. Copyright Academy of Management. Reproduced with permission.

## **Employee Empowerment and Employee Affective Commitment**

Employee empowerment is related to an employee's organizational behavior. Recent studies have shown that employee empowerment is positively related to affective organizational commitment (e.g., Babakus, Yavas, Karatepe, & Avci, 2003; Paré & Tremblay, 2007; Ugboro, 2006). When employees are given increased authority to handle their jobs, they are more likely to be highly engaged in the organizational operation and participate in the decision making process (Lashley, 2001). Engaged employees are happier with their lives which lead to positive relationships with managers and coworkers (Lockwood, 2007). Also, research by Corporate Leadership Council in 2004 found that companies with high employee engagement tend to have ten times more committed employees than those with low employee engagement (as cited in Lockwood, 2007). Smeenk, Eisinga, Teelken, and Doorewaard (2006) demonstrated in their study that HR practices, such as employee participation, can positively affect organizational commitment.

### ***Job Satisfaction (JS)***

Locke (1969) defined job satisfaction as the “the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values.” The two-factor theory (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959) along with the job characteristics theory (Hackman & Oldman, 1976, 1980) illustrates how job satisfaction is derived. Factors associated with an individual's needs for

psychological growth can be contributed to job satisfaction, a global feeling about the attitude of people liking or disliking their jobs (Spector, 1997). Spector noted that there are certain facets can be found in some common job satisfaction instruments, e.g., appreciation, communication, job condition, organization itself, pay, personal growth, recognition, promotion opportunities, security, etc. The assessment of job satisfaction can be approached via facet scales and global satisfaction scales. The facet scales include the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS; Spector, 1985), the Job Descriptive Index (JDI; Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969), the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ; Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967), and the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS; Hackman & Oldman, 1975). The global satisfaction scales can be found in the Job in General Scale (JIG; Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, & Paul, 1989), and the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire satisfaction subscale (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1979). Cammann et al. measured job satisfaction with three items: (1) All in all, I am satisfied with my job; (2) In general, I don't like my job; and (3) In general, I like working here. The second item was scored reversely.

Vroom (1964) pointed out that the more satisfied an employee, the more likely that he/she will stay at his/her job and there is less of a possibility of his/her leaving it voluntarily. After a thorough meta-analysis on various studies done from 1940's to 1960's, Vroom concluded that job satisfaction has a consistent negative relationship with the probability of resignation, also a less consistent negative relationship with absences. Recent studies showed consistently that job satisfaction can be used as a predictor of absenteeism (e.g., Wegge, Schmidt, Parkes, & Van Dick, 2007), intention to quit (e.g.,

Scott, Cravelle, Simoens, Bojke, & Sibbald, 2006), and actual turnover (e.g., Wright & Bonett, 2007).

### **Job Satisfaction and Employee Affective Commitment**

Job satisfaction and employee affective commitment are interrelated. Employees with a higher level of job satisfaction exhibit greater organizational commitment (Alexandrov et al., 2007). Mukherjee and Malhotra (2006) noted job satisfaction has an indirect effect on an employee's perception of service quality mediated through organizational commitment. Job satisfaction has been studied as an antecedent of organizational commitment by some researchers (e.g., Alexandrov et al., 2007; Brown & Peterson, 1993; Chen, 2007; Scott-Ladd et al., 2006; Marsh & Mannari; 1977).

### ***Employee Perceived Service Quality (EPSQ)***

Service employees in service industry deliver services to satisfy customers' needs and wants. Service employees' job performance can be interpreted from the quality of the service delivered. It is widely accepted that service quality can be measured based on customers' perception of service quality (e.g., SERVQUAL; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985).

However, Steers and Porter (1991) argued that employee perceived service quality is a more direct and suitable consequence of role clarity since perceptions drive behavior. Schneider et al. (1980) established the linkage between the customers'



perception of service quality and the employees' perception of service practices and procedures related to service quality. They further suggested that feedback from employees should be evaluated as well during the process.

### **Employee Empowerment and Employee Perceived Service Quality**

Frontline employees in today's service industry face a greater uncertainty from increasingly demanding consumers in the unpredictable service situations. It is important for service organizations to allocate more authority to front line employees to allow them to respond promptly to the needs of individual customers (Hartline & Ferrell, 1999).

Frontline employees are more likely to exercise empowered behavior, when they have encouragement, support, trust and confidence of their superiors (Klidaset al., 2007).

Service firms, to delight the customers, often empower their employees to do "whatever it takes" to meet customers' expectations and recover service failures (Lashley, 2001).

Kurtz and Clow (1998) observed employees tend to work harder and perform better if they believe their job is significant to their organization. Giving employees more responsibility and authority employers gain through increased productivity and better quality (Lashley, 2001).

Moore, Hopkins, W.E., and Hopkins, S.A. (1998) conducted a longitudinal study and found that empowerment programs lead to customer satisfaction, which improve organizational effectiveness. Bitner, Booms, and Tetreault (1990), by studying the critical incidents, noted that a service employee's ability to respond in service failure situations could recover failures and result in highly satisfactory encounters. The incidents included compensation for the customers who experienced a long wait in a

restaurant, responded to the customers' needs and special requests, and paid attention to the customers.

Geralis and Terziovski (2003) studied bank employees and suggested empowering the workforce was a powerful strategy that substantially improved service quality. However, Vandenberghe et al. (2007) surveyed service employees who worked at 12 fast-food restaurants in Belgium and found there was no positive relationship between affective commitment and service quality. The authors noted that the result contradicted the commitment theory, which may indicate that the goals of the organization may not be compatible with those of the customers'.

The studies above using service quality as an indicator of job performance were measured differently from case to case. Geralis and Terziovski (2003) measured service quality by staff personal qualities, abilities of staff, and performance outcomes. Vandenberghe et al. (2007) measured service quality by adopting the SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1985) based on customers' perception. Only Mukherjee and Malhotra (2006) adapted SERVQUAL instrument to measure service quality based on employees' perception. There are five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, empathy, assurance, and responsiveness in original SERVQUAL model. Mukherjee and Malhotra used four dimensions to measure employee perceived service quality: reliability, empathy, assurance, responsiveness. Four items were used to measure assurance. The other three dimensions were measured by two items respectively. For instance, empathy was measured by "I perform the service right at the first time" and "When I promise a customer that I will do something by a certain time, I do so."

## **Organizational Commitment to Employee and Employee Perceived Service Quality**

Organizational commitment to employees (OCE) has a significant positive effect on a firm's performance (Muse et al., 2005; Roca-Puig et al., 2005). OCE can be considered as a strategic resource which affects organizational outcomes. Roca-Puig et al. used customer satisfaction and the firm's financial results to measure firm performance. Muse et al. measured OCE from the compensation aspect. This study proposes employee perceived service quality is a direct indicator of firm performance.

## **Employee Affective Commitment and Employee Perceived Service Quality**

Employees with strong affective commitment work harder and perform better than those with weak affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Babakus et al. (2003) pointed out employee affective commitment was a significant driver of job performance. A number of studies demonstrated that affective commitment was positively related to work effort and job performance (e.g., Bycio et al., 1995; Ingram et al., 1989; Luchak & Gellatly, 2007; Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, & Jackson, 1989; Sager & Johnston, 1989; Vandenberghe et al., 2004).

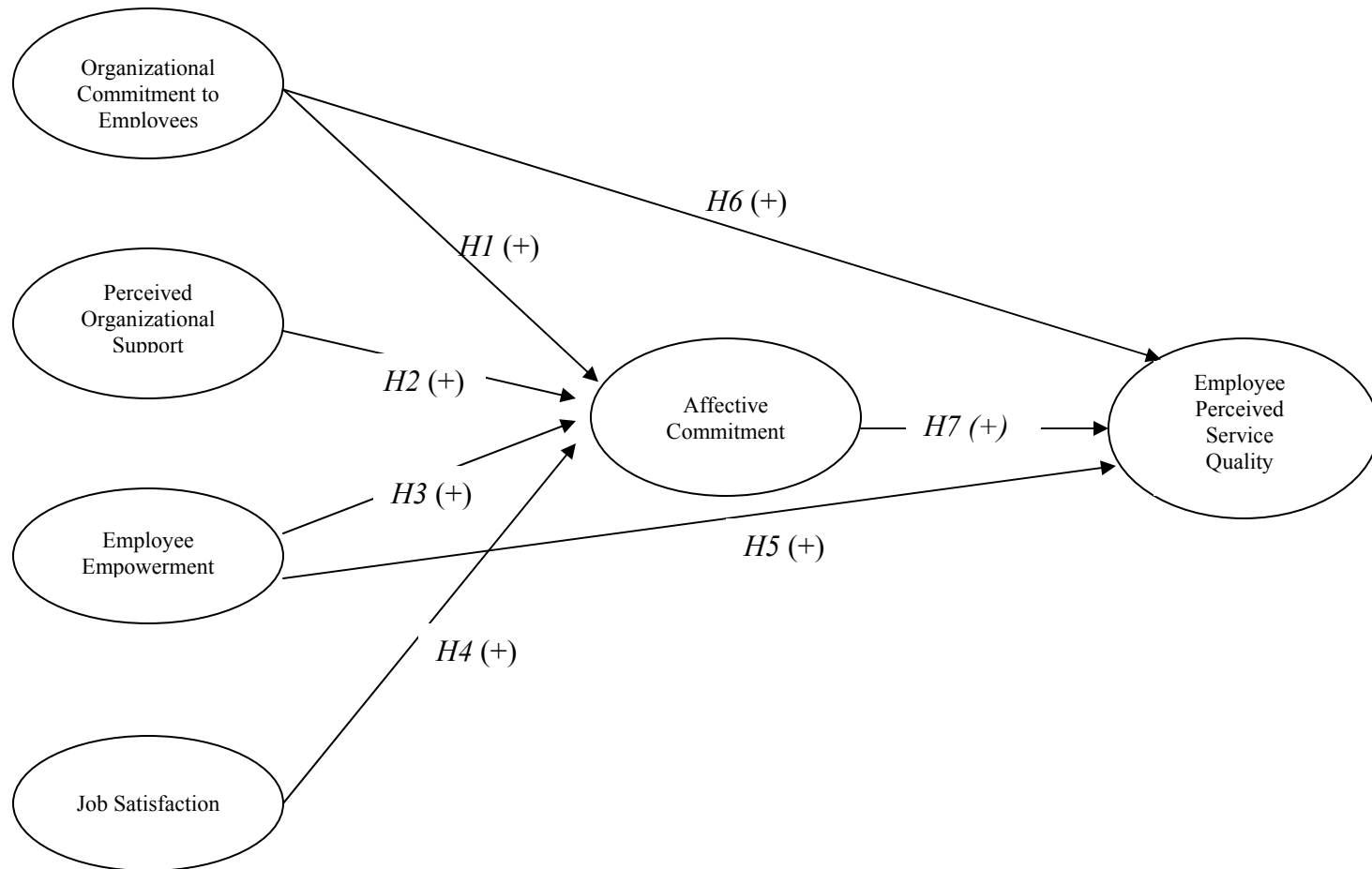
### ***Hypotheses and the Model***

The literature review suggests that employee affective commitment is a desirable organizational behavior which every organization hopes their employees will develop

over time. When an employee is emotionally attached and committed to his/her firm, he/she is more likely to perform better and stay longer with the organization than those who do not demonstrate affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). Therefore, a committed employee can contribute significantly to the success of his/her organization. To retain emotionally attached employees, an organization should understand what drives affective commitment. Studies have shown that an employee will demonstrate his/her affective commitment; when he/she is empowered and supported by the management, and satisfied with his/her job. This study will link affective commitment along with antecedents and consequences, as well as provide management with a theoretical foundation on how to foster employee affective commitment. Based on the literature review, eight hypotheses and a conceptual model (see Figure 2.2) have been developed.

- Hypothesis 1: Organizational commitment to employees will have a positive effect on employee affective commitment.
- Hypothesis 2: Perceived organizational support will have a positive effect on employee affective commitment.
- Hypothesis 3: Employee empowerment will have a positive effect on employee affective commitment.
- Hypothesis 4: Job satisfaction will have a positive effect on employee affective commitment.
- Hypothesis 5: Employee empowerment will have a positive effect on employee perceived service quality.
- Hypothesis 6: Organizational commitment will have a positive effect on employee perceived service quality.
- Hypothesis 7: Employee affective commitment will have a positive effect on employee perceived service quality.

**Figure 2.1. Proposed Model of Affective Commitment**



### *Theoretical and Research Boundaries*

Dublin (1969) maintained that the boundaries of one study include the implicit values of the theorists and the explicit restrictions regarding space and time. According to Bacharach (1989), the theory tends to be value-laden because of “the theorist’s creative imagination and ideological orientation or life experience.” Employee organizational commitment in this study is interpreted to be something beyond passive loyalty to an organization. Besides being committed to an organization, an individual may also make commitments to other aspects of his/her environment, such as one’s family or union or political party (Mowday et al., 1979). Commitment to one party does not mean that an individual can not make commitments to other parties, or that it is less committed to other parties. Hence, commitment can not be used up, is an infinite psychological state.

Boundaries for this particular study are also subject to space and time. This study analyzes data collected from the customer contact full-time employees in a U.S. resort organization. It may confine the findings to be generalized to other types of employment (e.g., part-timers, managers), other types of businesses (e.g., manufacturing, banking), and organizations outside the U.S territories (e.g., European companies, Asian companies). Regarding temporal assumptions, the study and research on commitment has evolved over time. Mowday et al. (1979) and Steers (1977) focused on organizational commitment as a unidimensional construct. Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) viewed organizational commitment as a multi-dimensional construct, which is composed of three components: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Therefore, the general findings on organizational commitment under the theory of Mowday and Steers’

may not be interpreted well in Meyer and Allen's three-component model, and vice versa. Therefore, special attention should be paid in the literature review process on the subject of organizational commitment.

### *Summary*

This chapter developed a conceptual framework of the antecedents and consequence of employee affective commitment. The literature review provided necessary and sufficient statements to support the hypotheses which specify the relationships among the constructs; organization's commitment to employees, perceived organizational support, employee empowerment, job satisfaction, employee affective commitment, and employee perceived service quality. The following chapter develops a conceptual model of affective commitment, and illustrates the methodology which will be used to examine the model.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Introduction***

This chapter presents the methodology used to examine the conceptual model of affective commitment. The following addresses (1) the research framework and hypotheses, (2) sample, (3) measure, and (4) the statistics techniques used in this study. A diagram of the model is presented (see Figure 3.1).

#### ***Research Framework***

The proposed conceptual framework in this study is based on findings in the literature review. By integrating existing constructs, adding new constructs, and modifying existing constructs, the proposed model contributes to the body of knowledge in regards to employee affective commitment, its antecedents and consequences. In the original model developed by Meyer and Allen (1991), organizational commitment to employees was not present. Job performance of the proposed model in this study is considered as one of the consequences of affective commitment. Further, job performance in this study is specified as employee perceived service quality (in the service industry).



**Figure 3.1. Proposed Model of Affective Commitment**

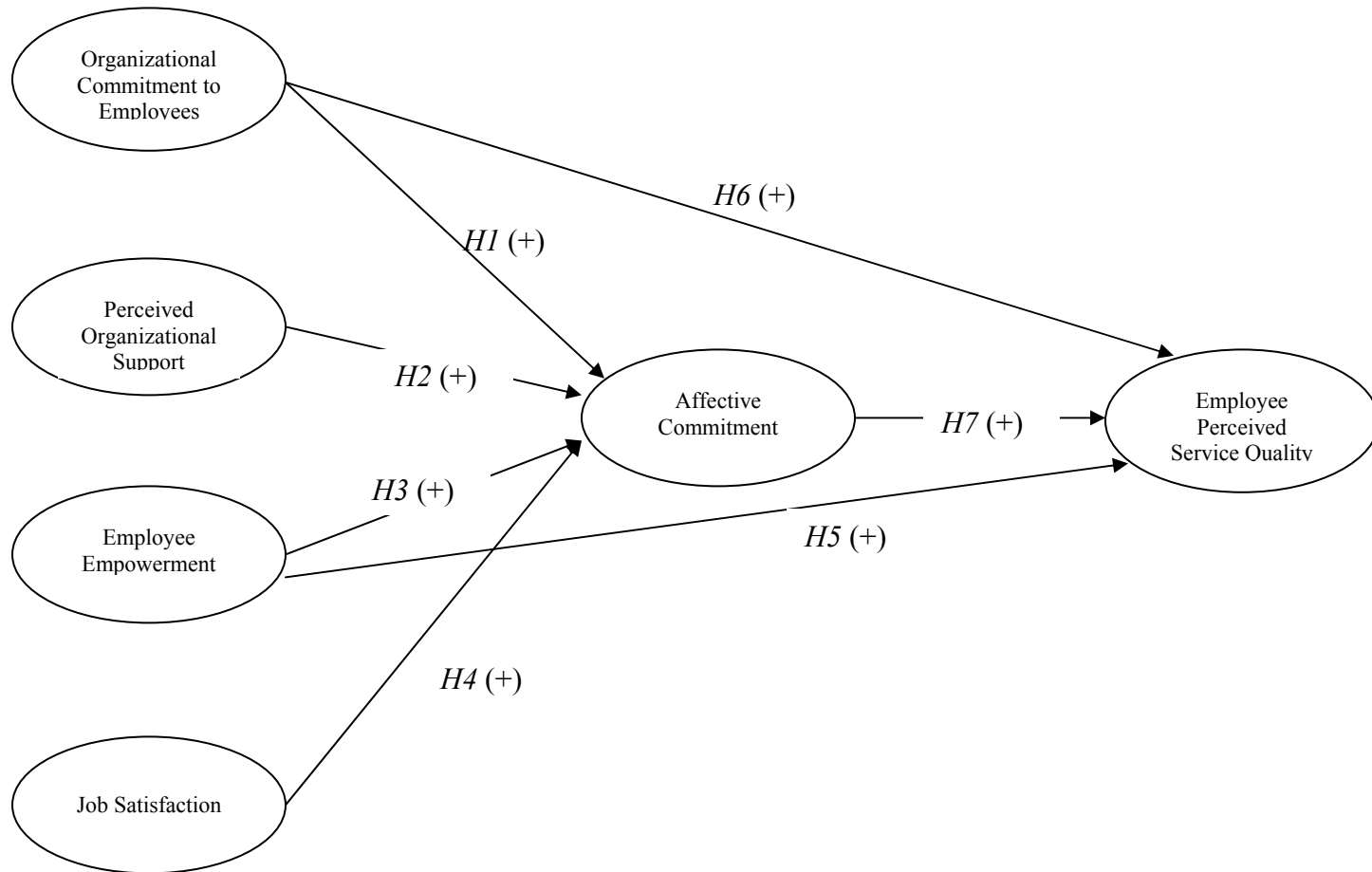


Figure 3.1 displays the proposed model of affective commitment, which is composed of six constructs and seven hypothesized relationships: organizational commitment to employees, perceived organizational support, employee empowerment, job satisfaction, affective commitment, and employee perceived service quality. Eight hypotheses were developed based on the literature review.

The research hypotheses are restated as the following:

Employees are valuable human capital. Based on the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), under certain circumstances, interdependent transaction between employees and management may generate high-quality relationships, which evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Gergen (1969) pointed out if one party supplies a benefit, the other receiving party should respond in kind. Therefore, if an organization wishes to retain the committed employees, the organization itself should make the commitment to its employees as well.

*Hypothesis 1: Organizational commitment to employees will have a positive effect on employee affective commitment.*

Employees with a high level of perceived organizational support (POS) are likely to experience high levels of organizational commitment (Jawahar & Hemmasi, 2006). Supported by the organization, employees develop their affective commitment to the personified organization through the obligation to exchange caring for caring (Foa & Foa, 1980), affiliation and emotional support (Eisenberger et al., 1986), as well as the sense of purpose and meaning (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

*Hypothesis 2:* Perceived organizational support will have a positive effect on employee affective commitment.

Studies show that employee empowerment is positively related to affective organizational commitment (e.g., Babakus et al., 2003; Paré & Tremblay, 2007; Ugboro, 2006). When employees are given authority to handle their jobs, they are more likely to be highly engaged in the organizational operation and participate in the decision making process (Lashley, 2001). Research by The Corporate Leadership Council in 2004 revealed that companies with high employee engagement tended to have ten times more committed employees than those with low employee engagement (Lockwood, 2007).

*Hypothesis 3:* Employee empowerment will have a positive effect on employee affective commitment.

Employees with a higher level of job satisfaction exhibit greater organizational commitment (Alexandrov et al., 2007). Mukherjee and Malhotra (2006) noted job satisfaction has an indirect effect on employee's perception of service quality mediated through organizational commitment. Job satisfaction has been studied as an antecedent of organizational commitment by some researchers (e.g., Alexandrov et al., 2007; Brown & Peterson, 1993; Chen, 2007; Scott-Ladd et al., 2006; Marsh & Mannari; 1977).

*Hypothesis 4:* Job satisfaction will have a positive effect on employee affective commitment.

Organizations can gain competitive advantage through improved service quality if empowerment is used as an employment strategy (Lashley, 2001). Today's service operations have frontline employees who face a greater uncertainty from increasingly demanding consumers in unpredictable service situations. It is important for the service organizations to allocate more authority to the front line employees to respond promptly to the individual needs (Hartline & Ferrell, 1999). Empowerment allows frontline service employees to have the flexibility and responsiveness needed in service encounters where it is difficult to predict customer needs (Barbee & Bott, 1991).

*Hypothesis 5:* Employee empowerment will have a positive effect on employee perceived service quality.

When an organization demonstrates its commitment to its employees, they will respond with trust and commitment to the organization. Organizational commitment to employees (OCE) has a positive effect on a firm's performance (Muse et al., 2005; Roca-Puig et al., 2005), and can be considered as a strategic resource which affects organizational outcomes.

*Hypothesis 6:* Organizational commitment will have a positive effect on employee perceived service quality.

Employees with strong affective commitment work harder and perform better than those with weak affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Babakus et al. (2003) found employee affective commitment to be a significant driver of job performance. A number of studies have demonstrated that affective commitment has

been positively related to work effort and job performance (e.g., Bycio et al., 1995; Ingram et al., 1989; Luchak & Gellatly, 2007; Sager & Johnston, 1989; Vandenberghe et al., 2004). Employee perceived service quality in this study is an appropriate indicator for job performance within the service organization.

*Hypothesis 7:* Employee affective commitment will have a positive effect on employee perceived service quality.

### ***Sample and Data Selection***

The conceptual framework examines the relationships between affective commitment as well as its antecedents and consequences. The target research population was composed of the frontline employees in a hospitality resort firm in the United States. Secondary data was used to test the proposed conceptual model. Originally an 8-page questionnaire was developed and used by the resort firm as the annual employee opinion survey from 1996 to 1999. Appendix A describes the questionnaire design process. The data used in this study was the version of 1999 survey, which contained 5913 cases in total.

If categorized by gender, there were 2125 female employees and 3085 male employees; the remaining 703 cases were without gender identification. Employees from six employment levels were surveyed: 4109 were hourly line employees, which accounted for 69.5% of the total employees; 580 were hourly lead/foreman, which was 9.8% of the total employees; 287 salaried non-supervisory employees, 4.9% of the total; 302 salaried supervisor or assistant manager, 5.1% of the total; 361 manager, 6.1% of the

total; and 121 senior manager or above, which accounted for 2% of the total employees. In term of employment length, about 30% of the total employees had worked for the resort for about three month or less; around 12% had stayed with the organization for about four to six months; roughly 13% had been with the firm for about seven to twelve months; approximately 19% had spent one to three years working for the resort; a little more than 10% had been with the organization for about five to ten years; and nearly 6% of the total employees had served the resort for more than ten years. In term of age, 33% of the employees were between 21 and 25 years old; 29% aged between 26 and 35 years old. Appendix B shows the detailed descriptive statistics.

Based on the hypotheses, the opinion from the front line employees was analyzed. To avoid the possible significance issue caused by the large sample size of 4109, 400 cases were randomly selected to conduct the statistical analyses (confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling), and another 400 cases were randomly selected for the purpose of model validation.

### *Statistical Techniques*

#### **Structural Equation Modeling**

Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a comprehensive statistical approach to testing hypotheses about relations among observed and latent variables (Hoyle, 1995). SEM techniques are becoming popular in confirming (disconfirming) theoretical models in a quantitative way. The first reason is that the SEM techniques can be used to deal

with the sophisticated theories being developed; whereas basic statistical methods only utilize a limited number of variables, which is not capable of understanding complex phenomena (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). The second reason is that SEM takes measurement error into account when analyzing data, and is based on linear models. (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2000; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). The third reason is that SEM has matured and become user-friendly over the years (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Researchers can choose from the Amos, EQS, and LISREL computer programs to conduct SEM analysis. In short, SEM has been selected for this study because this method can quantify and test theories when multiple constructs are present. In addition, the relationships between the constructs in this study are assumed to be linear, and therefore SEM is the appropriate statistical technique. In terms of computer program, LISREL 8.51 developed by Jöreskog and Sörbom (1996a) was chosen to analyze data in this study.

There are two components of the general structural equation model: the measurement model and the structural model. The measurement model prescribes the latent variables which are often referred to as factors. To determine which sets of observed variables share common variance-covariance characteristics, factor analysis is often used either to confirm that a set of variables defines those constructs or explore factors formed by a set of variables. These are the rationales for exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). The measurement instruments in this study are examined using exploratory factor analysis during the questionnaire design process, meaning a model was already found to fit the data. Six constructs were identified in this model. They are: organizational

commitment to employees (OCE), perceived organizational support (POS), employee empowerment (EMP), job satisfaction (JS), affective commitment (AC), and employee perceived service quality (EPSQ). To test the significance and the validity of the hypothesized factor model, confirmatory factor analysis is used to assess and evaluate the model.

The second component of the structural equation modeling is the structural model which prescribes relationships between latent variables and observed variables. The proposed model consists of four exogenous constructs (organizational commitment to employees, perceived organizational support, employee empowerment, and job satisfaction) and two endogenous constructs (affective commitment and employee perceived service quality). When the measurement model and the structural model are combined, researchers can evaluate relations among variables that are free of measurement error through the combined comprehensive statistical model (Hoyle, 1995).

The overall fit of a structural equation model is normally assessed by  $\chi^2$  goodness-of-fit statistic and the so-called fit indexes. Three criteria are recommended by Schumacker and Lomax (2004): (1) The non-statistical significance of the chi-square test and the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) values. A non-statistically significant chi-square value indicates that the sample covariance matrix and the reproduced model-implied covariance matrix are similar. A RMSEA value less than or equal to .05 is considered acceptable. (2) The statistical significance of individual parameter estimates for the paths in the model. This is referred to as a *t* value or a critical value and is typically compared to a tabled *t* value of 1.96 at the .05 level of significance. (3) The third criterion considers the magnitude and the direction of the parameter



estimates, paying particular attention to whether a positive or a negative coefficient makes sense for the parameter estimate.

According to Jöreskog and Sörbom (1989), the fit indices commonly used are chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ), the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), and the root-mean-square residual (RMR). The goodness-of-fit index (GFI) is based on the ratio of the sum of the squared differences between the observed and reproduced matrices to the observed variances. GFI can be any number between 0 and 1. Value close to .95 reflects a good model fit, indicating that 95 percent of the observed matrix is predicted by the reproduced matrix. Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) is adjusted for the degrees of freedom of a model relative to the number of variables. An AGFI value of .95 represents a good model fit. Root-mean-square residual index (RMR) uses the square root of the mean-squared differences between matrix elements in the observed and reproduced matrix. Normally the fit level is defined by researchers themselves (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004).

Parsimonious fit index (PFI) is used to test the model parsimony. Here, parsimony refers to the number of estimated parameters required to achieve a specific level of fit. PFI can range from 0 to 1, with 0 indicating no fit and 1 indicating perfect fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004).

## **Multiple Regression Analysis**

Multiple regression analysis is used to confirm the relationship between affective commitment and its antecedents, namely organizational commitment to employees,

perceived organizational support, employee empowerment, and job satisfaction. It indicated, based on the literature review, that affective commitment was positively related to its four antecedents. Five summated scales were created by combining several individual variables within the particular construct into a single composite measure to represent the construct. The summated scales not only can overcome the measurement error inherent in all measured variables, but also can represent the multiple aspects of a concept in a single measure (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006).

Multiple regression analysis is the appropriate technique employed to test the linear relationship between one single dependent summated scale variable (affective commitment) and several independent summated scale variables (the antecedents of affective commitment).

## *Measures*

### **Measurement of Organizational Commitment to Employees**

A few studies have examined organizational commitment to employees (e.g., Lee & Miller, 1999; Muse et al., 2005; Roca-Puig et al., 2005). Lee and Miller measured OCE in two steps, OCE1 and OCE2. OCE1 were measured with four items in a 5-point scale in terms of organization's caring about its employees. OCE2 were measured with profit sharing, fair pay, organization caring for employees' well-being, and money spent on education and competence development and compensation (see Table 2.3). Muse et al.

measured OCE by identifying three variables: average compensation per employee, whether a health plan was offered, and whether a pension plan was offered. Roca-Puig et al. measured OCE in their study with five indicators, focusing on the existence of communication with employees and active participation by employees. Those indicators include: (1) Action is taken to identify resource and information needs of all the staff in our company; (2) Management communicates and formally acknowledges employees' achievements; (3) Policy and strategy are formally communicated to all employees; (4) Procedures are set up to find out the opinions and level of satisfaction of our employees; and (5) Management allows employees to be highly autonomous and to regulate their own behavior (Roca-Puig et al., 2005). The literature indicates that there is no universal measurement scale.

Organizational commitment to employees may be regarded as a process of social exchange between management and employees, in which management creates a facilitative climate of support, trust and helpfulness to enhance the employee's well-being (Roca-Puig et al., 2005). This study adopted a 4-item scale similar to Lee and Miller's OCE1 measurement scale in the employee opinion survey questionnaire to measure OCE (see Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1. Organizational Commitment to Employees Scale**

---

1. My organization values me as an employee.
  2. My organization wants me to be satisfied with my job.
  3. My organization wants me to be successful.
  4. If I choose to stay, my organization offers potential career opportunities.
- 

*Note.* Organizational commitment to employees were measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from (1) = strongly disagree to (7) = strongly agree.

## **Measurement of Perceived Organizational Support**

The most widely used scale – Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) – was developed by Eisenberger et al. in 1986 (see Table 2.4). The original SPOS form contains 36 items. Most researchers normally conduct their studies in a shorter SPOS version with 17 items adapted from the original version. (e.g., Lee & Peccei, 2007). Stinglhamber, De Cremer, & Mercken (2006) only selected 8 items (item 4, 8, 9, 10, 17, 23, 25, and 27) from the SPOS version in their study. Erdogan and Enders (2007), and Vandenberghe et al. (2007) also used 8-item SPOS short version in measuring POS. Shanock and Eisenberger (2006) selected 6 items from SPOS, i.e., item 1, 4, 9, 20, 23, and 27, to measure POS. Loi et al. (2006) measured POS in a 6-item scale adapted from SPOS. Jawahar and Hemmasi (2006) developed their own 12-item scale to investigate the relationship between POS and job satisfaction among the female managers. The literature identifies that there are no strict rules about how many items should be included in the scale, as long as those items encompass the facets of the definition of POS (i.e., valuation of employees' contribution and care about employees' well-being), as recommended by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002). Four items which were similar to Eisenberger et al.'s scale were developed to measure POS in the employee opinion survey questionnaire (see Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2. Perceived Organizational Support Scale**

---

1. My management team helps making working here more pleasant.
  2. My management team maintains a good working relationship with me.
  3. My management team is sensitive to my needs.
  4. My management supports my participation in training and development programs.
- 

*Note.* Perceived organizational support were measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from (1) = strongly disagree to (7) = strongly agree.

## **Measurement of Employee Empowerment**

Researchers (e.g., Bordin & Bartram, 2007; Huang, Shi, Zhang & Cheung, 2006; Martin & Bush, 2006; Moye & Henkin, 2006; Ugboro, 2006) have adopted Spreitzer's (1995) 12-item empowerment measurement scale in conducting studies regarding the relationship between employee empowerment and other constructs.

Spreitzer (2007) developed two questions to best represent the essence of employee empowerment in his recent study on organizational leadership, employee empowerment, and peace. Two questions were directly related to decision-making freedom and compliance (the opposite of empowerment). Decision-making freedom was measured with an item asking respondents 'how free are you to make decisions in your job' (1=none, 10=a great deal). Compliance was measured with an item asking respondents 'people have different ideas about following instructions at work. Some say that one should follow one's superior's instructions even when one does not fully agree with them. Others say that one should follow one's superior's instructions only when one is convinced they are right. With which of these two opinions do you agree' (1=follow instructions, 2=must be convinced, 3=depends).

In the employee opinion survey, three items representing the essence of employee empowerment were developed to measure employee empowerment. Freedom and compliance were indicated through the questions (see Table 3.3).

**Table 3.3. Employee Empowerment Scale**

---

1. I am allowed use my judgment to solve problems.
  2. When I am assigned a job, I am allowed to decide how I do it.
  3. I have freedom I need to do my job well.
- 

Note. Employee empowerment were measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from (1) = strongly disagree to (7) = strong agree.



## **Measurement of Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction has the most volatile measurement scales, e.g., JSS, JDI, MSQ, JDS, Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire satisfaction subscale. In the employee opinion survey, four general items similar to Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire satisfaction subscale (Cammann et al., 1979) were developed to measure employee job satisfaction (see Table 3.4).

**Table 3.4. Job Satisfaction Scale**

---

1. I am very satisfied with my job.
  2. I am satisfied with the kind of work I am currently doing.
  3. I am satisfied with the level of challenging in my job.
  4. I look forward to coming to work.
- 

*Note.* Job satisfaction were measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from (1) = strongly disagree to (7) = strong agree.

## **Measurement of Employee Affective Commitment**

The three-component model developed by Allen and Meyer (1991) is currently most widely accepted model regarding employee organizational commitment. Researchers have been using the related scales (see Table 2.2) to measure organizational commitment. Luchak and Gellatly (2007) selected twelve out of seventeen items to measure affective commitment and continuance commitment. Ugboro (2006) used six out of eight items to measure affective commitment. McCormack, Casimir, Djurkovic, and Yang (2006) modified Allen and Meyer's original scale and developed a 3-item scale to measure affective commitment. Affective commitment, in the employee opinion survey, was measured with four items similar to Allen and Meyer's (1991) measurement instrument on affective commitment (see Table 3.5).

**Table 3.5. Employee Affective Commitment Scale**

---

1. I would recommend my organization to my friends as a great place to work.
  2. I am proud to tell others that I work for my organization.
  3. My organization inspires me to do my best work.
  4. I am pleased with my decision to work for my organization.
- 

*Note.* Employee affective commitment were measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from (1) = strongly disagree to (7) = strong agree.

## Measurement of Employee Perceived Service Quality

The employee perceived service quality scale has been adapted from SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988). SERVQUAL uses the following five dimensions are suggested in the measurement of the customer's perception of service quality.

Tangibles:	Physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel
Reliability:	Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
Responsiveness:	Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service
Assurance:	Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence
Empathy:	Caring, individual attention the firm provides its customers

Twenty-two items were developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) to measure service quality. However, nine items, in the employee opinion survey questionnaire, were developed based on the same five dimensions (see Table 3.6). Tangibles was measured by two items, i.e., appearance of physical facilities and appearance of employees. Reliability was measured by two items, i.e., performing service right the first time, and prompt service. Responsiveness was measured by two items, i.e., willingness of employees to help guests, and courteousness of employees. Assurance was measured by two items, i.e., ability of employees to answer questions, and the ability of employees to meet guest needs. Empathy was measured by one item, i.e., commitment to solving guest problems.

### **Table 3.6. Employee Perceived Service Quality Scale**

Please rate how well you believe your organization meets guest service expectations.

---

1. Appearance of physical facilities
  2. Appearance of employees
  3. Commitment to solving guest problems
  4. Performing services right the first time
  5. Prompt service (minimal waiting time)
  6. Willingness of employees to help guests
  7. Courteousness of employees
  8. Ability of employees to answer questions
  9. Ability of employees to meet guest needs
- 

*Note.* Employee perceived service quality were measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from (1) = not at al satisfied to (7) = extremely satisfied.

## *Summary*

This chapter restated the hypotheses and provided information for data collection and statistical technique. The measurement scales for the constructs were discussed. The items chosen to measure each construct were based on the literature review and previous studies. Organizational commitment to employees was measured on a 4-item scale. Perceived organizational support was measured on a 4-item scale adapted from Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) scale. Employee empowerment was measured on a 3-item scale adapted from Spritzer's (1995). Job satisfaction was measured with four items similar to Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire satisfaction subscale (Cammann et al., 1979). Affective commitment was measured with four items similar to Allen and Meyer's (1991). And employee perceived service quality was measured with nine items based on SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Statistical technique was illustrated in this chapter. Measurement model and structural model are two components of structural equation modeling. Fit indices of assessing model fit were described. The result of the hypotheses testing will be presented in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

#### *Introduction*

This chapter presents the results from the data analysis by using LISREL 8.51 computer software (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996a). The descriptive statistics of affective commitment constructs are presented, followed by the discussion of reliability and validity of the constructs. Finally, the hypotheses and the model are tested and the results are elaborated.

#### *Characteristics of the Sample*

The sample units studied were 4109 hourly service employees in a U.S. resort company. However, some respondents did not answer all the survey questions, causing the data set incomplete. Because the generalizability of the statistical results are strongly affected by missing data values in variables, researchers have the options of deleting subjects who have missing values, replacing the missing values, and using robust statistical procedures to handle missing values (Hair et al., 2006; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Given the fact that there were 4109 cases in this study, deleting cases with missing values in the related variables is suitable. There were twenty-eight variables, representing six constructs in the proposed model. Cases with missing values in those



twenty-eight variables were deleted. Finally there were 3127 cases remaining in the data set, 76.1 percent of the original cases. Because gender, age, and employment status were not the critical variables in the model, missing cases in these variables were ignored.

Among 3127 cases, 1724 (55.1%) were males and 1071 (34.3%) were females. Of the sample, 1212 (38.8%) aged between 21-25 years old, and 826 (26.4%) were between 26 and 35 years old. Most respondents (2189, 70%) were full-time and 483 (15.4%) were part-time employees (see Table 4.1).

### *Sample Size for Statistical Analysis*

Sample size is critical in achieving statistical significance. Small sample size can result in either (1) too little statistical power for the test to identify significant results or (2) too easily “overfitting” the data. If the sample size is too large, it can make the statistical tests overly sensitive (Hair et al., 2006). When conducting analysis with univariate statistical techniques, a common formula developed by McCall (1982) is used to determine how large the sample size should be:  $n = (Z\sigma/\epsilon)^2$ , where  $n$  is the sample size needed for the desired level of precision,  $\epsilon$  is the effect size,  $Z$  is the confidence level, and  $\sigma$  is the population standard deviation of scores. In multivariate data analysis, different sample size is required when using different technique. For example, when designing a factor analysis, the minimum sample size should be 50 observations, and the number of observations can be maximized by having at least 10 observations per variable. If multiple regression analysis is the selected technique, it is required to have a minimum sample of 50 and preferably 100 observations for most research situations (Hair et al.,

2006). However, in structural equation modeling, a much larger sample size is required to maintain power and obtain stable parameter estimates and standard errors (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Ding, Velicer, and Harlow (1995) noted that some studies adopted 100 to 150 subjects as the minimum satisfactory sample size. Schumacker and Lomax noted that many published articles used 250 to 500 subjects. Boomsma (1982, 1983) recommended 400 would be sufficient. Therefore, 400 randomly selected subjects out of 3127 were used in conducting structural equation modeling, and an additional set of 400 randomly selected subjects were selected for the model validation. The demographic characteristics of the two sets of 400 cases are presented in Table 4.1.

The two sets of data used in this study were compared to identify if they had similar demographic patterns. Results in Table 4.1 indicated that similar percentages within groups between two data sets existed in the category of age, employee status I, employee status II, and time employed. The only difference between two data sets was found in the category of gender. In the first 400 cases, 49.3 percent were female and 41.5% were male; whereas in the second 400 cases, 55.0 percent were female and 33.5 percent were male (see Table 4.1). To further test if there was significant differences between these two sub sets of data in terms of demographics, *t* tests were carried out. Results showed that there were no significant differences between two subsets regarding age, employee status I, employee status II, and time employed. However, there was significant difference between the two subsets of data in terms of gender (see Table 4.2). Results showed that there were more female respondents in the second data set of 400 cases than in the first data set of 400 cases. Other than that, the two sets of data used in this study were similar in terms of demographic characteristics.

**Table 4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N<sub>1</sub>=3127, N<sub>2</sub>=400, N<sub>3</sub>=400)**

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Total Sample</i>		<i>Data Set 1</i>		<i>Data Set 2</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Gender</i>						
Female	1071	34.3	197	49.3	220	55.0
Male	1724	55.1	166	41.5	134	33.5
Missing	332	10.6	37	9.3	46	11.5
<i>Age</i>						
Less than 20	345	11.0	46	11.5	53	13.3
21-25	1212	38.8	155	38.8	141	35.3
26-35	826	26.4	96	24.0	111	27.8
36-49	442	14.1	59	14.8	47	11.8
Over 50	268	8.6	40	10	40	10.0
Missing	34	1.1	4	1.0	8	2.0
<i>Employment Status I</i>						
Full-time	612	70.0	260	65.0	274	68.5
Part-time	587	15.4	67	16.8	60	15.0
Volunteer	1296	.2	0	0	1	.3
Missing	632	14.4	73	18.3	65	16.3
<i>Employment Status II</i>						
Year round	612	19.6	64	16.0	72	18.0
Season/Season	587	18.8	82	20.5	80	20.0
Seasonal winter or summer only	1296	41.4	193	48.3	162	40.5
Missing	632	20.2	61	15.3	86	21.5
<i>Time Employed</i>						
<=3 months	1220	39.0	167	41.8	157	39.3
4-6 months	399	12.8	50	12.5	52	13.0
7-12 months	434	13.9	58	14.5	49	12.3
1-3 years	508	16.2	48	12.0	68	17.0
3-5 years	221	7.1	34	8.5	34	8.5
5-10 years	234	7.5	29	7.3	27	6.8
> 10 years	90	2.9	13	3.3	11	2.8
Missing	21	.7	1	.3	2	.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3127</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.2. Results of *t*-Tests on Two Data Sets**

Item	<i>t</i> Value	<i>Df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Gender	2.142	715	.033 *
Age	.405	786	.685
Employee Status I	.637	660	.525
Employee Status II	1.500	651	.134
Time Employed	-.464	795	.643

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ .

### *Reliability*

Reliability refers to the measurement that is free from error and provides consistent results (Zikmund, 1997). The overall reliability is assessed by computing the Cronbach's alpha along with the correlation of each item to the construct. Summated scales were created to analyze the correlation between each construct and its items. It is suggested that Cronbach's alpha above .70 be generally considered acceptable for research purposes (Nunnally, 1978) and those items with correlations below .3 be deleted from the scale (Churchill, 1979; Nunnally, 1978). Table 4.3 exhibits the reliability coefficients and the correlations of each item to its construct. The correlation values between each item and its defining construct were greater than .6, indicating that some underlying structure did exist in the set of selected items. The Cronbach's alpha for the constructs were: organizational commitment to employees (Cronbach's alpha = .898), perceived organizational support (Cronbach's alpha = .914), employee empowerment (Cronbach's alpha = .913), job satisfaction (Cronbach's alpha = .902), affective commitment (Cronbach's alpha = .914), and employee perceived service quality (Cronbach's alpha = .916). With all the Cronbach's values exceeded .7, it is concluded that reliability is present.

**Table 4.3. Reliability Tests**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>Item-to-Construct Correlation</i>
<i>Organizational Commitment to Employees (OCE)</i>	.898	
OCE1		.909
OCE2		.913
OCE3		.898
OCE4		.788
<i>Perceived Organizational Support (POS)</i>	.914	
POS1		.931
POS2		.919
POS3		.909
POS4		.808
<i>Employee Empowerment (EMP)</i>	.913	
EMP1		.905
EMP2		.938
EMP3		.928
<i>Job Satisfaction (JS)</i>	.902	
JS1		.883
JS2		.908
JS3		.882
JS4		.856
<i>Affective Commitment (AC)</i>	.914	
AC1		.913
AC2		.903
AC3		.873
AC4		.897
<i>Employee Perceived Service Quality (EPSQ)</i>	.916	
EPSQ1		.628
EPSQ2		.670
EPSQ3		.808
EPSQ4		.807
EPSQ5		.789
EPSQ6		.793
EPSQ7		.821
EPSQ8		.808
EPSQ9		.833

## *Measurement Model*

### **Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

Confirmatory factor analysis is the statistical technique used to confirm the existence of a specific factor structure. In other words, confirmatory factor analysis is designed to test hypotheses about a factor model whose number and interpretation are given in advance (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2000). Previously, the data used in this study were tested based on the literature review in order to derive the factor structure. The purpose of this study is to test the 6-factor model for consistency with the observed data using a SEM-type approach.

In conducting confirmatory factor analysis, a scale is assigned through a unit loading identification (ULI) constraint. One of the indicators in a factor is assigned to the fixed value of 1.0. The indicator with the ULI constraint is called the reference variable. The rationale of fixing the indicator to 1.0 is the advantage of simplicity. The choice of which indicator is to be the reference variable is arbitrary (Kline, 2005). Therefore, the first indicator in each factor was standardized to 1.0 in this study.

One necessary condition should be met in order for a CFA model to be identified: the number of free parameters is less than or equal to the number of observation (i.e.,  $df_M \geq 0$ ). Since one indicator in each factor was fixed to 1.0, a total of 71 parameters remain to be estimated, including 34 variances (of 6 factors and 28 error terms), 22 factor loadings, and 15 factor covariances. With 400 observations,  $df_M = 400 - 71 = 329$ .

In order to identify a CFA model with two or more factors, one sufficient condition should be met: each factor should have at least two indicators. This is often

referred to as the two-indicator rule (Bollen, 1989). There are six factors in this study: organizational commitment to employees (OCE), perceived organizational support (POS), employee empowerment (EMP), job satisfaction (JS), affective commitment (AC), and employee perceived service quality (EPSQ). Except that EMP was measured by three indicators and EPSQ was measured by nine indicators, all other factors were measured by 4 indicators respectively. Hence, the factor model met the sufficient requirement of the two-indicator rule (Bollen, 1989).

## **Results**

A confirmatory factor model was generated, with all the factor loadings exceeding .50. Each indicator's  $t$  value (listed in the brackets) was greater than 4.8 ( $p < .001$ ) (see Table 4.4). The goodness-of-fit indices demonstrated a moderate level of fit: GFI = 0.85, CFI = 0.93, AGFI = 0.82, PGFI = 0.70, RMSEA = 0.069, RMR = 0.051,  $\chi^2(335) = 966.06$  ( $p < .001$ ). It is recommended that only a model with a GFI less than 0.8 (Tanaka & Huba, 1985) and RMSEA above 0.1 (Browne & Cudeck, 1989) should be rejected. Therefore, the measurement model of this study is acceptable.



**Table 4.4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results: Factor Loadings and *t* Values**

<i>Item</i>	<i>F1</i>	<i>F2</i>	<i>F3</i>	<i>F4</i>	<i>F5</i>	<i>F6</i>
OCE1	1.00					
OCE2	1.02 (28.66)					
OCE3	.97 (25.72)					
OCE4	.71 (14.99)					
POS1		1.00				
POS2		.98 (32.85)				
POS3		.93 (28.15)				
POS4		.74 (17.49)				
EMP1			1.00			
EMP2			1.06 (23.17)			
EMP3			1.07 (23.69)			
JS1				1.00		
JS2				.97 (22.73)		
JS3				.90 (20.21)		
JS4				.92 (20.73)		
AC1					1.00	
AC2					.96 (24.36)	
AC3					.92 (22.23)	
AC4					.97 (24.87)	
EPSQ1						1.00
EPSQ2						1.10 (9.39)
EPSQ3						1.42 (10.99)
EPSQ4						1.41 (10.95)
EPSQ5						1.38 (10.81)
EPSQ6						1.45 (11.09)
EPSQ7						1.50 (11.30)
EPSQ8						1.46 (11.16)
EPSQ9						1.53 (11.44)

Fit StatisticsChi-square = 966.06 (*df* = 335)

GFI = .85

AGFI = .82

CFI = .93

RMSEA = .069

*Note.* All *t* values were significant at  $p < .001$ .

## Validity

A scale is valid when it measures what it intends to measure. Construct validity implies that the empirical evidence generated by a measure is consistent with the theoretical logic about the concepts (Zikmund, 1997). Two types of constructs are usually evaluated: convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity refers to the ability of some measure to correlate with measures of the same construct. Discriminant validity implies that a measure has a low correlation with measures of dissimilar concepts (Zikmund, 1997).

Convergent validity and discriminant validity can be examined by calculating the amount of average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct. If the AVE values for all constructs are greater than the minimum recommended level of 0.50, convergent validity is present (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Fornell and Larcker also noted that discriminant validity was achieved if the AVE for each construct exceeded squared correlations between all pairs of the constructs.

The formula (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) to calculate the average variance extracted (AVE) is:

$$\text{AVE} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^p \lambda_{yi}^2}{\sum_{i=1}^p \lambda_{yi}^2 + \sum_{i=1}^p \text{Var}(\epsilon_i)}$$

where:

$y$  is a  $(p \times 1)$  column vector of observed dependent variables,

$p$  is the number of observed dependent variables ( $y$ ),

$\lambda_y$  is a  $(p \times m)$  regression coefficient matrix of  $y$  on  $\eta$ ,

$m$  is the number of constructs (latent variables developed from the observed dependent variables),

$\eta$  is an  $(m \times 1)$  column vector of constructs derived from the dependent variables ( $y$ ),

$\varepsilon$  is a  $(p \times 1)$  column vector of errors of measurement in  $y$ .

Table 4.5 presents the correlations of the constructs, the squared correlation, and the calculated AVE values. The result shows that the AVE for OCE, POS, EMP, JS, AC, and EPSQ were .75, .76, .83, .75, .78, and .80 respectively, each exceeding the threshold of 0.50 recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Thus, convergent validity is present. Meanwhile, each AVE also exceeded the squared correlations ( $\gamma^2$ ) of the related paired constructs. For example, AVE for POS was .76. It exceeded the squared correlation of the paired constructs POS / EMP ( $\gamma^2 = .52$ ) and the squared correlation of the paired constructs POS / JS ( $\gamma^2 = .25$ ); in addition, the AVE was also greater than the squared correlation of the paired constructs POS / AC ( $\gamma^2 = .35$ ) and the squared correlation of the paired constructs POS / EPSQ ( $\gamma^2 = .23$ ). Therefore, the requirement for discriminant validity was met in this study. Therefore it is concluded based on the evidence above that the construct validity in the measurement model was present.

**Table 4.5. Construct Correlations, the Squared Construct Correlations and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**

<i>Construct</i>	<i>OCE</i>	<i>POS</i>	<i>EMP</i>	<i>JS</i>	<i>AC</i>	<i>EPSQ</i>	<i>AVE</i>
OCE	1.00						.75
POS	.59 (.35)	1.00					.76
EMP	.41 (.17)	.72 (.52)	1.00				.83
JS	.59 (.35)	.50 (.25)	.50 (.25)	1.00			.75
AC	.79 (.62)	.59 (.35)	.47 (.22)	.71 (.50)	1.00		.78
EPSQ	.61 (.37)	.48 (.23)	.38 (.14)	.41 (.17)	.65 (.42)	1.00	.80

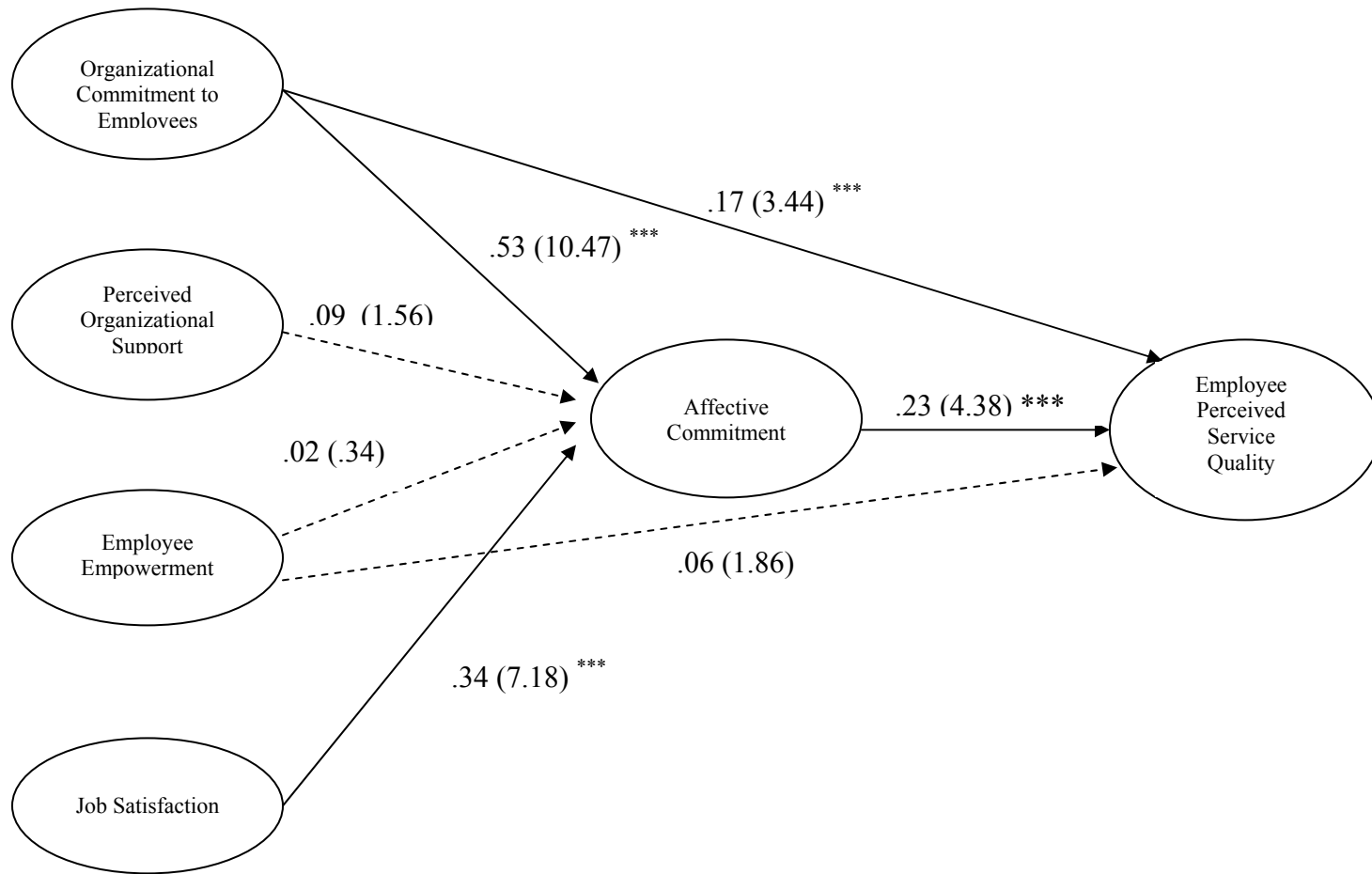
*Note.* OCE: Organizational commitment to employees; POS: perceived organizational support; EMP: employee empowerment; JS: job satisfaction; AC: affective commitment; and EPSQ: employee perceived service quality.

## *Initial Theoretical Model*

### **The Structural Model**

Figure 4.1 displays the path coefficients for the theoretical model proposed in this study. The goodness of fit statistics showed that the model was acceptable; with a chi-square of 984.43 ( $df = 337$ ), a goodness of fit (GFI) of .85, an adjusted goodness of fit (AGFI) of .82, a CFI of .92, and a RMSEA of .069 (see Table 4.7). The overall model was acceptable. The path coefficients (see figure 4.1) indicated that the relationship between employee empowerment and affective commitment was not statistically significant, with a path coefficient of .02 and a  $t$  value of .34. Employee empowerment also had no significant effect on employee perceived service quality, with a path coefficient of .60 and a  $t$  value of 1.86. The relationship between perceived organizational support and affective commitment was found not statistically significant as well, with a path coefficient of .09 and  $t$  value of 1.56.

**Figure 4.1. The Path Diagram of the Initial Theoretical Model**



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

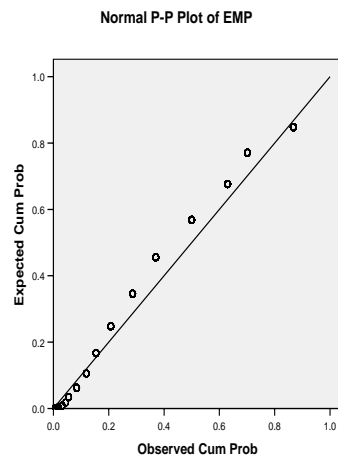
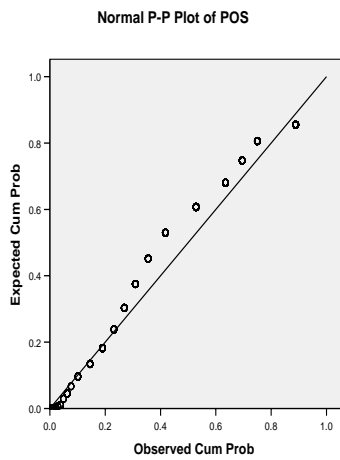
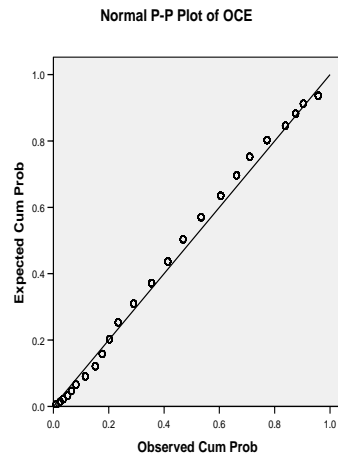
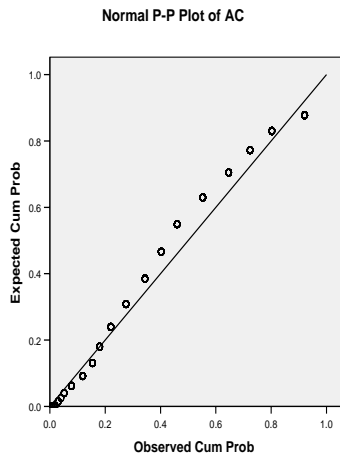
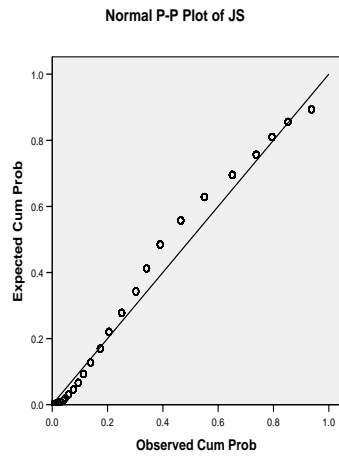
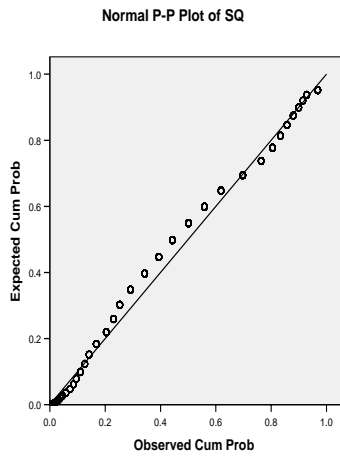
## **Multiple Regression Analysis**

Although the constructs met the requirements of reliability and validity, it seems that the expected significant relationships among some constructs are questionable. To further explore the relationship, multiple regression analysis was carried out, using the same sample with randomly selected 400 cases and 28 variables representing 6 constructs. The sample size met the requirement for multiple regression analysis: (1) a minimum sample of 100 observations for most research situations; (2) the minimum ratio of observations to variables (5:1), but the recommended level increases to 50:1 when a stepwise procedure is employed (Hair et al., 2006).

### *Assumptions Test*

A summated scale was created for each factor. Assumptions for multiple regression analysis are: normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. Normality was tested by the normal probability plot, which compares the cumulative distribution of actual data values with the cumulative distribution of a normal distribution (Hair et al., 2006). Linearity and homoscedasticity were checked with the results from the multiple regression analysis. The normal probability plots (see Figure 4.2) indicated that the distribution of each factor is normal, because the actual data distribution closely followed the diagonal line.

**Figure 4.2. Normal Probability Plots for the Factors**





### *Multiple Regression Model of Affective Commitment*

It is expected from the hypothesized model that affective commitment, based on the literature review, is positively influenced by organizational commitment to employees, perceived organizational support, employee empowerment, and job satisfaction. The level of dependent criterion (AC) is therefore affected by several independent predictors (POS, EMP, and JS). To understand whether the independent predictors were significantly associated with the dependent criterion, multiple regression analysis is the proper statistical technique. Regression coefficients were used to determine whether they were significantly different from zero.

As shown in Table 4.6, three models were generated. Model 3 was the final model, including OCE, JS, and POS in the equation. The  $F$  value ( $F = 492.92$ ) for the overall regression equation was significant ( $p < .001$ ), and the model explains 65.5% of the total variance. As for the multicollinearity, a common cutoff threshold is a tolerance value of .10. The tolerance values in model 3 were all greater than .50, indicating that more than half of each factor's variance was not explained by other factors and the level of multicollinearity was acceptable. Linearity was examined through residual plots. The residuals were randomly scattered with relatively equal dispersion about zero and no strong tendency to be either greater or less than zero (see Figure 4.3), indicating the relationships among the examined factors were linear.

Employee empowerment was excluded from the regression model of affective commitment, indicating that employee empowerment could not significantly predict affective commitment in this case, which supported the result of the initial structural model. Based on the results from both the structural model and the multiple regression

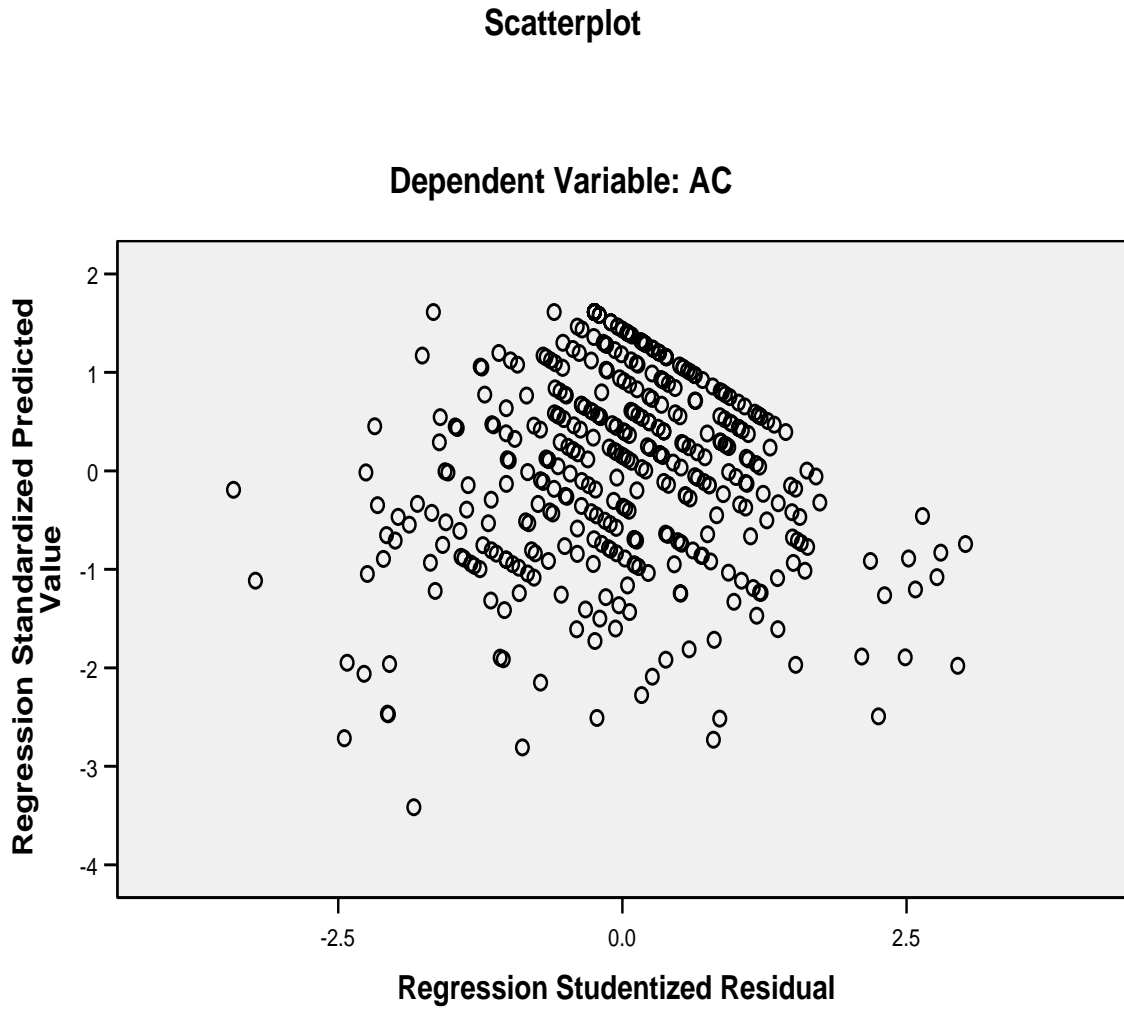
model, it was decided that the path relating employee empowerment to affective commitment should be deleted from the structural model. A revised structural model was then estimated.

**Table 4.6. Affective Commitment Multiple Regression Analysis Model Summary**

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>
(Constant)	2.746	1.795	1.456
OCE	$\beta = .603^{***}$	$\beta = .454^{***}$	$\beta = .406^{***}$ , tolerance = .589
JS		$\beta = .312^{***}$	$\beta = .288^{***}$ , tolerance = .696
POS			$\beta = .124^{***}$ , tolerance = .643
	$R^2 = .553$	$R^2 = .645$	$R^2 = .655$
	Adj. $R^2 = .552$	Adj. $R^2 = .643$	Adj. $R^2 = .653$
	$\Delta R^2 = .553$	$\Delta R^2 = .091$	$\Delta R^2 = .011$
	$F = 492.92^{***}$	$F = 359.90^{***}$	$F = 251.10^{***}$
	$\Delta F = 492.92^{***}$	$\Delta F = 101.91^{***}$	$\Delta F = 12.55^{***}$

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

Figure 4.3. Residual Plots



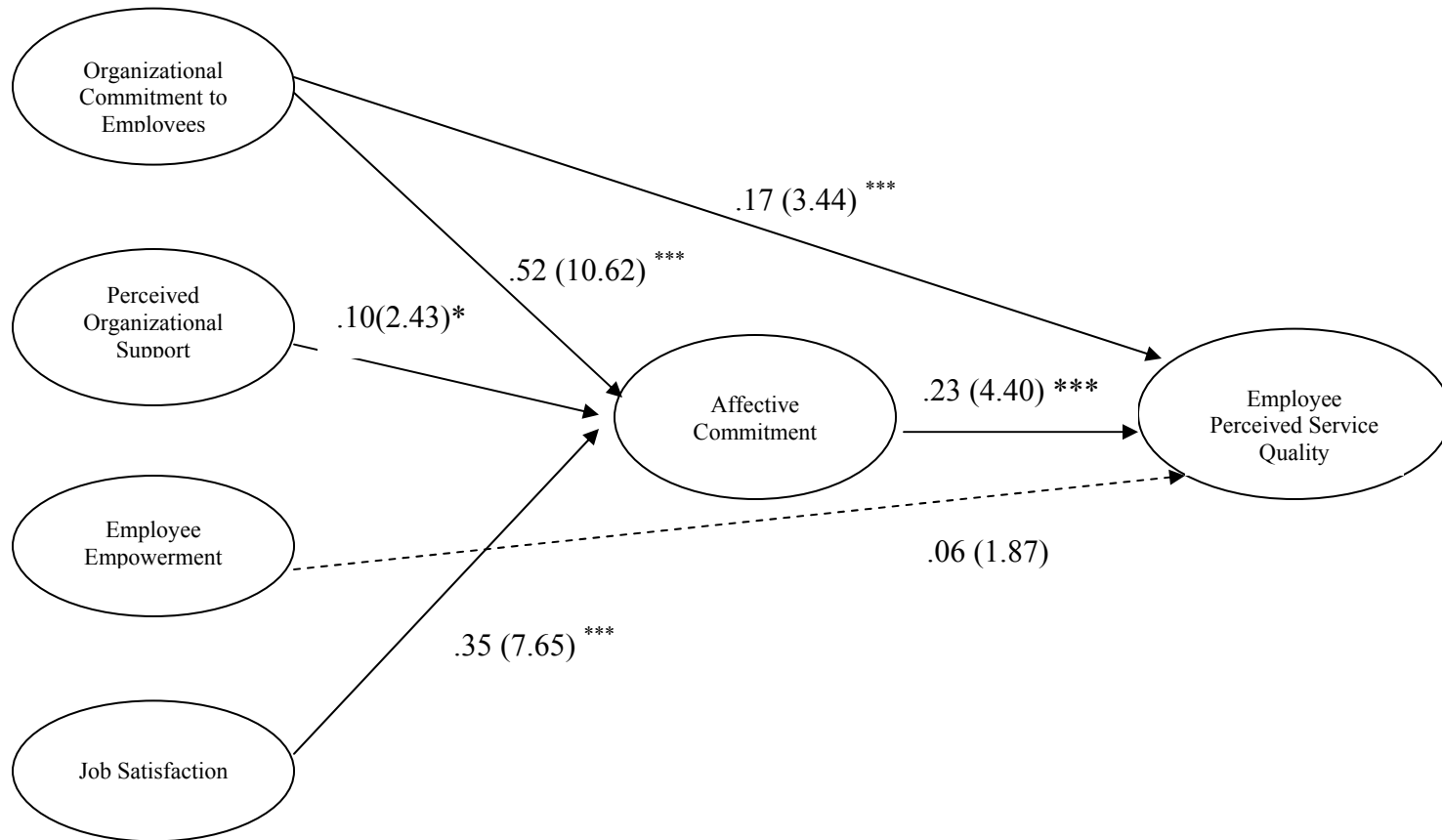
## The Revised Structural Model 1

An examination of the path coefficients and *t* values for the initial structural model indicated that the hypothesized path relating employee empowerment and affective commitment was statistically insignificant (see Figure 4.1). Multiple regression analysis also confirmed that employee empowerment was not an indicator for predicting affective commitment. Therefore, the path was deleted and a revised structural model 1 was assessed.

Figure 4.4 displays the path coefficients of the revised model 1. The goodness of fit indices showed the model was acceptable; with a  $\chi^2$  of 984.96 (*df* = 338), a GFI of .85, an AGFI of .82, and a RMSEA of .069 (see Table 4.7). The path coefficients were all significant except the one relating employee empowerment to employee perceived service quality, indicating that affective commitment was positively related to organizational commitment to employees, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction; and employee perceived service quality was positively related to affective commitment and organizational commitment to employees.

A chi-square difference test was conducted to determine whether the revised model 1 was better than the initial model. The chi-square for the initial model was 984.43 (*df* = 337), the chi-square for the revised model was 984.96 (*df* = 338). The difference of the chi-square was .53 (*df* = 1), which was not significant at .05 level (see Table 4.7). Hatcher (1996) recommended that a construct be deleted from the model if it would not result in any significant chi-square change. Therefore, it is acceptable to drop the employee empowerment – affective commitment path.

**Figure 4.4. The Path Diagram of the Revised Model 1**



*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

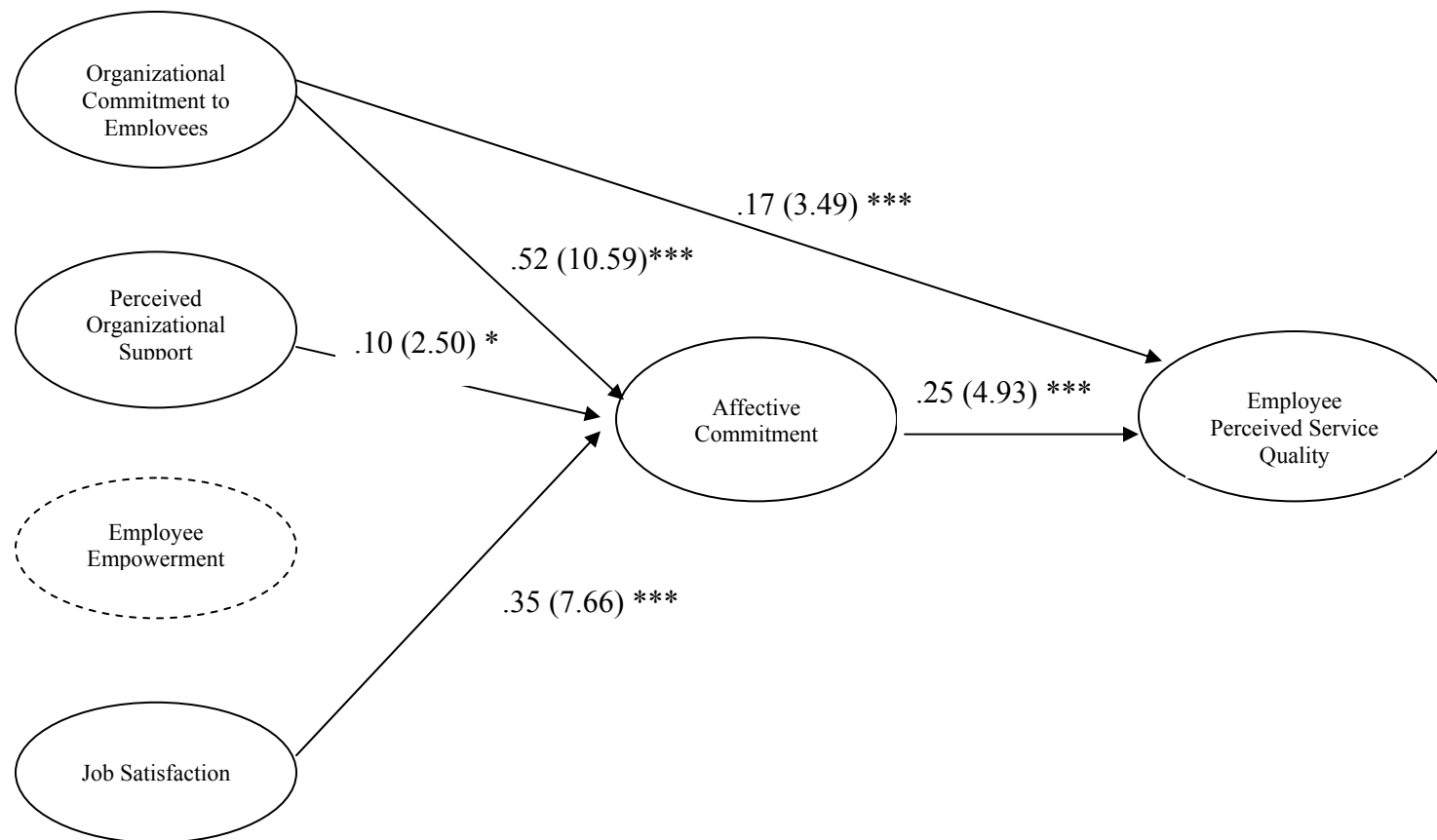
## The Revised Structural Model 2

The revised model 1 (see Figure 4.4) showed that the relationship between employee empowerment and employee perceived service quality was not statistically significant. To improve the model, this path was then deleted and a revised model 2 was estimated (see Figure 4.5).

The goodness of fit statistics showed the model was acceptable; with a  $\chi^2$  of 988.23 ( $df = 339$ ), a goodness of fit (GFI) of .85, an adjusted goodness of fit (AGFI) of .82, and a RMSEA of .069 (see Table 4.7). The path coefficients were all significant, indicating that affective commitment was positively related to organizational commitment to employees, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction; and employee perceived service quality was positively related to affective commitment and organizational commitment to employees.

A chi-square difference test was conducted to determine whether the revised model 2 was better than the revised model 1. The chi-square for the revised model 1 was 984.96 ( $df = 338$ ), the chi-square for the revised model 2 was 988.23 ( $df = 339$ ). The difference of the chi-square was 3.80 ( $df = 1$ ), which was not significant at .05 level (see Table 4.7). No significant chi-square change resulted from deleting the path relating employee empowerment and employee perceived service quality, indicating that the deletion of this particular path was acceptable (Hatcher, 1996).

**Figure 4.5. The Path Diagram of the Revised Model 2**



*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .



**Table 4.7. Structural Models Summary**

---

<i>Model</i>	<i>Chi-square</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>GFI</i>	<i>AGFI</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>
Initial Model	984.43	337	.85	.82	.93	.069
Revised Model 1	984.96	338	.85	.82	.93	.069
Revised Model 2	988.23	339	.85	.82	.93	.069

---

Chi-square change in model comparison:

1. revised model 1 vs. initial theoretical model  
 $\Delta\chi^2 = .53$  ( $df = 1, p > .05$ )
  2. revised model 2 vs. revised model 1  
 $\Delta\chi^2 = 3.27$  ( $df = 1, p > .05$ )
  3. revised model 2 vs. initial theoretical model  
 $\Delta\chi^2 = 3.80$  ( $df = 2, p > .05$ )
-

### ***Model Validation***

Hair et al. (2006) pointed out that the researcher must strive not only to estimate a significant model but to ensure that the model can also be used to generalize to the whole population. To validate the results, the researcher can split the sample to two, one for the model estimation and the other one for predictive accuracy estimation. In this study, 800 randomly selected cases in total were used as the sample. Four hundred cases (data set 1) were used to estimate the model, and another set of 400 cases (data set 2) were used to validate the results. Confirmatory factor analysis and structural model were employed in both approaches.

#### **Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

The confirmatory factor analysis results showed that the validation confirmatory factor model was acceptable, with all the factor loadings exceeding .50. Each indicator's *t* value (listed in the brackets) was greater than 4.8 ( $p < .001$ ) (see Table 4.8). The goodness-of-fit indices showed a moderate level of fit: GFI = 0.83, CFI = 0.92, AGFI = 0.79, PGFI = 0.68, RMSEA = 0.079, RMR = 0.056,  $\chi^2(335) = 1174.91$  ( $p < 0.001$ ). It is recommended that only a model with a GFI less than 0.8 (Tanaka & Huba, 1985) and RMSEA above 0.1 (Browne & Cudeck, 1989) should be rejected. Therefore, the measurement model is acceptable.

The validation confirmatory factor model (see Table 4.8) was very similar to the initial confirmatory model (see Table 4.4). The two models had very similar goodness-of-fit indices and very similar factor loadings. This indicates that other cases in the data

set could generate the same model. In other words, the initial confirmatory factor model can be used to generalize to the whole population.

**Table 4.8. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results for Model Validation: Factor Loadings and *t* Values**

<i>Item</i>	<i>F1</i>	<i>F2</i>	<i>F3</i>	<i>F4</i>	<i>F5</i>	<i>F6</i>
OCE1	1.00					
OCE2	1.02 (28.01)					
OCE3	1.00 (26.53)					
OCE4	.72 (15.02)					
POS1		1.00				
POS2		.99 (36.08)				
POS3		.92 (28.70)				
POS4		.70 (16.30)				
EMP1			1.00			
EMP2			1.11 (18.88)			
EMP3			1.13 (19.18)			
JS1				1.00		
JS2				.98 (20.88)		
JS3				.88 (17.57)		
JS4				1.01 (21.93)		
AC1					1.00	
AC2					1.00 (28.15)	
AC3					.94 (24.47)	
AC4					.97 (26.10)	
EPSQ1						1.00
EPSQ2						1.13 (10.21)
EPSQ3						1.16 (10.38)
EPSQ4						1.28 (11.05)
EPSQ5						1.21 (10.68)
EPSQ6						1.43 (11.80)
EPSQ7						1.38 (11.57)
EPSQ8						1.25 (10.92)
EPSQ9						1.40 (11.65)

Fit Statistics

Chi-square = 1174.91 (*df* = 335)

GFI = .83

AGFI = .79

CFI = .92

RMSEA = .079

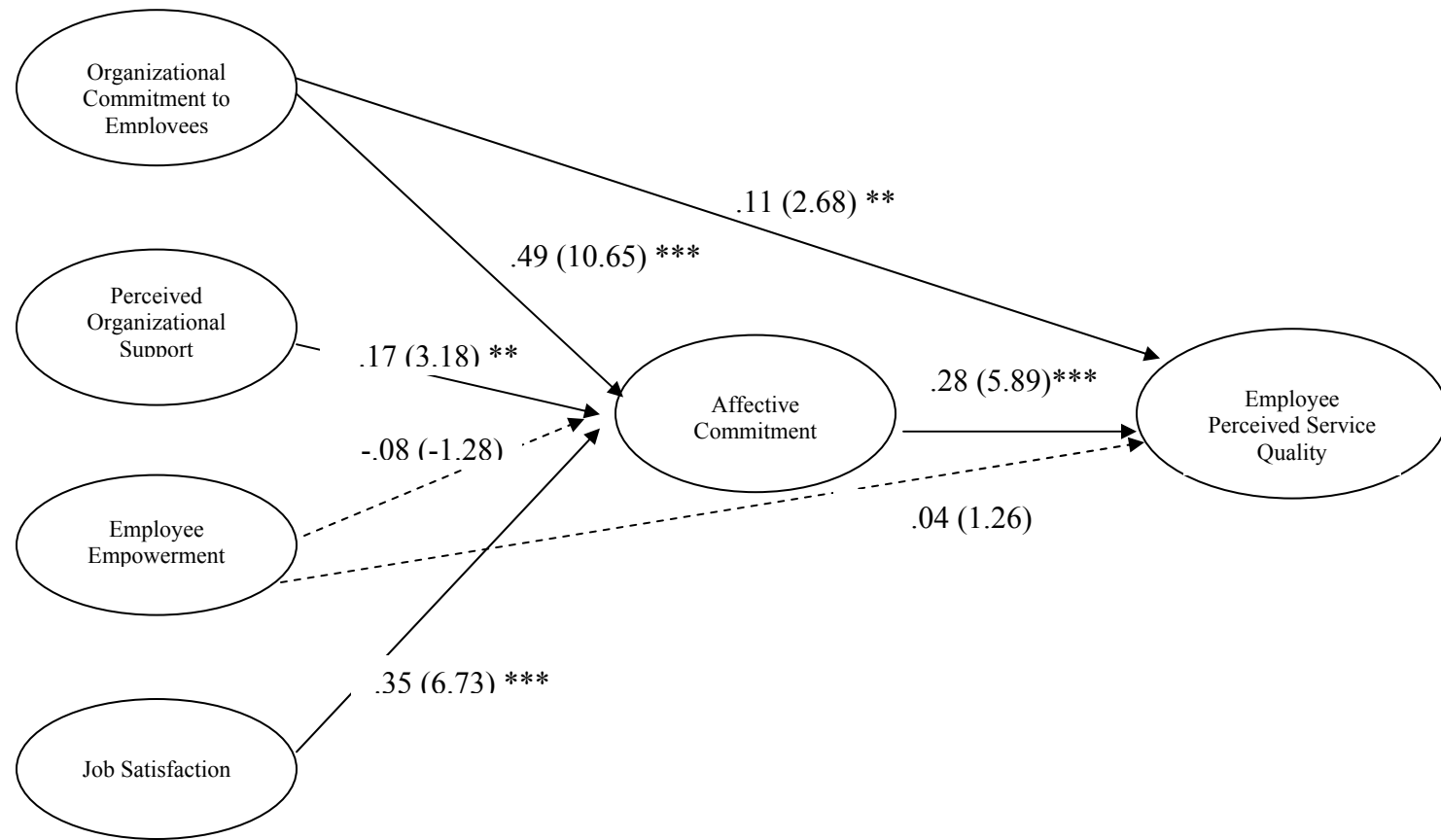
*Note.* All *t* values were significant at  $p < .001$ .

## Structural Model

Figure 4.6 displays the structural model of affective commitment for the purpose of validation. The goodness of fit statistics showed that the model was acceptable; with a chi-square of 882.82 ( $df = 337$ ), a goodness of fit (GFI) of .86, an adjusted goodness of fit (AGFI) of .84, a CFI of .94, and a RMSEA of .064. The results showed that the relationship between employee empowerment and affective commitment was statistically not significant, with a path coefficient of  $-.08$  and a  $t$  value of  $-1.28$ . Meanwhile, employee empowerment had no significant effect on employee perceived service quality, with a path coefficient of  $.04$ , and a  $t$  value of  $1.26$ . However, affective commitment was found to be positively related to organizational commitment to employees ( $\gamma_{11} = .49$ ,  $t = 10.65$ ,  $p < .001$ ), perceived organizational support ( $\gamma_{12} = .17$ ,  $t = 3.18$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and job satisfaction ( $\gamma_{14} = .35$ ,  $t = 6.73$ ,  $p < .001$ ). And employee perceived service quality was found to be positively related to affective commitment ( $\beta_{21} = .28$ ,  $t = 5.89$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and organizational commitment to employees ( $\gamma_{21} = .11$ ,  $t = 2.68$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Compared to the initial theoretical model, the validation model confirmed that employee empowerment was not a right indicator to predict affective commitment. The only difference between the two models is that in the initial model perceived organizational support was found positively related to affective commitment only when employee empowerment was taken out of the model, whereas in the validation model perceived organizational support was positively related to affective commitment before employee empowerment was taken out of the model. This may be caused by the effect of employee empowerment.

**Figure 4.6. The Path Diagram of the Validation Model**



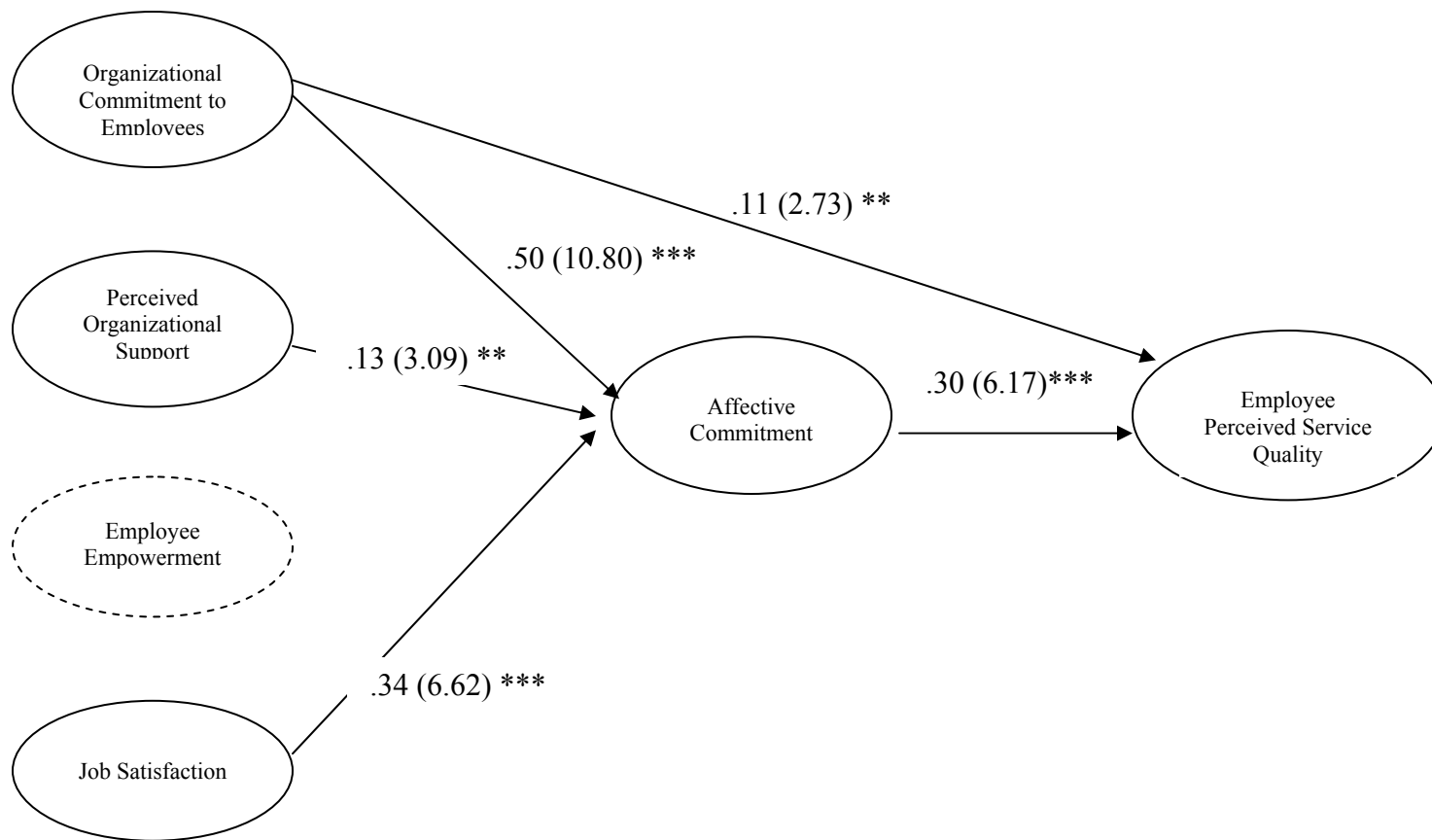
*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

## Modified Structural Model

Because of the weak effect of employee empowerment on affective commitment and employee perceived service quality, employee empowerment was deleted from the model. A modified structural model was estimated (see Figure 4.7). The goodness of fit statistics showed that the model was acceptable; with a chi-square of 889.31 ( $df = 339$ ), a goodness of fit (GFI) of .86, an adjusted goodness of fit (AGFI) of .84, a CFI of .94, and a RMSEA of .064. Affective commitment was found to be positively related to organizational commitment to employees ( $\gamma_{11} = .50, t = 10.80, p < .001$ ), perceived organizational support ( $\gamma_{12} = .13, t = 3.09, p < .01$ ), and job satisfaction ( $\gamma_{14} = .34, t = 6.62, p < .001$ ). And employee perceived service quality was found to be positively related to affective commitment ( $\beta_{21} = .30, t = 6.17, p < .001$ ), and organizational commitment to employees ( $\gamma_{21} = .11, t = 2.73, p < .01$ ).

The modified structural model confirmed the results from the initial modified structural model (see Table 4.9). This indicates that the estimated initial model can be used to generalize to the whole population.

**Figure 4.7. The Path Diagram of the Modified Validation Model**



Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .



**Table 4.9. The Structural Model Summary**

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
$\chi^2$	984.43 ( <i>df</i> = 337)	988.23 ( <i>df</i> = 339)	882.82 ( <i>df</i> = 337)	889.31 ( <i>df</i> = 339)
GFI	.85	.85	.86	.86
AGFI	.82	.82	.84	.84
RMSEA	.069	.069	.064	.064
CFI	.92	.92	.94	.94
<i>H</i> <sub>1</sub> : OCE → AC	.53 (10.47) ***	.52 (10.59) ***	.49 (10.65) ***	.50 (10.80) ***
<i>H</i> <sub>2</sub> : POS → AC	.09 (1.56)	.10 (2.50) *	.17 (3.18) **	.13 (3.09) **
<i>H</i> <sub>3</sub> : EMP → AC	.02 (.34)	-	-.08 (-1.28)	-
<i>H</i> <sub>4</sub> : JS → AC	.34 (7.18) ***	.35 (.766) ***	.35 (6.73) ***	.34 (6.62) ***
<i>H</i> <sub>5</sub> : EMP → ESPQ	.06 (1.86)	-	.04 (1.26)	-
<i>H</i> <sub>6</sub> : OCE → EPSQ	.17 (3.44) ***	.17 (3.49) ***	.11 (2.68) **	.11 (2.73) **
<i>H</i> <sub>7</sub> : AC → EPSQ	.23 (4.38) ***	.25 (4.93) ***	.28 (5.89) ***	.30 (6.17) ***

*Note.* OCE: organizational commitment to employee; POS: perceived organizational support; EMP: employee empowerment; JS: job satisfaction; AC: affective commitment; EPSQ: employee perceived service quality. Model 1: initial theoretical model; model 2: modified initial model (EMP was deleted); model 3: validation model; model 4: revised validation model (EMP was deleted).

### *Analysis of the Hypotheses*

There were seven hypotheses developed in this study based on the literature review. The hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling technique. The exogenous variables were organizational commitment to employees, perceived organizational support, employee empowerment, and job satisfaction. The two endogenous variables were affective commitment and employee perceived service quality, as they were posited to be affected by at least one other construct. The hypothesized relationships in the initial theoretical model were shown in Figure 4.1.

#### **Hypothesis 1: Organizational commitment to employees will have a positive effect on affective commitment.**

The path coefficient was .53 and the  $t$  value was 10.47 ( $p < .001$ ) in the initial theoretical model (see Table 4.9), indicating that organizational commitment to employees did have a positive effect on affective commitment. In the validation model, the path coefficient relating organizational commitment to employees and affective commitment was .49, with a  $t$  value of 10.65 ( $p < .001$ ) (see Table 4.9), confirming the result of the initial theoretical model. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

#### **Hypothesis 2: Perceived organizational support will have a positive effect on affective commitment.**

In the initial theoretical model, the path coefficient relating perceived organizational support and affective commitment was .09 ( $t = 1.56, p > .05$ ) (see Table

4.9), indicating that perceived organizational support exerted no significant effect on affective commitment. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was not supported. However, if employee empowerment was deleted from the initial model because of its lack of significance, perceived organizational support was found positively related to affective commitment, with a path coefficient of .10 and a  $t$  value of 2.50 ( $p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.9). The revised validation model confirmed that perceived organizational support had a positive effect on affective commitment ( $\gamma_{12} = .13, t = 3.09, p < .01$ ) if employee empowerment was not included in the model (see Figure 4.7).

**Hypothesis 3: Employee empowerment will have a positive effect on affective commitment.**

Surprisingly, employee empowerment was found not significant related to affective commitment, both in the initial theoretical model and in the validation model (see Table 4.9). Hence, hypothesis 3 was not supported. The path coefficient in the initial model was .02 ( $t = .34, p > .05$ ). And it was -.08 ( $t = -1.28, p > .05$ ) in the validation model. Although both models suggested that employee empowerment was not significantly related to affective commitment, the initial model and the validation model provided some interesting results: there was a positive relationship between employee empowerment and affective commitment in the initial model, whereas there was a negative relationship between the two constructs in the validation model. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the relationship between affective commitment and its antecedents, using the same sample in the estimation of the initial model. The

result from multiple regression analysis (see Table 4.6) confirmed that employee empowerment was not an appropriate indicator in predicting affective commitment.

**Hypothesis 4: Job satisfaction will have a positive effect on affective commitment.**

The path coefficient relating job satisfaction and affective commitment was .34 ( $t = 7.18, p < .001$ ) in the initial model. When employee empowerment was deleted from the initial model, the path coefficient changed slightly to .35 ( $t = 7.66, p < .001$ ). In the validation model and the revised validation model, the path coefficient was .35 ( $t = 6.73, p < .001$ ) and .34 ( $t = 6.62, p < .001$ ) respectively (see Table 4.9). The similar results from the model estimation, modification, and validation process suggested that job satisfaction did have a significant positive effect on affective commitment. Therefore, hypothesis 4 was supported.

**Hypothesis 5: Employee empowerment will have a positive effect on employee perceived service quality.**

The path coefficient relating employee empowerment and employee perceived service quality was .06 ( $t = 1.86, p > .05$ ) in the initial theoretical model, whereas it was .04 ( $t = 1.26, p > .05$ ) in the validation model (see Table 4.9). Both model indicated that employee empowerment had no significant effect on employee perceived service quality. Hence, hypothesis 5 was not supported. This further supported the decision of deleting employee empowerment from the model.

**Hypothesis 6: Affective Commitment will have a positive effect on employee perceived service quality.**

The path coefficient relating affective commitment to employee perceived service quality was .17 ( $t = 3.44, p < .001$ ) in the initial theoretical model. When employee empowerment was deleted because of its insignificance, the path coefficient remained unchanged ( $\beta_{21} = .17, t = 3.49, p < .001$ ). In the validation model, the path coefficient was .11 ( $t = 2.68, p < .01$ ). It also remained unchanged ( $\beta_{21} = .11, t = 2.73, p < .01$ ) when employee empowerment was taken out of the validation model (see Table 4.9). The consistency of the results from the initial model and the validation model indicated that affective commitment had a positive effect on employee perceived service quality. Thus, hypothesis 6 was supported.

**Table 4.10. The Summary of Hypothesis Tests**

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<i>Hypothesis</i>		<i>Result</i>
Hypothesis 1:	Organizational commitment to employees will have a positive effect on affective commitment.	Supported
Hypothesis 2:	Perceived organizational support will have a positive effect on affective commitment.	Supported
Hypothesis 3:	Employee empowerment will have a positive effect on affective commitment.	Not Supported
Hypothesis 4:	Job satisfaction will have a positive effect on affective commitment.	Supported
Hypothesis 5:	Employee empowerment will have a positive effect on employee perceived service quality.	Not Supported
Hypothesis 6:	Affective commitment will have a positive effect on employee perceived service quality.	Supported

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### *Summary*

This chapter examined the relationships between affective commitment and its antecedents and consequence. Model estimation and validation procedure were employed in this study, with randomly selected 400 cases in each procedure. Reliability and validity were examined before the model was estimated. The results showed that the measurement instruments were reliable and valid. Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the measurement model. The hypothesized relationships were tested using SEM. Employee empowerment was found not significantly related to affective commitment and employee perceived service quality as expected in the initial theoretical model. A modified model was then assessed. In the validation process, employee empowerment had no significant effect on affective commitment and employee perceived service quality as well. Therefore, employee empowerment was deleted from the model and a revised model was examined.

The validation process confirmed that employee empowerment was not a right indicator in the proposed model. The following chapter will discuss the results and the implications as well. Future research suggestions will be provided.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### *Introduction*

This chapter discusses the statistical analysis results of the research concerning the relationships between affective commitment and its antecedents and consequence. Then, implications from the findings are suggested and the limitations of the study are discussed. Finally, suggestions for future research are presented.

#### *Discussion*

This study was designed to examine the relationship between affective commitment and its antecedents and consequence. The model developed based on the literature review was composed of six constructs: organizational commitment to employees, perceived organizational support, employee empowerment, job satisfaction, affective commitment, and employee perceived service quality. The model containing six hypotheses was tested using the structural equation modeling technique. Multiple regression analysis was also employed to further identify whether the construct of employee empowerment was the right indicator in predicting affective commitment. Using a model validation approach, this study further evaluated the generalizability of the estimated model. The model summary was presented in Table 4.8.



## **Affective Commitment**

Affective commitment is defined as an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in his/her organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between affective commitment and its antecedents and consequences. Four antecedents and one consequence were identified based on the literature review. Affective commitment was found to be positively related to organizational commitment to employees, perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, and employee perceived service quality. However, the expected positive relationship between employee empowerment and affective commitment was found not significant.

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that employees are more committed to their organization, if they are valued as important assets, supported by the management team, and satisfied with their job. Affective commitment can boost the level of service quality. Committed employees work harder and perform better (Meyer & Allen, 1997), which ultimately improve organizational effectiveness.

## **Organizational Commitment to Employees**

Organizational commitment to employees is defined as an organization's actions toward and treatment of its employees reflected in its care for the employees' wellbeing and satisfaction (Lee & Miller, 1999; Muse et al., 2005). A few studies have investigated the construct of organizational commitment to employees (e.g., Lee & Miller, 1999; Muse et al., 2005; Roca-Puig et al., 2005). The findings from the researchers suggested that organizational commitment to employees had a positive effect on business outcomes,

such as return on assets, firm performance, and strategic flexibility. However, the relationship between organizational commitment to employees and affective commitment has barely been examined. According to the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the findings from the above researchers, it was hypothesized that organizational commitment would have positive effects on affective commitment and on employee perceived service quality as well.

The results from the structural equation modeling indicated that the relationship between organizational commitment and affective commitment was positively significant, as was the relationship between organizational commitment and employee perceived service quality. The findings bring some insights into understanding the construct of organizational commitment to employees. Organizations often expect their employees to automatically develop commitment over time, and do not recognize that commitment development is a complicated process based on mutual trust and benefits. In order to win over employees, organizations should purposefully demonstrate their commitment to employees.

This study determined that organizational commitment to employees was the most influential construct, with the highest path coefficient of .53 ( $t = 10.47, p < .001$ ) on affective commitment in the initial theoretical model. The modified models and the validation model also showed the consistent results (see Table 4.8). In addition, results from multiple regression analysis confirmed that organizational commitment to employees was the most important factor in predicting affective commitment. Organizational commitment to employees had the highest beta coefficient in the regression model, in which  $AC = 1.456 + .406 OCE + .288 JS + .124 POS$  (see Table 4.5)

(AC: affective commitment; OCE: organizational commitment to employees; JS: job satisfaction; and POS: perceived organizational support). The findings imply that in order to retain committed employees, organizations should look out for their employees' best interest, such as valuing employees and offering potential career growth opportunities. The more an organization cares about its employees, the more committed the employees will be to their organization.

The findings also indicate that organizational commitment has a positive effect on employee perceived service quality. In the service industry, the main job function for front line employees is to deliver service to customers. Service quality reflects how well front line employees perform their job. According to the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the notion of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), service employees will respond in kind by improving their contributions, in this case by improving service quality, when their organization exhibits care taking towards the employees.

### **Perceived Organizational Support**

Perceived organizational support is defined as the degree to which an employee perceives his/her employer to be concerned with his/her well-being and to value his/her contributions to the organization (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). The original measurement scale developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986) consists of thirty-six items. Although there is evidence of the reliability of the originally unidimensional construct, many researchers tend to use an adapted shorter version to measure perceived organizational support (e.g., Erdogan & Enders, 2007; Settoon et al., 1996; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006; Vandenberghe et al., 2007). In this study, four items were developed

to measure the mentioned construct. These four items directly related the supportive work environment created between employees and management. The construct of perceived organizational support, in this study, differs from the construct of organizational commitment to employees. OCE focuses on looking out for the best interests of employees; and POS in this study is more inclined to fostering a supportive work environment for employees.

Perceived organizational support was hypothesized to have a positive effect on affective commitment. However, the expected relationship was not confirmed in the initial theoretical model. When further analyzing the model, it was decided to delete employee empowerment from the model because of its weak contribution. In the modified model, the relationship between perceived organizational support and affective commitment emerged as positively significant. Meanwhile, perceived organizational support was found to be positively related to affective commitment in the validation model as well.

The finding of this study is consistent with other researchers' studies on the relationship between affective commitment and perceived organizational support (e.g., Alexandrov et al., 2007; Hutchison, 1997; Hutchison & Garstka, 1996; Vandenberghe et al., 2004). On the basis of reciprocity norm (Gouldner, 1960), employees would feel obligation to care about their organization through greater affective commitment (e.g., Eisenberger et al., 1986; Mowday et al., 1982). Perceived organizational support would also increase affective commitment by fulfilling employees' needs for esteem and affiliation (Rhoades et al., 2001). The results from this study suggest that the organization should examine the policies to create a dynamic supportive climate to foster

employee affective commitment. For instance, employees are more likely to stay with an organization and develop emotional attachment overtime if a good working relationship is maintained between them and their management team. Employees who intrinsically value their association with the organization are more likely not only to stay with the company but to work toward its success (Meyer et al., 1989).

### **Employee Empowerment**

Employee empowerment is defined as a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness, and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Employee empowerment was hypothesized to be positively related to affective commitment and employee perceived service quality as well. Quite surprisingly, the relationships were found not significant at all, both in the initial theoretical model and the validation model.

The notion of employee empowerment advocates the extent to which employees are engaged in the decision making process in an organization. Empowered employees are motivated intrinsically to perform better through the sharing of relevant information and the provision of control over factors affecting job performance (Newstrom, 2007). Kazlauskaite, Buciuniene and Turauskas (2006) pointed out that “empowerment is a multifaceted construct that should be considered from both individual and organizational perspectives, i.e. the first referring to employees’ psychological state and the latter being related to organizational culture that supports empowerment.” Klidas et al. (2007) found

that frontline employees were more likely to exercise the empowered behaviors, when they have the encouragement, support, trust and confidence of their superiors. Service organizations, such as American Airlines, Marriott, American Express and Federal Express, have embraced the concept of employee empowerment as a human resource management strategy critical for defining their service as a core competitive advantage (Zemke & Schaaf, as cited in Bowen & Lawler, 1992).

Yet, empowerment programs are often unsuccessful because of the incongruence between the reality and the implementation of empowering programs by management (Kazlauskaite et al., 2006). Employees are expected to fulfill more responsibilities through job enrichment and job enlargement. But too many responsibilities may cause stress and burnout to employees, which will have a negative impact on job satisfaction (Lashley, 2001; Hartline & Ferrell, 1996). As already mentioned before, unsatisfied employees are more likely to quit the job, demonstrating less organizational commitment. The evidence from the study by Hales and Klidas (1998) revealed that empowerment programs in ten five-star hotels in Amsterdam meant increased responsibility, but not decision-making power or involvement in service quality improvement.

This study focused on the hourly employees in a U.S. resort organization. This organization had adopted empowerment program. Yet, it is not clear if all the hourly employees at different level would feel that they were truly empowered by the organization. It also remains questionable whether every employee at this organization understood the definition of empowerment and how the empowerment program worked. In addition, some employees who performed routine jobs may not want to be empowered to complete their tasks. But the data included all the employees' opinion on

empowerment regardless of the reality. Additionally, the demographic characteristics of two data sets used in the initial model testing and model validation may explain something regarding employee empowerment. A majority of the respondents in both data sets were between 21 and 35 years old, 62.8 percent and 63.1 percent respectively. Nearly half of the respondents worked as seasonal employees during summer or winter only. In both data sets, about 40 percent of the respondents worked for the organization for three months or less. The evidences imply that employees may not ready for empowerment yet because of the short time period they have engaged in the organization. Meanwhile, since a lot of employees worked seasonally, they might have other employment engagement with other organizations when they were off season. They may not feel obliged and therefore may not want to take more responsibilities. Additionally, the majority of employees were young and they might not be ready for empowerment. These possible explanations may help identify why employee empowerment was not found significant in the model testing and validation.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is defined as the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values (Locke, 1969). Job satisfaction was found to have a positive effect on affective commitment. Satisfied employees are more likely to stay with the organization than unsatisfied employees (Vroom, 1964). Further, employees who are satisfied with their jobs have greater affective commitment than those who are not (Alexandrov et al., 2007). According to motivation theory (e.g., Herzberg, 1959), employees are satisfied with their

jobs when they are rewarded with both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. Money as intrinsic reward has not been shown to be a powerful motivator. Employees are better motivated and satisfied with their jobs if they feel a sense of completion, achievement, autonomy, and personal growth (Herzberg, 1959). In order to retain committed employees, service organizations should not only provide their employees with reasonable financial rewards, but also with achievement recognition and the work itself.

### **Employee Perceived Service Quality**

Employee perceived service quality is defined as the employee's judgment about the overall excellence or superiority of a service. Employee perceived service quality was found to be positively related to affective commitment, both in the initial theoretical model and the validation model. The results were consistent with Allen and Meyer's work. In addition, organizational commitment to employees, as expected, had a positive effect on employee perceived service quality.

In the service industry, it is a challenge for an organization to provide consistent and high quality service to its customers. The moment of truth lies in the service encounter. Front line employees are the ones directly interact with customers. And their job performance ultimately affects customers' perception of service quality. Bitner et al. (1990) noted that a service employee's ability to respond in service failure situations could recover failures, result in highly satisfactory encounters and improve service quality. If employees feel supported by their organization, they are more inclined to perform better during service encounters (Susskind, Kacmar, & Borchgrevink, 2003). In



order to create a climate for reliable and high quality service, organizations should develop supportive management practices.

The findings in this study leads to an understanding of service quality from a different perspective. Normally service quality is measured with customers' perception (e.g., Parasuraman et al., 1988). The measurement of service quality in this study shifted to listen to employees' voice: employee perceived service quality. Schneider et al. (1980) found that there was a direct linkage between the customers' perception of service quality and the employee's perception of service quality. Steers and Porter (1991) pointed out that employee perceived service quality is a more direct and suitable consequence of role clarity since perceptions drive behavior. Mukherjee and Malhotra (2006) studied employees in call centers relating role clarity to employee perceived service quality. The approach of measuring service quality from the perspective of employee is relatively new. This study may bring some interesting insights into the research field.

### ***Implications of the Research Findings***

The study aimed to understand the antecedents of affective commitment as well as the consequences. The notion of affective commitment has caught much attention for several decades and numerous studies have investigated the subject (e.g., Alexandrov et al., 2007; Eisenberger et al., 1990; Vandenberghe et al., 2007). The results from this study indicate that affective commitment is associated with organizational commitment to employees, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction. On the other hand, affective commitment has a positive effect on employee perceived service quality.

## **Contribution to the Present Body of Literature**

The theoretical model of this study was derived from the literature review. The construct of organizational commitment to employees was introduced to the model as an antecedent of affective commitment. Organizational commitment to employees is fairly new in the study of organizational sciences and it has not been related to affective commitment in the previous studies. The findings suggested that organizational commitment to employees was the most influential factor affecting affective commitment. This may generate some interests to further explore the importance of organizational commitment to employees in the future studies.

The construct of employee perceived service quality was introduced to the model in this study as a consequence of affective commitment. Previous studies have focused on service quality from the customers' perspective. This study directed the attention to the employees' perception of service quality. The construct was measured by five dimensions developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985), showing good reliability and validity. This implies that future studies on service quality may consider the voice from the employees when diagnosing their job performance.

Perceived organizational support and job satisfaction were found positively related to affective commitment. The findings were consistent with previous studies. It confirms that employees may develop loyalty to their organization if they are satisfied with their jobs and provided with sufficient support.

However, the expected positive effects of employee empowerment on affective commitment and employee perceived service quality were not found in this study. From the human resource management point of view, employees are unique attributes, which

has been recognized since Taylor's scientific management published in 1911. Today's strategic human resource management emphasizes enhancing organizational effectiveness by retaining talented employees (Dessler, 1999). Lawler (1986) advocated employee involvement through empowerment process. Empowered employees gain work autonomy by fulfilling additional responsibilities and exerting a greater influence at work (Paré & Tremblay, 2007). The positive work experience resulted from empowerment practices enable employees to be emotional attached to their organization. Lashley pointed out that empowered employees are more likely to stay with the organization longer and perform better.

However, the findings in this particular study indicated that employee empowerment had no significant impact on affective commitment and job performance. The explanations for this may be drawn from two aspects: organizational aspect and individual aspect. Some organizations are driven to implement empowerment practices because other organizations are doing it. These followers may not thoroughly understand the notion of empowerment and fail to explain it clearly to the employees. Organizations should also monitor the success and make changes when necessary once the empowerment program has been carried out (Kazlauskaite et al., 2006). If the organization does not provide consistent support from the top, the employees will presume that the empowerment practices are just show cases and will not take it seriously. Also, some organizations would "empower" employees by assigning them additional responsibilities but not including them in the decision making process. The example would be Hales and Klida's (1998) study. In this scenario, the empowerment program is

used as an excuse to wrongfully treat employees. Eventually, employees will find out the truth and resent the wrongdoings.

From the individual aspect, empowerment is not a right tool for every one. Additional responsibilities may cause burnout and stress (Hartline & Ferrell, 1999). Employees with low internal needs for power and control may not be suitable for empowerment development. In addition, not every employee needs to be empowered. If there is a low level of uncertainty in the workplace, employees are more likely to follow the standard procedures to complete the tasks.

### **Practical Applications**

Committed employees are important assets for any organization. To enhance organizational effectiveness, organizations wish to retain employees with affective commitment, who are attached to the organization emotionally without economic and moral obligations. Studies have shown that employees with affective commitment perform better and stay with the organization longer than those without affective commitment. Many factors are identified to help employees foster affective commitment, such as perceived organizational support, employee empowerment, job satisfaction, and so on. This study tested the model developed from the literature review. The findings may be expanded in the managerial applications.

An important finding from this study is that organizational commitment to employees had the highest effect on affective commitment. This suggests that in order to retain committed employees, the organization should be committed to the employees in

the first place. From the concept of the social exchange theory, an employee forms a psychological contract with its organization. The extent to which an organization fulfills its side of the psychological contract will have a significant influence on the employee's attitudes and behaviors (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994). If the employee perceives that the organization cares about his/her well-being, he/she will feel obligations to respond in kind, which will have a significant influence on the employee's level of satisfaction, commitment and job performance. For example, if an organization maintains that it will not fire any employees even if the current financial situation is tough, employees will value this treatment and work hard to pay back in the long run.

Consistent with the social exchange theory, previous researches concluded organizational support had a positive impact on employee citizenship behaviors (Metlen, Eveleth, & Bailey, 2005). Employees who perceive strong support from the organization are more likely to perform better and be more satisfied with their jobs, hence less likely to leave the organization. For example, if management provides employees with training and development programs, employees will feel the obligation and respond with commitment. Besides the general commitment from the organization, management should also provide employees with a pleasant work environment and necessary aids, such as day care center, fitness center, weight loss program, etc. The support from the organization will help employees cope with their difficulties and problems that may distract them from the job tasks. With those problems taken care of, employees are more likely to be less stressful and stay on the job for a longer time.

Employee empowerment has been positively related to affective commitment (e.g., Babakus et al., 2003; Paré & Tremblay, 2007; Ugboro, 2006). Yet, empowerment

programs are often unsuccessful (Kazlaukaite et al., 2006). To effectively implement empowerment programs, the organization should evaluate every aspect from the organizational and individual perspectives. Clear communication between the employees and management regarding the implementation of empowerment program should be present. Consistent support and trust from the management is necessary for the employees to exercise the empowered behaviors (Wilderom, 2007). Organizations should consistently advocate the empowerment program and listen to employees' suggestion and opinions. Employees will be more likely to practice the empowerment behaviors if they perceive the commitment from the top management. Additionally, changes should be made if there is any incongruence occurs. Empowerment programs are more efficient if it improves overtime.

Meanwhile, employee empowerment is not necessarily the right tool for everyone. Employees with a higher level of operational uncertainty should be considered in the empowering process (Kazlauskaitė et al., 2006). In other words, employees need to be given power in decision making process if they are highly engaged in customer interaction, such as front desk clerks in a hotel. On the other hand, it is not necessary to empower employees who perform job duties routinely at the back of the house, for instance, dishwashers in a kitchen at a restaurant.

Responsibilities and authorities should be allocated fairly and reasonably to employees who have internal needs for power and control (McClelland, 1975), feelings of personal efficacy (Bandura, 1986), and strong personal skills (Bowen & Lowler, 1992). To recruit right people is essential for the implementation of empowerment program. Human resource department should develop certain criteria in the selection process to

ensure the right person is deployed at the right position. For instance, people who are extraverts and possess excellent communication skills will perform better in terms of interaction with people. If these people are equipped with needs of power, they will become the perfect candidates in the process of empowerment. When right employees are selected and empowered, management should provide them with adequate resources to lessen the stress and conflict in allocation of scarce resources (Sell, 2005). To further enhance the implementation of empowerment, organizations need to recruit Theory Y managers who believe their subordinates can act independently to benefit both the organization and the customers (Bowen & Lawler, 1992).

In summary, employees with affective commitment are highly desired by any organization. To retain committed employees, organizations should provide sufficient care and support, and include employees in the decision making process. When employees feel that their job is meaningful, they are very likely to perform better and stay with their organization longer.

### ***Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research***

Although this study provides evidence in assessing the importance of affective commitment in service organizations, certain limitations arise because of the practical considerations, such as the sample issues and time frame. First, the sample used in this study came from a secondary data resource. Because of this, the items measuring each construct were not necessary exactly what other researchers have used in the literature. However, the measurement scale for each construct was similar to the items used in

previous studies. During the research design, a couple of workshops and a pilot study were carried out. The scientific process ensured that the measurement scales had good reliability. Second, the research is a case study of one service organization in the United States, and may not be representative of the entire service industry in the U.S. and worldwide. Service in other cultures maybe different and employee attributes may vary.

Another limitation of the study is that the measurement scales were not duplicated but adapted to form a shorter version from the existing scales. For instance, employee perceived service quality was measured by nine items, which were adapted from SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1985); employee empowerment was measured by three items, adapted from Spreitzer's (1995) study. The shorter version of the measurement scale for each construct may not fully represent the dimensions that the construct should have.

In the future, the study could be replicated in other service organizations, other industries, or even in other countries. For example, it would be useful to compare our results to other service organizations, such as banking, retailing, etc. It might be even more interesting to replicate our study on an organization located in an Asian country, where culture is different from the U.S. In addition, future studies could use the original measurement scale for each construct. For example, employee empowerment could be measured with Spreitzer's (1995) 12-item measurement scale.

In conclusion, this study establishes linkages between employee affective commitment and its antecedents and consequence. Given the limitations, this study has provided constructive contributions to the existing knowledge body on the mentioned subject.



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## **Appendix A**

### **Questionnaire Design**

The initial item pool of the questionnaire was developed by a U.S. consulting firm based on the publications in Marketing Science Institute and other existing journal research articles. Approximately in 1995, a Service Excellence Team comprised of a number of employees (number not disclosed) throughout all job levels in the resort organization was established for the purpose of developing the measurement instrument outline. In that summer, the consulting firm conducted about 6 to 10 focus groups on the Service Excellence Team in order to organize the constructs and draft the questionnaire. Then the pre-test questionnaire was administered to a sample of 250 employees for scale purification. Exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach's Alpha were later carried out in the data analysis. Modified questionnaire was sent back to the Service Excellence Team to be reviewed and finalized. The final questionnaire was then administered as the annual employee opinion survey in 1996-1997 (year 1), 1997-1998 (year 2), and 1998-1999 (year 3). Between year 1 and year 2, a workshop with the Service Excellence Team was conducted with the Service Excellence Team for further feedback. And another workshop was set up between year 2 and year 3.



**Appendix B**  
**Descriptive Statistics**

		<b>Job Level</b>			
		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	line (hourly)	4109	69.5	71.3	71.3
	lead/foreman (hourly)	580	9.8	10.1	81.4
	non-supervisor (salaried)	287	4.9	5.0	86.4
	supervisor or assistant manager (salaried)	302	5.1	5.2	91.6
	Manager	361	6.1	6.3	97.9
	senior manager or above	121	2.0	2.1	100.0
	Total	5760	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	153	2.6		
Total		5913	100.0		

**Time Employed**

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	3 months or less	1815	30.7	31.2	31.2
	4-6 months/1 season	678	11.5	11.7	42.9
	7-12 months/2 seasons	775	13.1	13.3	56.2
	1-3 years/3-6 seasons	1106	18.7	19.0	75.2
	3-5 years/7-10 seasons	501	8.5	8.6	83.8
	5-10 years/10-20 seasons	596	10.1	10.2	94.1
	more than 10 years/more than 20 seasons	345	5.8	5.9	100.0
	Total	5816	98.4	100.0	
Missing	System	97	1.6		
	Total	5913	100.0		

**Age**

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	less than 20	528	8.9	9.1	9.1
	21-25	1962	33.2	33.9	43.0
	26-35	1717	29.0	29.6	72.6
	36-49	1047	17.7	18.1	90.7
	over 50	540	9.1	9.3	100.0
	Total		5794	98.0	100.0
Missing	System	119	2.0		
Total		5913	100.0		

**Gender**

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	Male	3085	52.2	59.2	59.2
	Female	2125	35.9	40.8	100.0
	Total	5210	88.1	100.0	
Missing	System	703	11.9		
Total		5913	100.0		

**Employment Status**

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	full time	4400	74.4	86.4	86.4
	part time	680	11.5	13.4	99.8
	volunteer	12	.2	.2	100.0
	Total	5092	86.1	100.0	
Missing	System	821	13.9		
Total		5913	100.0		

**Employment Status 2**

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	year round	1762	29.8	37.9	37.9
	season/season	946	16.0	20.4	58.3
	seasonal winter or summer only	1939	32.8	41.7	100.0
	Total	4647	78.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1266	21.4		
Total		5913	100.0		