

Employees' Organizational Commitment Challenges - a Hotel Industry Perspective

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Abstract. *Hotel industry is confronted with some challenges induced by changing customers' requirements and by a competitive environment. In this context, front-line employees are a very important determinant of organizational performance. Researchers suggested that organizational performance can be achieved through employee organizational commitment (OC) development. This is the reason why this paper aims to explore employees' level of OC components from hotel chains, considering a variety of independent variables. Furthermore, recommendations for hotel managers who want to improve employees' OC are offered. A quantitative study was conducted on 152 employees from 12 hotels belonging to four international and national hotel chains. We first verified if the same OC components from scholarly literature can be identified in Romanian context. Then, an analysis on differences registered for these OC components was conducted, considering variables like age, gender, educational level, work experience, hotel chain name, hotel location, etc. Considering results, we identified all the three OC components presented in the literature (affective, normative and continuance commitment) and also found that affective commitment reaches the highest level of manifestation for the hotel chain employees from our study. Statistically significant differences between the level of OC manifestations are registered for normative commitment considering the "hotel chain", respondents' "educational level", and "hotel chain belonging" variables and also for affective and normative commitment considering the "hotel location" variable. Even though we found support for these differences only for some of the independent variable, we could still draw some guidelines for hotel managers.*

Keywords: *organizational commitment, affective commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment, hotel chain*

Introduction

The statement that "the hotel industry intensively uses workforce and this most precious resource can make the difference when talking about service quality and organizational competitiveness" became almost a truism. Despite this fact, very few real actions are taken in order to improve work conditions

or quality of human resources. The answer is usually very simple and also almost obvious: in this industry, workforce costs are already high, and improving the quality of human resources means increasing them even more. Anyway, starting the year 1995, English and American researchers have shown that hotel employers began to implement some decisions on human resource development using customised human resource practices (Anastassova & Purcell, 1995 cited in Blašková, 2008; Hoque, 1999). The reasons may be diverse, including increasing customers' expectation on service quality or the service differentiation requirements. These changes entail upon higher qualifications and of course developing social abilities, new technical skills, ingenuity and hard work (Mohinder & Katon, 2007 cited in Blašková, 2008). There are also some authors who sustained that hotel employee must be an intelligent (especially emotional one) person, with particular knowledge and abilities and good time management skills (Wong et al., 2002). Besides all these, the success of a hotel depends on employee's organizational commitment, behaviours and attitudes (Anastassov & Purcell, 1995 cited in Blašková, 2008).

A lot of research was conducted on organizational commitment topic, including in hotel industry field (Sharply & Forster, 2002; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Fisher, McPail & Menghetti, 2010). The question how relevant the research is for this topic in the new economy. The new economy asks for a flexible, well specialised workforce, ready to solve any problem may encounter. This is due to the fact that there is so much variation in the work volume during a year and also time and costs pressures for searching and training new employees doesn't allow organization to search for low qualified ones. In this case, will employers be further interested in increasing organizational commitment? Wouldn't they look for occupational commitment only? These are some questions that should be taken in consideration in the future research, considering that human resource leasing is not so used, yet, in the hotel industry.

Therefore, the main purpose of this paper is to explore employees' level of OC components from hotel chains, considering a variety of independent variables. In order to achieve this aim we first described the evolving context of hotel industry and human resource management activities (HRM activities), then we briefly presented the organizational commitment (OC) construct, taking in consideration all of its components (affective, continuance and normative commitment). After that, the methodology used in the study is explained, followed by the results and discussions on the research

conducted in 12 hotel chains (international and national hotel chains) from Romania. Finally we drew some conclusions and managerial implications that hotel industry employers could take in consideration for improving employees' OC.

The changing context of hotel industry

The most important difference between production and service sectors, as found in the literature, consists in the fourth characteristics of services: intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishables (Cowell, 1988). Considering different levels of manifestation of these characteristics and also different levels of service standardization, literature in the field classify services in four major categories (Lashley, 1998). These four categories are:

- *mass produced services*: service is standardized and the dominant characteristic is “tangibility”.
- *mass services*: implies the existence of a standardized service offer, but customer satisfaction comes from intangibilities. Front-line employees are very important in delivering the service, but the skills required are limited.
- *mass customised services*: implies personalization of some characteristics of the service, but there is still predictability on the possible variations; “tangibility” is dominant.
- *customised services*: are those services which differ from a customer to another; very few customers will receive the same service because the requirements are different; intangibility is dominant and the service quality depends on direct contact employees' skills.

We consider that hotel industry is situated somewhere between mass customised services and customised services, being in the middle of tangibility/intangibility axis and almost in the middle of standardised/customization services axis (standardization is still dominant) (*Figure 1*). Even so, customers are expecting for the employee to break the rule for them, so in the future more standardised services will become customised.

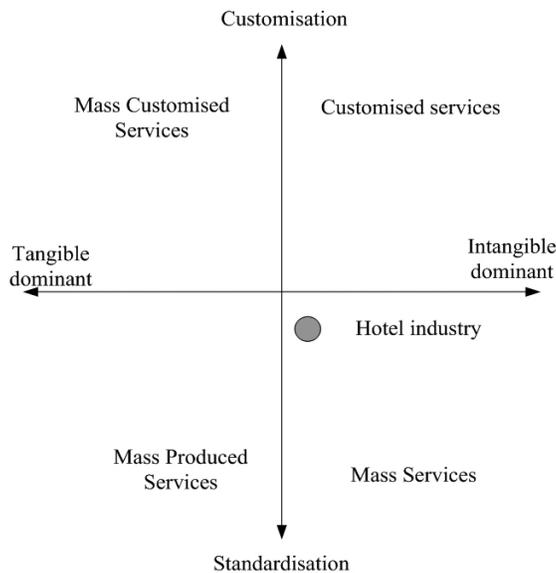


Figure 1. Service offers models

Source: adapted from Lashley C, 1998, p.26

Other evolving issues from hotel industry are HRM activities. Between 1990 and 2011 a lot of research was conducted into the “black box” (human resource practices) of the organization in order to improve organizational performance. The result was concluding: only certain employees’ attitude and behaviour help companies to achieve organizational performance improvement. Purcell and Hutchinson (2007) proved that all employees’ results like commitment, autonomy, achieving feeling and challenge are correlated with employees’ perception on leader behaviour and on human resource practices and the impact is higher if they act simultaneous.

In other words, human resource activities became more important than they used to be and all managers from top to front-line ones should be involved in creating and implementing human resource practices (e.g. empowerment, training, performance evaluation). Furthermore, in order to obtain the desired employees’ attitudes and behaviours certain human resource practices are required. Thereby, the literature on HRM-performance chain topic offers different strategic approaches on HRM practices that may conduct to HRM / organizational results (including employees’ OC), as identified below:

- universal system or “best fit” practices (Pfeffer, 1994; Haynes & Fryer, 2000);

- contingency or external fit (Delery & Doty, 1996) which means the alignment between HRM practices (viewed as system, bundle or cluster) and a specific organizational context (Kepes & Delery, 2010);
- “configurational” perspective or internal fit of HRM practices which also illustrates the “complementarity among HRM practices” (Kepes & Delery, 2010, p.387).

Over the last 20 years, literature in the field has tried to explain how HRM system can generate organizational performance. Thereby the HRM – performance chain considerably developed over the last years by identifying variables that mediate this relation, like employees’ attitudes (e.g. commitment, loyalty, motivation) and behaviours (e.g. organizational citizenship behaviours) (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Mackey, 2007; Katou & Budhwar, 2010). Even so the HRM still needs to offer some explanations about what “bundle” of practices will have a better impact on performance or what HR practices’ combination will be effective (Guest, 2011).

Considering motivational HR practices used in the hotel industry, we can argue that because of the growing competition many of them have changed. For example, new instruments were introduced in hotel industry HR activities like coaching, empowerment, commitment. This brought us to the changing role of hotel employees in raising customers’ satisfaction and of course to some new distinctions offered to them: partner or business associate (Thomas, 2009).

Furthermore, in the last two decades responsibilities of human resource managers from hotel industry (HR managers) also changed. In our days, they are not only involved into attracting, recruiting, selecting, training and compensation activities, but also into strategic decision of the company. They also develop procedures in order to create a more flexible, more empowered and committed workforce, in order to create a learning-based organizational climate. Most of traditional HRM activities are now assumed by front-line managers and that is the reason why they need new knowledge and new skills. All these requirements can be achieved only with the permanent support of HR managers.

Debates in the ’90 about the front-line managers’ roles in HRM activities were generous and that is why Purcell and Hutchinson (2007) classified them in three main categories: a) human resource management return to front-line managers (Hutchinson & Wood, 1995); b) front-line managers’ role extend-

ing, meaning adding new HR activities besides the traditional supervising role (McConville & Holden, 1999); c) the new role of front-line managers in human resource management, meaning their implication into employee evaluation and participation, and decisions about compensations benefits (Grint, 1993; McGrover et al., 1997; Harris, 2001). In conclusion, the relationship between front-line managers and employees is very important and that is why top managers, including HR managers should invest more in selecting, training, evaluating and compensating them (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007).

Another issue put into debates by practitioners is that HR managers from hotel industry are playing an ambiguous role. This is due to the fact that, on one hand they need to improve OC and on the other hand they need to control the workforce (seen like an organizational resource). But actually both control activities and improving OC are equally important and do not represent two poles apart.

In this context, in order to help service industry to choose what type of HRM should apply, Lashley (1998) proposed four HRM styles (also used for human resource requirements identification) based on standardization/customisation offer and type of performance locus of control (internal –organizational objectives become intrinsic; external – supervision and pay for performance). These four HRM styles are: involvement style, professional style, command and control style and participative style. Over these four styles, we consider that hotel industry should have a participative approach because the service offer in hotel industry is mostly standardized and locus of control is intern. *Participative style* implies selecting employees based on attitude and personality, offering simple on-the-job training, presenting the service values that will become a guide for customer-employee relationship. Also the team work and team discussions are recommended in order to generate or improve organizational commitment, the feeling of ownership for an activity. The employees are feeling empowered and they have the opportunity to become loyal to costumers and to exert their job autonomy and responsibilities (Lashley, 1998, p.28). This style has a lot of implications for HR managers, but if adopted, the employees will become moral involved, will feel that they have a powerful job role and they will become committed to organization.

Another recommendation offered by literature in the field is using High-Performance Work System (HPWS) as an instrument for improving employees' skills, empowerment, and motivation (Gollan, 2005; Lawler, 2005).

Organizational commitment – definitions and links to other constructs

There is no doubt that OC can have a major implication for organization as a whole and also for each individual, being known as a powerful predictor of employee's motivation and personnel fluctuation (DeCottis & Summer, 1987).

The importance of the employee's commitment for reaching the highest grade of quality of services is emphasized by the theorists and also by the practitioners (Heskett et al., 1994; Larson & Sasser, 2000). The first phase of defining this construct appeared in 1960 (Becker, 1960; Steers, 1977), but by the year 2000 a measurement instrument had been almost validated (Susskind et al., 2000), the factors that determine the manifestation of the OC had been identified (Meyer & Allen, 1990; Luthans, 1998, apud Kazlauskaite et al., 2006) and its role as mediator for organizational performance had been almost proved (Purcell & Kinnie, 2007). Even so there is still not an agreement on the OC definition and the only common view is on its belonging to social exchange theory. Developed for the first time by Blau (1964), this theory tried to explain why employees' attitudes and behaviours that are not enforced through a formal contract, appear. In this context, Eisenberg, Hutington, Hutchinson, and Sowa (1986) found support for including the construct in the social exchange view, meaning that they illustrated that "employees' commitment to the organization is strongly influenced by their perceptions of the organization's commitment to them" (Eisenberg et al., 1986, p.500).

OC was defined for a great number of researchers, but the first time Becker (1960) defined it as the availability of each individual to engage in a consistent and continuous way into organization's activities. Another approach was proposed by Steers (1977), according to whom OC represents a powerful identification of each individual to the organization and his implication in its activities. Later on Morrow (1993) sustains that OC is the psychological and emotional attachment of individuals to the organization. Later, Greenberg and Baron (2000) define OC as "the measure in which an individual identifies itself and is implicated in the organization or the extent in which the individual is willing to leave" (Greenberg & Baron, 2000, p.181). Even so, the most representative definition of OC is enunciated by Porter et al. (1974) who say that OC is "the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization", and it is characterized by three factors: "the belief in and acceptance of organizational goals and values; a willingness to exert effort;

a strong desire maintain membership of the organization” (Porter et al., 1974, p.604). The common concepts that refer to OC used by practitioners refers to: doing your actions smart, using you judgment, taking responsibility, applying your intelligence. Whatever term is used, the common idea is about extra value, seen as an organizational result, which employees bring to their work.

Other authors consider that the central theme that continues to appear in defining OC is the individual's psychological attachment to an organization (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). At the beginning of OC research, two dimensions were measured: attitudinal (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979) and calculative (Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972 cited in Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) commitment. Looking to researches done in 1991, we can conclude that Meyer and Allen identified three components of OC: affective commitment (employees “want to” continue with the organization), normative commitment (employees “ought to”) and continuance commitment (because for the moment there aren't any other options, employees “need to” remain) (*Table 1*).

Table 1. The components of the OC proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991)

Components	Definition
Affective	- the emotional attachment of employees and their implication in organizational activities; - the person continues to stay in the organization because he/she wants to.
Normative	- the obligation feeling to continue with the organization is a result of an exterior pressure; - the person remains engaged because it feels bound to this way by his rules and values;
Continuance (no other options)	- the time of employment depends on the costs that are associated to leaving the organization; - the person continues with the organization because has no other option as a job.

In other words, unlike Porter et al. (1974), Meyer and Allen (1991) suggest that human resources may be committed to the organization for many reasons. Because of that the OC doesn't always lead to organizational performance (Conway & Monks, 2009). This is also the reason why researchers used in their performance studies only the “affective commitment” component, considered to be the involvement strength of an individual or the individual's positive feeling about the organization, feeling that is manifested by strong desire to see its organization achieving its goals and by a proud feeling owed by his/her membership (Meyer et al., 1989). Another argument for using only affective commitment in the performance research is that very little information is known about antecedent of continuance or normative commitment and about the mechanism involved in developing them (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

There are also some authors who consider OC as an individual attachment to a target (Klein et al., in press), which means that it's an individual's internal process, not a force which can come from the organization (Wright & Kehoe, 2008). The same authors propose three different approaches for analysing OC (Klein et al., apud Wright & Kehoe, 2008):

- analysing the three commitment elements: *goal commitment*, with the possibility of being committed to more organizational goal at the same time; *the strength of commitment* –the intensity of goal commitment; *commitment rationality* – how individual in explaining himself this commitment.
- commitment results as emotions, continuance, motivation which all depends on commitment' rationality and strength;
- competing commitments which mean that individual deals with a competition of work/organization commitment and personal commitment; this competition may lead to a decrease on organizational commitment intensity due to the fact that individual resources are limited (Kanferand & Ackerman, 1989).

Regarding OC relationships with other construct, the literature in the field offers most often links between commitment and human resource turnover or leaving intentions (Wong et al., 2002; Yao & Wang, 2006). The research on commitment antecedents drawn a quite developed map studied and synthesized by Allen and Meyer (1990) as follow: a) *antecedents of affective commitment*: personal characteristics, job characteristics, work experience, structural characteristics (Mowdayet al.,1982); b) *antecedents of continuance commitment*: magnitude and/or the number of personal investments made and alternatives penury; c) *antecedents of normative commitment*: personal experiences dwelled previously (e.g. family) or after working in the organization (Wiener, 1980).

Another relationship proved by researches in the field is that with perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986), the link being mediated by job satisfaction. More recent studies covered the causal link between HRM and performance and in this context organizational commitment measuring is an integral part of it, most of the time considered to be an employee's result of human resource practice implementation (Dyer & Reeves, 1995). Only a small number of studies tried to measure the impact of certain human resource practice on each commitment component (Conway & Monks, 2009) and this is the reason why more research should be done in the field. Also, researches didn't reveal the influence of socio-demographic variables, like: age,

gender, education, the number of working years and work experience in the organization.

Methodology

As we underlined before, the main purpose of this paper is to explore employees' level of OC components from hotel chains, considering a variety of independent variables. Furthermore, considering the results, we want to offer recommendations for those hotel managers interested to improve employees' OC. In order to reach the paper's aim we first identified OC's components of front-line hotel employees, then we investigate which of these components have an emphasized manifestation and if this manifestation depends on a series of independent variables like age, education level, gender, work experience, hotel experience, hotel chain name, department.

We used the quantitative method and as instrument we chose 15 items questionnaire proposed by Mowday et al. in 1979 (Organizational Commitment Questionnaire). The scale used was 5 point Likert scale, where "1" represents "total disagreement" and "5" – "total agreement" (*Appendix 1*). We used this scale because it is the most comprehensive one, considering that it had to be translated in Romanian language and it was not yet validated in this language. Also, the questionnaire's authors followed all three forms described by Porter et al. (1974) which made it appropriate for many other researches in the field (Rogg et al. 2001; Ahmad and Schroeder, 2003). Another reason is that some authors proved that this questionnaire has psychometric properties (Allen and Meyer, 1990), while other shorter scales were not tested or validated. There were also studies that tried to validate this construct in service industry using respondents from hospitality and non-hospitality industry, but the results weren't that satisfactory. The reasons came from the measurement errors and item specifications (Susskind et al., 2000). There were studies that used shorter scales (nine, five or even three items), but only because they used OC construct as mediator in a larger research.

The measurement questionnaire took into consideration aspects like: the employee belief and acceptance of organization's values and goals; willingness to exert effort for the well-being of the organization; membership desire. The items used by us were translated from English to Romanian and gave it to an experienced, specialised Romanian-English translator in order to check for any content differences that may occur. Only two items were modified.

Afterwards the questionnaire was presented to five experts in the hotel industry and human resource management fields in order to adapt the language to future respondents (2 practitioners from hotel industry, 2 human resource specialists and 1 expert in tourism). Following this phase, none of the items had suffered for relevant changes.

The independent variables were: age, gender, hotel experience, work experience, department, hotel chain, employees' level of education, hotel belonging (national or international chain) and hotel location. Some of these variables were considered in the literature and proved their relevance (e.g. gender, age).

In order to conduct our research we first identified all hotels from Romania belonging to a hotel chain (international or national ones). A total number of 67 hotels (44 hotels from international hotel chains and 23 hotels from national hotel chains – at the end of 2011 year) belonging to 13 hotel chains were contacted via email and/or phone in order to invite them to voluntarily participate to the survey. In the end 12 hotels (17.91%) with 3 and 4 stars classification, belonging to Ramada, Best Western, Golden Tulip and Unita Tourism chains participated to our research.

For hotel industry, front-line employees have the most important role in achieving organizational performance. Also, literature in the field demonstrated that OC can influence organizational performance (Conway & Monks, 2009). These are the reasons why in the survey respondents were front-line employees from three departments: front-office (FO), food and beverage (FB) and housekeeping (HK) who voluntarily offer to answer the questionnaire. Anyway, for data collection phase we still took into consideration that the sample should have comparable respondents groups, fact that would have allowed us to conduct statistical analyses based on differences testing. Therefore, a number of 152 employees answered to the questionnaire from which 33.6% work in FO, 34.9% in FB and 31.6% in HK department. The employee distribution considering educational level is shown in *Figure 2* and illustrates that 49.3% of respondents finished a high school and 34.8% have a university degree (cumulative %).

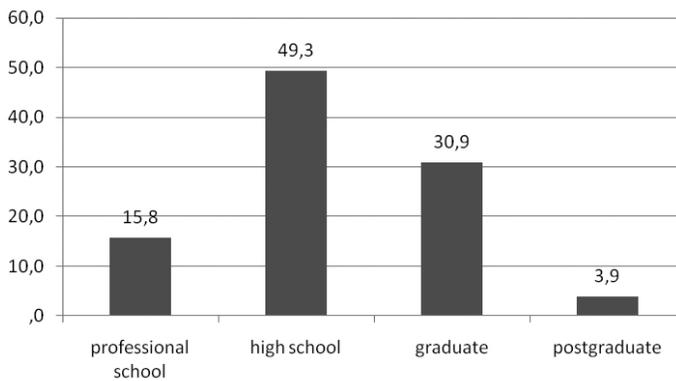


Figure 2. Employee distribution considering "educational level" variable

The respondents' age is diverse, with 23% for respondents with age between 18-24 years old and 21.7% for 35-44 years old employees. Also, 41.4% of the employees work in hotels located in north-east (NE) region of the country and 58.6% in the west (W) side. In what concerns employees experience in hotel studied, we also find comparable percentages like: 25% for 6-12 months of experience, 30.3% for 1 to 3 years experience and 28.3% for employees having more that 5 years experience (*Table 2*).

Table 2. Employee distribution considering "hotel experience" variable

Hotel experience		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	< 6 months	12	7.9	7.9	7.9
	6-12 months	38	25.0	25.0	32.9
	1-3 years	46	30.3	30.3	63.2
	3-5 years	13	8.6	8.6	71.7
	> 5 years	43	28.3	28.3	100.0
Total		152	100.0	100.0	

Analysis and results

In order to identify OC components we conducted an exploratory factor analysis using the Principal Component technique and Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization method. We used this method in order to simplify factor structure from factor matrix resulted and also because it is considered to be superior to other orthogonal factor rotation methods (Hair et al., 2006).

Following this technique we eliminated 5 items that did not fit properly into one single factor and also the loading values were small (< 0.35). The five items eliminated are: I1 – “I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.”; I3 – “I feel very little loyalty to this organization”; I6 – “I am proud to tell others that I am a part of this organization”, I7 – “I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar”; I9 – “It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization.” Our purpose was also to obtain the best total variance explained.

The 10 items left converged to the same three OC components ($KMO = 0.807$) as present in literature in the field, with 67.62% of explained variance (Table 3). The Bartlett test of sphericity (KMO), which certifies that correlation matrix has significant correlations among at least some of the variables (Hair et al., 2006, p.114), is statistically significant and its value is meritorious, as is higher than .80 (Hair et al., 2006). As can be seen in the table below, the factor loadings exceed .50 value for each item left, which means that each of them explain at least 25 percent of the variance (the coefficients' values smaller than .40 were suppressed). The factors are as follow, as they are also described in the table below: normative commitment (F1), affective commitment (F2) and continuance commitment (F3). Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each factor exceeded .60, a value that is agreed in exploratory research (Robbinson et al., 1991), like this study is.

Table 3. Rotated component matrix for organizational commitment construct

Organizational commitment ($\alpha = 0.865$)	Components		
	F1	F2	F3
Normative commitment ($\alpha = 0.823$)			
I14 - For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.	.836		
I4 - I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	.776		
I8 - This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance	.723		
I5 - I find that my values and the organization's value are very similar.	.661		
I2 - I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.	.572		
Affective commitment ($\alpha = .719$)			
I10 - I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.		.793	
I15 - Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part.		.762	
I13 - I really care about the fate of this organization.		.671	

	Components	
Continuance commitment ($\alpha = 0.670$)		
I12 – Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees.		.868
I11 – There's no too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely		.740

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

The next step was to analyse which component is more present in employees' attitude and if there are any differences between departments or employees with different socio-demographical characteristics.

Overall, all the three OC components had reached high mean scores, but the highest was affective commitment (3.97 out of 5), which can be considered a good news, taken into consideration that literature in the field sustain that this component can be a predictor for individual performance (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnytsky, 2002). Even though the study was conducted during economic crisis, when job offers were so few, the continuance commitment component had the lowest mean score (3.19).

The hierarchy remains the same, meaning affective commitment on first place, normative commitment on second and continuance commitment on the third place even when considering department (*Figure 3*), age, hotel experience, work experience and gender variables. There are also no statistically significant differences between the three forms of commitment by controlling these five independent variables mentioned before.

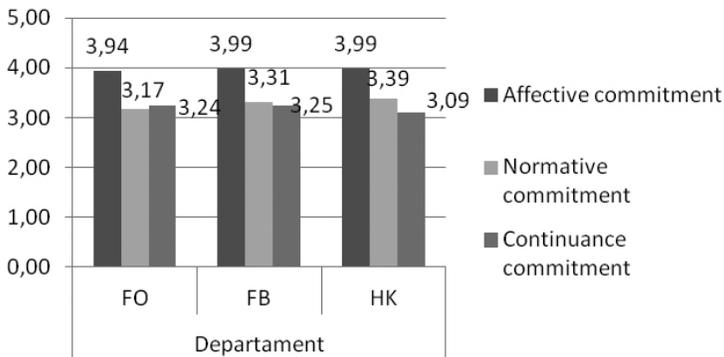


Figure 3. Organizational commitment components considering department variable

Anyway, some significant differences ($\text{sig} < 0.05$) were registered between employees' OC components when considering name of hotel chain, educational level, hotel chain belonging (national/international chain) and region (Table 4).

Table 4. Tests and sig. values for independent variables for which significant differences had been registered

OC components	Independent variable							
	Name of hotel chain		Educational level		Hotel chain belonging*		Hotel location (NE/W)	
	F	sig.	F	sig.	Levene Test	sig.	Levene Test/T-Test	sig.
Affective commitment	,646	,587	,543	,653	,438	,509	5,495	,020
Normative commitment	6,785	,000	2,835	,040	4,687	,032	2,144	,034
Continuance commitment	1,187	,317	1,710	,167	,563	,454	1,508	1,340

*Belonging means in this case a national or international hotel chain

For example, considering "name of hotel chain" variable a significant difference was acquired for normative commitment. As can be seen in Figure 4, the highest mean score for normative commitment is registered to Unita Turism chain, situation that could be explained by the hotel experience years, meaning that the percent for employees with more than 5 years working in the hotel is 59.5% in Unita Turism chain, while it is only 20.5% in Golden Tulip chain and 21% in Best Western chain.

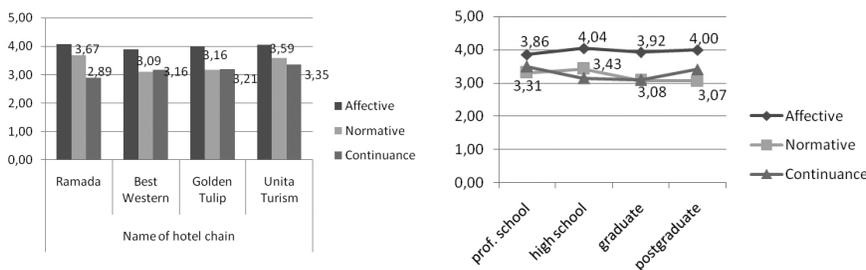


Figure 4. OC components mean scores based on "name of hotel chain" and "educational level" variables

Significant differences ($\text{sig.} = 0.4$) appeared also for normative commitment component considering educational level of employees. As can be seen in Figure 4, it seems like employees who finished professional or high schools only, have higher mean scores for normative commitment than those who have a university degree. This means that they are committed to the organization through their values and rules and they would accept anything only to work for the organization.

The same normative commitment component registered significant differences considering “hotel location” and “hotel chain belonging” (national/international hotel chain) variables, and it could be seen that even though the gap is not so deep, hotel employees from NE region and those belonging to a national hotel chain tend to have higher mean scores. (*Table 5*)

Table 5. OC components means considering “hotel location” and “hotel chain belonging” variables

OC components	Hotel location		Hotel chain belonging	
	NE	W	international chain	national chain
Affective commitment	4,06	3,91	3,95	4,06
Normative commitment	3,43	3,19	3,19	3,6
Continuance commitment	3,31	3,11	3,14	3,69

These results may be a consequence of the culture they live in, meaning that because of the region they live, they are used to be more polite or they are afraid that their supervisors will find out about their responses. The single significant difference registered for affective commitment was for “hotel location” variable and as can be seen employees from NE country region offered higher grades than the ones from W country region.

All these results may offer some insights for hotel employers interested in increasing employees' OC. For example, the normative commitment may depend on educational level, meaning that employees with university degrees might not be committed to the organization because they have to or because they just want to respect a work contract, but they will be committed more if that's what they want to and they really feel that way (affective commitment has the highest mean score - 3.96). Also there are significant differences between employees normative commitment when considering the name of hotel chains, situation that may appear due to different management practices used or maybe the brand reputation or the proud employees feel because they work in that specific hotel. In our case, this difference may be explained by employees' hotel experience years.

Even though significant differences were not registered for department, age, gender variables, it doesn't mean that they couldn't exist, because this study was more like an explorative one and if we would work on larger samples some gaps may occur.

Discussions

Considering this study, it is important, first, to emphasise that the same three OC components: affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment found in the literature in the field had been identified also to Romanian employees from hotel industry. Another result is that direct contact employees from Romanian hotel industry who responded to our questionnaire are most likely affective committed to organization, situation that may be beneficial for organizational performance (Conway & Monks, 2009). Also, it is found in the literature that affective commitment can influence the employees' productivity, absenteeism, and turnover (Meyer & Allen, 1984; Mowday et al., 1982).

High mean scores were registered also for the other two OC components, but this shouldn't have a negative connotation because even though their role to increasing organizational performance was not proved yet, that doesn't mean that they are not contributing to organization well-being (at least for a certain context). For example the employee' continuance commitment when the workforce offer is not so generous or the employee' normative commitment when a front-line manager is not so skilled, can help organization to continue its course. On the other hand, there are some research that shown that continuance commitment is negatively correlated with individual performance (Meyer et al., 2002). These finding should determine hotel managers to reconsider the HR practices and to work on employees' empowerment and motivation in general.

This paper shows that there may be different OC manifestation based on variable like name of the hotel chain, educational employee level, hotel location (the country region) and hotel chain belonging (international or national chain). All these findings may have implications for those who want to improve OC manifestation. For example differences registered for normative commitment considering the hotel belonging (international or national ones) may emphasize that certain HR practices like employees' selection have different approaches. It is questioning what employees' values are looked for in the candidates. Also the statistically differences registered on affective commitment considering the hotel location (NE and W), with higher values for hotel employees from NE region may underline the importance of cultural characteristics. This finding should be taken into consideration by the international

hotel chains when dealing with intercultural management challenges. It looks like hotel employees from NE region are more affectively committed to the organization which may imply (among others) that they are more sentimental persons.

The fact that no statistically significant differences were registered between departments may underline the fact that employees' opinions are shared between them (Nishii et al., 2008) and that over time, the same general perception is created.

Literature in the field demonstrated that HR practices have a great impact on OC components (especially on affective one). Top and front-line managers should consider applying certain practices for certain employees. For example, if the hotel is part of renowned hotel chain, managers should use that in order to increase employees' OC. Also, high qualified workforce is not so normative committed as low qualified ones, which means that employers should be more careful with improving affective commitment, in this case.

Conclusions

Whether OC is important or not for the future organization which is oriented to high qualified workforce, which will be used only when the organization needs it, which has a high level of flexibility and is willing to work only on projects, it is for those organizations to decide. Meanwhile, service organizations in general and hotels, in particular who are facing the recent challenges, like the need for increasing levels of customisation and intangibilities, higher customers' expectation from direct contact employees, more front line managers involvement in HR activities, should consider OC as an instrument for higher organizational performance. These challenges have special implications for front-line hotel employees and that is why OC is so important to manifest. If front-line employees are committed to the organization they will get more involved, they will use their knowledge in order to solve problems that may occur, they will be willing to share their knowledge with them peers or supervisors.

A solution that comes from the literature is the one offered by Macky and Boxall (2007) who suggest that an organization should develop a powerful culture that will encourage employees to trust their managers. Anyway, this solution is thought to happen only in small organizations (Boxall & Macky, 2007). For corporations or large organizations, front-line managers have the

most important role, because they are the ones who implement human resource practices and can gain employees' trust. Everything that front-line managers make or don't make can influence employees' perceptions organization (Boxall & Purcell, 2011) and furthermore, can influence employees' OC. Other recommendations proposed by Luthans (2005) are:

- commitment to employees should be the first organizational value;
- organizational mission has to be clarified and communicated to employees;
- organization should guarantee its fairness;
- organization should offer support for employee development.

Another issues that needs to be taken into consideration in this evolving context when developing OC, are human resource practices like: recruiting and selection, training and development, performance evaluation, empowerment and communication. These practices are considered to be the key practices in hotel industry (Haynes & Fryer, 2000) and may use OC improvement also. It's true that selection process will be more oriented in the future on occupational commitment, rather than personal values, but training and development should still be oriented both on-the-job and off-the-job directions. Empowerment and communication are other two most important human resource practices as they can generate real organizational commitment manifestations.

Even though in this study, variables like age, gender, work experience, department didn't make a difference in OC manifestation it doesn't mean that it's impossible to influence its components. This may be due to the limits of the study which are the small sample, a low representative of all age categories and work experience. This is why in the future research we recommend a larger sample and also a longitudinal study. Also considering measuring some of the OC antecedents found in the literature in order to test if they can be considered into Romanian environment.

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Appendix 1

No.	Questionnaire's items proposed by Mowday et al. in 1979
1	I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond what is 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.
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 value are very similar.
6	I am proud to tell others that I am a 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.
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.
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 no too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely.
12	Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees.
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.