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Influencers and consequences of Organisational Commitment within Sheffield City Region's mid-sized businesses

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the influencers and consequences of organisational commitment (OC) within the context of the Sheffield City Region and mid-sized business.

The existing literature on OC is almost wholeheartedly dedicated to investigating which type of commitment an employee will experience during their work. Ghosh and Swamy (2014) and Singh and Gupta (2008) considered this to be a weakness of commitment research as it has failed to explain what influences commitment, and its associated consequences. Meyer and Allen's (1991) three component model (TCM) is often used as a framework, and allows researchers to investigate **to what extent employees are committed,** and which of the three styles of commitment they experience: 'affective' and in line with organisational goals; 'continuous' and trapped through a lack of alternatives; or 'normative' and remaining through loyalty. However, what is missing from existing research is an investigation into the influencing factors of OC and the consequences of having committed employees in the same way that Meyer and Allen (1991, p.71) said *'would require further attention.'* Essentially asking, **why are employees are committed?** Finally, it is noteworthy that OC theory has generally been developed in North-America's public sector and seldom tested in the United Kingdom and with smaller private organisations, a gap filled by this PhD study.

In order to answer the research question, a mixed methods research approach was adopted in this thesis. In a pre-study, the existing Meyer and Allen (1991) TCM questionnaire survey was issued to employees in three case organisations in the Sheffield City Region. This allowed the researcher to position, for each employee their current commitment, or lack of thereof, relative to theory before investigating the reasons they were committed. The questionnaire also asked willing employees to volunteer for follow-up interviews. Further, and through a snowballing approach from the original sample, additional volunteers were located. In total, 147 completed TCM questionnaires were returned in the pre-study and 38 employees were interviewed from the three case organisations.

The pre-study quantitative data was analysed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS and the qualitative data was transcribed and analysed in line with framework analysis (FA) (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994). The results from the qualitative data and FA demonstrated that 'Culture,' Organisational Direction,' and 'Relationship' were influencers of OC and the authors own 'Influencers of Organisational Commitment' (IOC model) was presented. Further, the researcher identified the consequences of commitment; for continuous commitment, only the requirement to remain was found. Whereas, for affective and normative commitment styles a number of outcomes were noted: goal and value alignment; reduced turnover; employee attachment; and interest and awareness in the organisations strategy.

The influencers and consequences of organisational commitment were identified and explored through the findings and discussion chapters, serving as a practical and theoretical contribution to knowledge in line with the Corley and Gioia (2011) framework.

Candidates Statement:

I declare that this thesis is all my own work and has not been submitted for any other academic award.

Marc Duffy - May 2018.

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List of Abbreviations

AC	Affective Commitment
CC	Continuous Commitment
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COO	Chief Operating Officer
FA	Framework Analysis
HR	Human Resources
IOC	Influencers of Organisational Commitment Model
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
MSB	Mid-sized business
NC	Normative Commitment
NOC	Negative Organisational Commitment
OC	Organisational Commitment
OCB	Organisational Citizen Behaviour
OCP	Organisational Consent form
OCQ	Organisational Commitment Questionnaire
OD	Organisational Direction
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPS	One Pager Summary
PCS	Participant Consent form
PIS	Participant Information sheet
POC	Positive Organisational Commitment
SCCI	Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and Industry
SCR	Sheffield City Region
SI	Strategic Implementation
SME	Small to Medium Enterprise
SP	Strategic Planning
TCM	Three Component Model

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The main purpose of this thesis is to investigate the topic of Organisational Commitment (OC) within the context of the Sheffield City Region (UK) and within mid-sized businesses. In the most part, the commitment between an employee and their employer has been studied in the context of North America and in large, public sector organisations. The researcher accepts that North-America and the UK are culturally similar in many ways, but asserts that the employment environment is notably different in several key areas.

As this thesis will explore, research and theory in OC has favoured a North-American audience, with researchers in the OC tradition situated in the United States or Canada and conducting their research projects locally. In many cases this has extended to North American employers such as Hospitals or Universities, this includes multiple studies focusing on the Nursing profession and several studies focusing on students. The purpose of the Literature Review in Chapter 2 is to investigate the work that has already been carried out in this area and to review the existing theory.

The concept of North-American developed theory is problematic for a number of reasons, particularly for researchers wishing to investigate the phenomena from another context, i.e. the United Kingdom. Firstly, employees in the UK are generally regarded to have more employment rights than their North American counterparts (particularly those in the United States). Environmental factors differ between the UK and US, notably in that UK citizens are provided with free healthcare at the point of use as opposed to employee sponsored medical insurance that would naturally differ from organisation to organisation and across states. Secondly, in line with the American *'at will'* system employment is seen as voluntary and can be terminated by either party without cause at any time (Summerst, 1952). In contrast, an employee in the UK could not be terminated in the same way and under current employment legislation, would be deemed to have an employment contract even if not committed to paper. Thirdly, British employees profit from additional employment benefits,

including statutory sick pay and maternity leave (Gov.UK, 2018), and while several of these benefits are provided by the government as opposed to an organisation, the researcher questions how this environment will influence employee commitment to their employees, the relevance of North American theory to this context and how this theory applies to a UK and British context.

OC researchers have generally focused on large public-sector organisations in the same context, often with public sector employees (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979), university staff (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986) or even students (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). There is a clear need to conduct research with several of these groups, however it is a limitation of OC research that it has sought to understand an employee's commitment with students in particular (Kelman, 1958; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). Further, in line with the earlier discussion, it is unlikely that North American, public sector employers are representative of all employment contexts.

In addition to developing OC research in North America's public sector, the researcher notes that most commitment theory has been developed using questionnaire testing and seldom seeks to consider alternative methods such as interview or focus group testing. In more recent research OC has been considered from a qualitative perspective, (see: Sturges & Guest, 2001) however, several seminal definitions of OC remain either quantitatively developed, or lack empirical data entirely (Becker, 1960).

Furthermore it may be noted that existing OC research serves to answer the question *'to what extent are employees committed?'* and has developed an array of tools to measure various styles of commitment. In applying the plethora of OC tools to an organisation, a researcher would quickly be able to establish if an employee or group of employees are committed. This could be in line with the organisations goals and values (Mowday et al., 1979), feeling loyal to the organisation (Wiener, 1982), trapped with the organisation (Becker, 1960), compliant (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986), un-committed or more recently a combination of several styles, i.e. feeling committed in line with the goals of the organisation, whilst feeling loyal at the same time (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). However, what is missing from existing research is an

investigation into the factors that precede commitment and the associated consequences of the same, essentially asking the question - *'commitment, so what?'*

This is an important observation; that most research relating to OC is focused on diagnosis as opposed to an analysis of the root cause or consideration for its side-effects. In fact, Ghosh and Swamy (2014) argued that *'OC* [has] *failed to distinguish between the two processes of commitment, i.e. antecedents and outcomes of commitment on one hand and the root cause of attachment to the organisation on the other,'* this argument was supported by Somers (2009, p. 75) who claimed that *'future research* [should] *focus on the combined influences of commitment on work outcomes.'*

If the purpose of existing OC research is to diagnose commitment levels without further intervention, then it can be considered to be a suitable and effective theory as it currently stands. However, if the purpose of OC theory is to understand why employees are committed, or to understand the outcomes of the same, then it may be argued that the existing body of knowledge is severely limited.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the influencers and outcomes of OC within the context defined. This raises a number of questions of the literature and existing knowledge in OC theory;

1. *What are the roots and underpinning theory associated with organisational commitment?*

2. *What are the ontological and epistemological foundations of organisational commitment theory literature?*

3. *How has organisational commitment theory been empirically researched and tested in the literature?*

4. *What are the main objectives of the organisational commitment literature?*

5. *In line with the focus of the PhD enquiry and the research aim, what influencers and consequences of organisational commitment have been identified by the literature?*

It is important to begin the PhD enquiry with a comprehensive investigation into the literature as it will help the researcher to understand what is already known about the issue. The researcher agrees with (G. Thomas, 2017, p. 57) who argues *'our work is not*

an island, and must occur within the context of what is already known.' The questions above are designed to help the literature review process and to guide the researcher's efforts to produce a thorough review of the literature and current knowledge of the relevant literature.

1.1.1.   Research Aim

In line with the focus of the thesis and observations that there is a lack of empirical research considering the influencers and outcomes of OC (Ghosh & Swamy, 2014; Somers, 2009), the researcher proposes the initial research aim ahead of the literature review:

- To investigate the influencers and consequences of organisational commitment within Sheffield City Region's mid-sized businesses

The researcher intends to develop the overall aims and objectives of the thesis again at the end of the literature review and once the existing theory and knowledge is better understood In line with Thomas' (2017) arguments. Further, the context of the Sheffield City Region and mid-sized business is as yet undefined; this will be introduced and justified in the methodology in Chapter 3.

1.2.   Structure of this thesis

This thesis is split into nine chapters. The section that follows provides an overview of each chapter. This chapter explores the rationale for testing OC theory that has been developed primarily in North America in mid-sized businesses in the Sheffield City Region. Further, it develops an argument that most research in OC is focused on answering the question of whether employees are committed, as opposed to investigating how they might be committed, and what the associated outcomes of commitment might be.

Chapter Two reviews the key academic literature in the area of OC. The chapter builds the story of OC, from its foundations and basic definitions of commitment, to commitment grounded in organisations and its various manifestations in line with seminal theorists. As the focus of this thesis is an investigation into the influencers

and consequences of OC, the researcher consults with the limited literature in both areas in order to better understand the holistic phenomena.

Chapter Three is the methodology chapter and considers the research design as informed by the literature review. The chapter details a three-phased mixed method design where a Phase One pre-study collects quantitative data to inform the secondary collection of qualitative data. Phases Two and Three are explained to be primarily qualitative and designed to explore participants' feelings around OC and their experiences at work. The chapter explains the overall approach (i.e. mixed-methods, case based research, including a pre-study phase with three organisations in the Sheffield City Region), the data collection technique employed in the Phase One pre-study (i.e. questionnaire testing using the TCM questionnaire) and Phases Two and Three (i.e. follow up interviews with senior employees of the same MSBs). The data analysis procedure is also considered (i.e. Microsoft Excel, SPSS and Framework Analysis).

Chapter Four investigates the process of data analysis and the development of themes. The chapter outlines the process of analysing the quantitative data collected in the Phase One pre-study (TCM questionnaire) through Microsoft Excel and SPSS software and presents the data and results in various tables and charts. The process of analysing the qualitative data collected in Phases Two and Three is also explained in detail. Here an overview of the chosen method, Framework Analysis (FA), is provided and the development of themes using that approach is considered.

Chapter Five presents the results from the pre-study in Phase One. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the overall results of the OC, TCM questionnaire and to provide context for the findings chapters that follow. The researcher presents the quantitative data, means standard deviations and correlation coefficients of the data to inform the wider context and meaning.

Chapter Six considers the first influencer of OC, that emerged from the data and FA conducted in Chapter 4 'Culture'. As Chapter Six is the first Chapter to introduce qualitative data, the approach to structuring the findings and analytical rationale for the selection of quotations is also explained. This chapter considers the manner in

which Culture and employee expectations influence the overall employee experience relative to OC. Chapter Six explains how Culture contributes to the development of the IOC model that is presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter Seven considers the second influencer of OC that emerged from the data and FA, 'Organisational Direction'. This chapter considers the role of the organisation and its strategy (future direction) and its relationship to an employee's commitment and long-term role within an organisation. Chapter Six discusses how Organisational Direction contributes to the development of the IOC model that is presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter Eight is the third and final discussion chapter and considers the role of 'Relationship' as an influencer to OC. This chapter discusses how an employee will only seek to build a relationship with the employer if the other influencers to OC have already been established. The contribution of relationship to the IOC model is also explored.

Chapter Nine discusses the findings from the overall thesis, with particular focus on the influencers of OC taken from chapters 6, 7 and 8, where the results from Phase Two and Three of data collection were discussed. The Chapter relates the findings and influencers of OC to the literature and explores the overall influencers and consequences of OC within the context of the SCR and MSBs.

Chapter Ten provides a conclusion to the thesis. This chapter summarises the approach to data collection, key findings and contribution to knowledge. The conclusion also details how the initial research question and objectives have been answered. It ends with a personal reflection on the PhD research process and considers avenues for potential future research projects.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In this Chapter the literature on organisational commitment (OC) is critically reviewed. The style of review that has been adopted for this thesis is a *'conceptual literature review'* defined by Jesson, Metheson and Lacey (2011, p. 76) as a review designed to *'synthesise areas of conceptual knowledge that contribute to a better understanding of the issue.'* This style of review is useful for a study that is seeking to explore and understand an issue further as opposed to testing a particular theory or hypothesis.

In this case, the researcher is wishing to understand what is already known about OC and how the theory has been developed, rather than testing and incrementally developing a specific theory of OC. Jesson, Matheson and Lacey (2011) argue that those wishing to adopt this style of review should be careful to avoid biased arguments when selecting theory to *'tell a story'* but argue that this approach is favourable when compared to systematic approaches where *'the sheer volume of new research studies* […] *makes it hard for researchers* […] *to know what is currently useful'* (Jesson, 2011, p. 105). Therefore, the researcher has adopted a conceptual approach to reviewing the literature with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the issue under investigation (Torraco, 2016).

In line with the research aim and overall focus of the study, the literature review considers the factors that surround organisational commitment. Specifically, how these factors influence each other from the perspective of an employee. For example, what are the underpinning theoretical foundations of OC and what consequences of OC have already been explored in the literature? This is in line with Thomas' (2017) argument that our work is not an island and must be conducted in the knowledge of the theory that is already existing.

In line with a conceptual literature review, Chapter Two is structured as follows. In the first part, the literature review considers the conceptual underpinnings theory associated with OC. In the second part, OC itself is then introduced before considering the limitations of OC research, notably the dominant quantitative, statistical bias present in OC approaches. The review explores the possibility that qualitative and

mixed methods approaches can contribute to and deepen our knowledge in this area. The literature review considers the context in which OC research has been carried out, notably in North America and tested within the public sector, including hospitals, government agencies and Universities (Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Steers, 1977). Finally, in the third part, the Chapter considers the outcomes of OC that have been investigated in the literature and the review raises the question of how a body of OC research, developed in a single geographical location, often within a public-sector environment, can be generalisable across continents and sectors. The final part of this section introduces the research question and objectives before the overall chapter is summarised.

The first section of the literature review will consider the conceptual underpinnings of OC theory and the origins of the concept.

2.2. The Conceptual Underpinnings of Organisational Commitment Research

Angle and Perry (1981, p. 1) describe commitment as having *'been studied from so many different theoretical perspectives'* that we might *'better abandon the term all together'* (Hall, 1977). Kanter (1968) described commitment as being used to describe a diverse phenomena of constructs where social actors would lend their energy and loyalty to social systems.

Gutierrez, Candela and Carver (2012) argue that commitment is based on social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity. Kanter (1968, p. 504) claims that the language of reciprocity is evident in OC research, citing Becker's (1960) ideas of 'side-bets' and the 'profit associated with continued participation' or 'the cost associated with leaving' an organisation.

Mael and Tetrick (1992) argue that employees' identification with an organization can be defined as the perception of a shared characteristic with prototypical organization members and shared experiences with the organization. This is comparable to the literature in OC that speaks of 'alignment' to various interests of an organisation (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982).

Those attempting to conceptualise OC, including Meyer and Allen (1990) and Allen, Meyer and Smith (1993) did not offer a precise definition of commitment, only noting that it was a *'psychological state'* that 'links the employee to the organisation' (Ko, Price, & Mueller, 1997, p. 970). However, Cohen (1977c) points out that it is not clear what was meant by psychological state. Meyer, Becker and Vandenberghe (2004) attempted to connect employee commitment to self-determination theory and regulation focus theory, however it is acknowledged that this is a retrospective attempt to apply theory to commitment and not underpinning to the theory itself.

In this vein, Meyer, Stanley and Parfyonova (2012, p. 2) described it as *'surprising'* that greater efforts had not been made to understand the underpinning theory of OC despite several calls in the literature. This means that the conceptual underpinnings of OC have not been fully investigated in the literature and are therefore not fully understood. However Gutierrez, Candela and Carver (2012) are clear that OC theory is based on social exchange theory (SET), therefore, the section that follows will critically review and consider SET of relevance to commitment.

2.2.1.   Social Exchange Theory

Blau (1964, p. 6) described social exchange theory (SET) as being limited to *'actions that are contingent on rewarding reactions from others that cease when expected reactions are not forthcoming.'* Heath (1976, p. 1) referred to SET as being *'indebted'* in everyday speech, for example when a person might refer to the act of *'owing'* something to someone. Homans (1958, p. 598) reflected that SET was *'so obvious'* and explicitly present in normal life that the *'view has been much neglected in the social sciences.'* Blau (1964, p. 17) explained that while social exchange can be genuine, *'the tendency to help others is frequently motivated by the expectation that doing so will bring social rewards.* Gouldner (1960, p. 171) was more generic in his argument, claiming that reciprocity is a social norm or value based on the notion that *'people should help those who have helped them and people should not injure those who have helped them.'*

Homans (1974, pp. 16–29) offers three propositions of SET;

1. *The Success Proposition: For all actions taken by persons* [the] *more often a particular action of person is rewarded, the more likely the person is to perform that action (under similar conditions) (p.16).*

2. *The Stimulus Proposition: If in the past the occurrence of a particular stimulus or set of stimuli, has been the occasion on which a person's action has been rewarded, then the more similar the present stimuli are to the past ones, the more likely the person is to perform the action or some similar action now (p. 22-23).*

3. *The Deprivation-Satiation Proposition: The more often in the recent past has received a particular reward, the less valuable any further unit of that reward becomes for him (p. 29).*

In essence, Homans claims that under success proposition, behaviour that creates a positive outcome is likely to be continued. Under stimulus proposition if an individual's behaviour has been rewarded in the past, the person will continue in this behaviour. However in line with his third proposition, the value of the reward will diminish if an individual has received the same reward on several occasions. This is where Homans work takes a different approach to Blau (1964) who paid more attention to economic analysis and reward while Homans dwelled more upon instrumental behaviour (Emerson, 1976).

However, Emerson (1976) was critical of SET claiming that it was not a theory at all, arguing that it is a *'frame of reference within which many theories - some micro and some more macro - can speak to one another, whether in argument or mutual support.'* Emerson further critiques the logic of SET claiming that while '*people and firms sometimes act with such deliberate rationality, I do not want to limit social exchange theory to that narrow class of action'* (p. 340).

The researcher understands why Gutierrez, Candela and Carver (2012) drew the link between OC theory and SET. As will be explore in this review, OC theory relies upon the exchange between an employee and their employer, and some degree of relationship between the pair. SET is theoretically positioned a step before OC theory and investigates the psychological exchange relationship between individuals.

There are a number of unanswered questions of SET of relevance to OC theory, notably in line with Emerson's arguments that humans are not rational beings.

Organisations are complicated and often contain multiple departments and groups of employees with different daily needs and priorities; SET generally focuses on the exchange relationship between two parties. Does this exchange extend to 'the organisation' or multiple employees in an organisation? Further are these relationships treated the same by the employee? How does this influence the overall commitment relationship between employer and employee?

This considered, and theoretical underpinning of OC understood, the section that follows begins to explore the concept of commitment and the employee relationship with their employer.

2.3. Commitment

The subject of workplace commitment has been of academic interest for at least fifty years (Al-Yami, Galdas, & Watson, 2018; Cantril, 1963; Meyer & Allen, 1993; Mowday et al., 1979; B. Singh, Gupta, & Venugopal, 2008) and according to Allen & Meyer (2000), of the several work attitude variables studied by organizational psychologists, only job satisfaction has received more research attention. Therefore, it can be considered that commitment is a well-studied and researched concept. It has grown from the organisational behaviour literature as a one dimensional, attitudinal construct where an individual need for meaning led to the alignment of organizational and personal goals resulting in institutionalization (Cantril, 1963), and socialisation processes, ultimately giving employees that 'we' feeling (Blumer, 1971). However, despite the depth of research focusing on commitment, over the course of this Chapter, the researcher will highlight a narrow context for developing and testing this theory and compounded assumptions based on student data or purely theoretical ideas.

The significant focus that commitment received early in the last century, lead the concept to become wide, unclear and desperately seeking structure according to Morrow (1983), who argued that:

> *'the growth in commitment related concepts has not been accompanied by a careful segmentation of commitments theoretical domain in terms of intended meaning of each concept or the concepts' relationship among each other.'*

Becker and Carper (1956 p. 289) whose work focused on male *'graduate students'* (as opposed to employees) in the fields of *'physiology, philosophy and mechanical engineers'* defined commitment alongside identity, claiming that commitment can be closely tied to *'occupational personality'* where a young adult *'male, who, as he matures takes over an image of himself as the holder of a particular specialised position in the division of labour.'* This definition is interesting and demonstrates how the meaning has shifted in recent times and through increased academic interest. Becker highlighted as early as 1960 that commitment is connected to *'the specifications of other strongly held identifications, such as those growing out of participation in the family or orientation.'* Essentially, they build an argument of family connection and alignment of personal needs to the needs of the organisation in order to answer the social question *'what is your [job]?' (Or, what do you do?).*

Mowday Steers and Porter (1979), whose research was based in the United States and targeted at employees in large public sector organisations attempted to clarify the *'core essence'* of OC describing it as, one dimensional and fulfilling three primary criteria, citing that an employee should have;

1. *a strong belief in the organisations goals and values;*
2. *a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation;*
3. *a strong desire to maintain membership in the organisation.*

This foundation, as provided by Mowday, Steers & Porter (1979) remains popular for academics discussing OC, however, as will be discussed in this Chapter, the construct of commitment is no longer viewed as 'one dimensional,' and only fulfilling one basic criteria. Rather, OC (as opposed to the concept of commitment more broadly) has evolved into a multi-dimensional construct where employees are able to feel more than one way about the organisations in which they work at the same time (see: Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Meyer *et al.,* 1993). However, to its weakness, the full details of Mowday, Steers and Porter's research sample are not clear. The authors explained that their questionnaire was issued to 2,563 employees in the public sector, universities, hospitals, banks, telephone companies, scientists, engineers, auto company managers, psychiatric technicians and retail management trainees; however the response rate and profile of those responding was not properly explained. It

remains possible, due to lack of information provided by the authors that their sample was entirely made up of one type of organisation and had a low response rate.

Thus far, commitment has been spoken about in a manner that was positive in some form, either a reflecting belief in the organisations goals, values, extra effort, desire to maintain membership, (Mowday *et al.,* 1979), or a as process of institutionalization (Cantril, 1963). However, Becker (1960) strongly disagreed arguing that commitment should not be regarded as a positive from the perspective of the employer, in contrast, it was a series of 'side-bets' that an employee would accumulate in his/her organisation over time. The examples of health care and pension contributions were often cited as relevant.

Becker's (1960) work was not empirical, despite the respect that it has earned; the author notes that Becker is American and his paper was written as a series of *'notes on the concept of commitment'* and perhaps most interestingly, this work demonstrates how significantly the world of work and employment has evolved since publication, claiming that:

> *'we can expect that men ordinarily settle down to a career in a limited field and do not change jobs and careers with the alacrity of the proverbial economic man under changing market conditions'* (Becker, 1960)*.*

Becker (1960) went as far as to claim that a 'man' who changed his work too often would be seen as *'untrustworthy and erratic'.* To its weakness, Becker (1960) retains a sole and biased focus on males as was observed in his earlier work (Becker & Carper, 1956).

However, this considered, Becker's observations of the world of employment in 1960 are centrally important to this research project. In 1960's America, where 'men' could be expected to 'settle down' into employment and enjoy a stable career until retirement describes an employment market that no longer exists. If nothing else, the reference to *'men'* is outdated and ignorant in hindsight, but it does reflect an environment where employees tended to be men, and women often remained at home. Furthermore, the idea that a man would settle down into work and not seek

other employment, often until retirement is equally outdated. In the modern work environment, a job for life is not offered, nor is it sought in most cases (Skidelsky, 2017).

Becker's (1960) notes are however useful in that they do highlight the important idea that commitment should not always be seen as a positive construct. The idea that an employee has 'side bets' in an organisation, essentially investments that would be lost if organisational membership was terminated remains popular in OC theory (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010).   Becker and Carper (1956) argued that 'side bets' would not be purely economic, and they could include the loss of transferable skills, seniority based privileges, and disruption to personal relationships, demonstrating that 'side bet' commitment should be seen a psychological phenomenon as well as economic (Meyer & Allen, 1991; B. Singh et al., 2008).

In line with theory (Becker, 1960; Becker & Carper, 1956), the first limitation of research conducted in a single context can be observed here, notably the issue of health care and the requirement for employer-sponsored health insurance in certain regions. In the United States, for men and women of working age, health care is typically provided through medical insurance and normally issued through an employer to employees and dependents. It is not uncommon in the United States (US) for the level of health care cover to vary from employer to employer (for example one policy might include dental care, or another might offer a higher deductible excess for claims). According to data available from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2017), the total household spending on healthcare per capita in the UK is $4,192 against a figure of $9,892 in the context of the US, meaning that American households spend significantly higher amounts on healthcare.

Therefore, within the context of the US, the issue of health care coverage can be considered to be a significant cultural *'side bet'* that is of meaningful importance to employees who would not necessarily be guaranteed equal prevalence elsewhere (Hofstede, 2001). The importance of healthcare to a British employee is likely to be significantly reduced when compared to their North American counterpart, and it is unlikely that medical insurance would be considered a side bet in this context. In fact,

Snape and Redman (2003 p. 152) tested Meyer and Allen's (1991) TCM (discussed later in this chapter) within the context of the UK and HR managers finding that *'continuance commitment* [side bets] *had no significant relationship [with] intention to participate in professional activities' and that 'continuance commitment negatively related to withdraw cognitions only when continuance commitment was low'*

Wiener's (1982), who was also based in the United States and whose work lacked empirical underpinning, was critical of the commitment models that had been developed. Wiener claimed that 'theoretical models' should meet three primary criteria, 'definition precision, theoretical integration and predictive power,' something that he argued had not been achieved by earlier researchers. In response to this perceived shortcoming, Weiner (1982) claimed that more work was required to *'provide a more comprehensive, cohesive and systematic conceptualisation of commitment models'*. He developed a model that relied heavily on the concept of *'loyalty', 'duty'* and *'value';* however, despite this contribution, he is often only given credit for developing the concept of *'moral obligation'* to remain in an organisation. As will be discussed later in this Chapter, this is arguably due to the eclipsing of his ideas by the success of Meyer and Allen's (1991) work, although it should be noted that they did credit Weiner with contributing to their construct of, 'Normative Commitment.' It should not be forgotten, however that one outstanding feature that is central to Weiner's (1982) thesis is the concept of values, loyalty and *'doing what is right.'*

Wiener (1982) retained the earlier academic thesis that personal values should be aligned to the values of the organisation.   His model claimed that employee levels of 'loyalty and duty,' next to their interest in the organisations values, would lead an employee to be, a) *highly committed and balanced, blindly loyal, morally obligated*, or b) *uncommitted*. Perhaps most interestingly, the model also demonstrated that an employee with incompatible or incongruent values (when compared to the organisation) would be alienated, regardless of their loyalty and duty (Wiener, 1982).

Thus far, the concept of commitment has been considered as either a positive, alignment of personal and organisational goals, or something that traps an employee

through 'side bets' or loyalty. This began to change during the 1980's, when the concept of 'organisational commitment' (OC) began to emerge, along with the distinction between attitudinal and behavioural commitment styles (A. Singh & Gupta, 2015), this perspective on commitment proved to be an important step forward in the development of commitment related research. The section that follows outlines and explains the differences between attitudinal and behavioural styles of commitment.

2.3.1. Attitudinal and Behavioural Commitment

The concept of attitudinal and behavioural commitment styles stem from the idea that commitment can either be seen as a positive experience for the employee, or an experience where they are simply locked in an organisation and seeking to maintain membership (Becker & Carper, 1956). It should be noted that even at this stage, the early themes of commitment research are present, that an employee might feel aligned to their organisation, through goals and values (Mowday *et al.,* 1979) trapped through investments or lack of alternatives (Becker & Carper, 1956), or remaining through loyalty and duty (Wiener, 1982).

The concept of attitudinal commitment refers to the mind set in which an employee considers how their own goals and values align with those of the organisation (Mowday et al., 1982). It is argued that commitment is developed through 'involvement, loyalty and belief' in the values of the organisation (Mowday et al., 1979). Benson and Brown (2007) studied Australian workers and described attitudinal commitment within the context of knowledge workers as an individual's identification and involvement with the organisation. Behavioural commitment, on the other hand, refers to the process in which an employee becomes *'locked into an organisation'* and how they choose to *'deal with the problem'* (Singh et al., 2008 p. 60) or have a desire to maintain organisational membership (Brown, McHardy, McNabb, & Taylor, 2011).

It is relevant that 'mind sets' are referred to in the literature, as highlighted by Mowday (1982) who argued that in many ways, different styles of commitment should be considered as different mind-sets, belonging to the individuals, who apply their own ideals (in this case goals and values) to the organisation to check personal compatibility (A. Cohen, 2007). The concept of mind-set as a standalone construct

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was not developed until later, when Dewek (2012) developed the concept of 'fixed' and 'growth' mind-sets that influence how individuals see the world. The researcher considers that the two uses of the word 'mind set' mean different things.

The early conceptualisation of behavioural and attitudinal commitment provides some early indications as to how OC might progress over time. As highlighted by Becker (1960) commitment need not be a positive, in cases commitment might be experienced as a negative. The distinction between attitudinal and behavioural commitment offers an insight into this early distinction between the two commitment experiences; either alignment with positive attitude in the case of attitudinal commitment, versus behaviour and feeling locked in and trapped.

These developments in commitment research and attempts to conceptualise the experience from an employee perspective led, in turn, to the development of the term 'organisational commitment'. Organisational Commitment can be considered to be a distinct phenomenon from commitment *per se*, and is argued to be a more precise extension of the original term.

Mowday *et al* (1982) attempted to integrate both styles of commitment, arguing an arrangement of reciprocal influence. It was argued that, behavioural commitment may be influential in shaping attitudes and responsibility; employees might become (behaviourally) committed to their role (in order to maintain membership) and as an unexpected consequence, develop a more positive attitude towards their employer and their overall work. However, this argument was only presented as theoretical and lacks empirical testing (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

The distinction between attitudinal and behavioural commitment, along with other emerging theory being developed at the same time laid the foundation for OC and much of the research that exists today. However, as Ghosh and Swamy (2014) pointed out, there remains a lack of research considering the influencers and outcomes of OC. This considered, often researchers in OC traditions often label 'influencers' of OC as 'antecedents,' and this limited body of work will be considered in the next section.

2.3.2.   Antecedents and Influencers of Commitment

The literature in commitment has traditionally focused on antecedents of OC as opposed to factors that are influencers of commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002; Steers, 1977). The literature does not adequately explain what is meant by antecedents, however the word 'antecedent' itself is commonly known as something that *'existed before or logically precedes another'* (Oxford, 2018), In contrast 'influencers' do not necessarily precede anything, but are influential to the overall experience or phenomena. O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) were clear that the *'process through which commitment is established'* has not been fully investigated or understood by researchers.

Steers (1977) investigated the phenomena of antecedents within the context of OC in North American hospitals with research scientists and engineers. He concluded that the antecedents were *'varied'* but broadly categorised into three areas *'personal characteristics, job characteristics and work experience'* (p. 53). Personal characteristics include the need for achievement, age, education, and job characteristics including, identity, integration, feedback and experience spanning the dimensions of *'group attitude', 'dependability'* and *'personal importance'.*

Meyer and Allen (1990 p. 13) offered their interpretation of OC within the context of Canada and non-unionised employees in two manufacturing firms a university, a retail department store, hospital and university library,' at this stage known as affective, continuance and normative commitment styles. By their own admission, the task was undertaken to *'provide preliminary evidence that affective, continuance and normative components of attitudinal commitment are conceptually and empirically separable.'* They found this to be true, though there was *'some overlap between affective and normative commitment.'* However, it is worth pointing out at this stage that they did not undertake this exercise with the intention to understand why employees were committed and what was influential to commitment, as is of primary interest in this PhD enquiry.

During the developmental stages of Allen and Meyer's (1990) work, they argued that the three components of OC had different antecedents. In the case of affective

commitment (AC) they were found to be job challenge, role clarity, goals (including goal difficulty), peer cohesion, organisation dependability, equity, personal importance to the organisation and feedback from the organisation. In short, Allen and Meyer (1990 p. 8) describe antecedents of AC as something to *'satisfy employee needs,* [to make] *them comfortable in their relationship with the organisation.'* Considering that AC is spoken about as a positive alignment of personal goals and values to those of the organisation, it might not be surprising that the antecedents in this section are described as being overwhelmingly positive from the employees perspective.

Further, and as highlighted in Lee's (2002, p. 22) Korean focused thesis, the antecedents to CC *'seem to be affected by anything that increases the perceived cost of leaving the organisation'* and this might not be surprising when it is considered that CC is based on the side bets that an employee has made in an organisation and has often been compared to SET. The antecedents of continuous commitment (CC) include access to benefits, access to pensions, job alternatives and transferability of skills (Ko et al., 1997; Lee, 2002). Finally, the antecedents of normative commitment (NC), which Allen and Meyer (1990) admitted was included in their original scale for 'exploratory purposes' were generally in line with loyalty and experiences of reciprocation (Jaros, 1997b; Lee, 2002; Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010).

Mowday *et al* (1982) suggested that gaining a greater understanding of OC's antecedents was important, and has implications for employees, employers and society as a whole. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) conducted a meta-analysis of the antecedents, correlates and consequences of OC from previous empirical studies. It can be seen in Figure 2-1 that according to their interpretation of existing research, the antecedents of OC are varied and include personal, organisation and job characteristics, leader relations and role states (or role style). It is contended that the antecedents of OC lead employees to various states of organisational commitment, including motivation, satisfaction and performance. However, this work is naturally limited and reflective of the previous, North-American biased research from which it is built.

ANTECEDENTS

Personal Characteristics
Age
Sex
Education
Marital Status
Position Tenure
Organizational Tenure
Perceived Personal Competence
Ability
Salary
Protestant Work Ethic
Job Level

Role States
Role Ambiguity
Role Conflict
Role Overload

Job Characteristics
Skill Variety
Task Autonomy
Challenge
Job Scope

Group/Leader Relations
Group Cohesiveness
Task Interdependence
Leader Initiating Structure
Leader Consideration
Leader Communication
Participative Leadership

Organizational Characteristics
Organizational Size
Organizational Centralization

CORRELATES

Motivation
Overall
Internal
Job Involvement
Stress
Occupational Commitment
Union Commitment

Job Satisfaction
Overall
Intrinsic
Extrinsic
Supervision
Co-Workers
Promotion
Pay
Work Itself

CONSEQUENCES

Job Performance
Others' Ratings
Output Measures

Perceived Job Alternatives
Intention to Search
Intention to Leave
Attendance
Lateness
Turnover

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Figure 2-1 Mathieu and Zajac (1990. P. 174)

Mathieu and Zajac (1990 p. 180), point out that most OC studies have included personal variables in their studies, and they serve *'more as descriptive statistics, than as explanatory variables.'* This is offered as an explanation as to why personal variables are so prominent in their analysis, however as Mathieu and Zajac (1990) point out, what is missing from this analysis is an explanation as to *'why'* these personal variables are so related to commitment in the same way that O'Reilly and Chatman argued has not been achieved through the literature (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). However, Mathieu and Zajac's work did reveal that committed employees were more likely to be satisfied, involved and motivated in their work.

Sturges and Guest (1997) were UK researchers investigating the influencers of OC from the perspective of graduates in an early career setting, and perhaps of relevance here, their work was qualitative against a heavy backdrop of quantitative research. Sturges and Guest, whose work can only be generalised to graduates in large organisations, found that graduates were influenced by two main criteria, firstly the *'extent to which*

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they felt that their pre-joining expectation had been met in certain key areas' and secondly *'the extent to which they found the culture to be comfortable and helpful.'*

The findings around culture and pre-joining expectations are interesting and a natural extension to earlier research in OC achieved in the quantitative tradition. However, the researcher questions how important *'pre-entry expectations'* would be for employees of longer standing and with significantly more experience than graduates but will remain open to this emerging as an influencer of OC during the data collection phases. Sturges and Guest's work is important due to the qualitative and inductive nature of their approach, further, their work is UK focused and this is unusual in OC research.

The section that follows considers the primary models that emerged from the concept of Organisational Commitment, unlike the preceding research and theory, these models attempt to holistically understand the employee commitment relationship to an employer and consider multiple dimensions of the commitment relationship.

2.4. Organisational Commitment

Singh and Gupta (2008) argued that during the 1980's the topic of organisational commitment (OC) was developed more strongly and researchers made great strides in clarity and definition. OC is often spoken about alongside employee commitment and general feelings of commitment towards an organisation and this has likely resulted in some confusion that surrounds the various terms.

In title if nothing else, the topic of OC assumes that an employee is committed to their organisation, as opposed to other commitment foci such as commitment to religion, community, career, or manager (Ghosh & Swamy, 2014) as discussed in the preceding section. This is an important development, as early research on commitment describes the concept as having a more broad alignment with personal interests, citing social or religious organisations as examples (Cantril, 1963; Kelman, 1958). Over time, and through development of alternative theoretical models, it may be acknowledged that a discrete focus shifted towards organisations has been established (B. Singh et al., 2008).

The significant focus that OC received in the last century, along with confusion over the interpretation and focus of the various definitions of commitment lead the concept to become, wide, unclear and desperately seeking structure. The argument being made was that the concept of commitment was not clear amongst academics and researchers. As observed by Morrow (1983) who argued:

> *'the growth in commitment related concepts has not been accompanied by a careful segmentation of commitments theoretical domain in terms of intended meaning of each concept or the concepts' relationship amongst each other'*

In more recent times, Bray and Williams (2017) defined commitment as;

> *'an employee's allegiance to, affection for, devotion to and participation in an organisation'*

It can be seen that commitment has made some progress in terms of intended meaning and structure, however as Ghosh and Swamy (2014) point out, research into the influencing factors and consequences of OC is lacking. This considered, several models have emerged from the literature that attempt to holistically describe an employee's commitment experience at work, the section that follows will consider these models in turn.

2.4.1.   Meyer and Allen's Three Component Model

Morrow's (1986) concerns of the limitations of the OC literature led Meyer & Allen (1991) to build what has become the most well-known model of OC, based on empirical work in North-America. The 'Three Component Model' (TCM) (1993) now dominates the area of OC and has enjoyed significant exposure within the literature (Clements, Kinman, & Guppy, 2014; B. Singh et al., 2008). The success of Meyer and Allen's work over alternative models, such as O'Reilly and Chatman's (2010) 'multi-dimensional model' or earlier one dimensional models such as those offered by Mowday (1979) or Becker (1956), is perhaps because Meyer and Allen were primarily attempting to conceptualise earlier literature. Indeed, during the developmental stages of their research Allen and Meyer (1990 p.2) claimed that their work served to achieve three primary goals:

1. to delineate the distinctions between three of the more common conceptualizations of 'attitudinal' commitment
2. to develop measures of each
3. to demonstrate that these measures are differentially linked to variables identified in the literature as antecedents of commitment

Meyer and Allen's (1990) primary goals are narrow considering that the authors were attempting to conceptualise the meaning of wider OC. For example the first goal refers only to attitudinal commitment and therefore omits to mention behavioural commitment, influencers of commitment or its associated outcomes.

Further, Meyer and Allen's (1990) work was developed in Canada and tested over two phases of data collection, the first sample included a response rate of 52% (256 questionnaires) and was issued to manufacturing organisation and a university. The second phase included a response rate of 53% (337 questionnaires) and was taken from a sample of a retail department store, hospital and a university library. In both cases it is reasonable to assume that the university in question was Meyer and Allen's own place of work. This sample retains the earlier seen bias for university and hospital contexts and the geographical context of North America.

The resultant TCM (Meyer & Allen, 1991) included three components of commitment and these are explained in turn, in the sections that follow.

2.4.1.1. Affective Commitment (AC)

Affective Commitment is the most widely studied component of the TCM, and arguably the most positive outcome for the employer (Gutierrez et al., 2012). Affective commitment is the desire to stay with an organisation, borrowing theory from Mowday Porter and Steers (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), a tool built upon the foundations of Mowday *et al* (1979) and his colleagues one dimensional model. It should be noted at this point therefore that the affective component of the TCM was not created by Meyer and Allen, rather modified and adapted from Mowday, Porter and Steers (1979) existing theory.

Porter and Steers (1974), investigated the topic of OC relative to satisfaction and turnover of 'psychiatric technicians' in a longitudinal study over a 10.5 month period. They laid much of the foundation for OC theory, arguing that it was found to discriminate better between stayers and leavers than job satisfaction. Their results also found that a *'significant relationship existed between certain attitudes held by employees and turnover'* (Porter & Steers, 1974, p. 603). They conclude that *'it is possible that some employees place a high value on the goals of the organisation'* and *'to a degree, their like or dislike of a particular task required to attain such goals'* (Porter & Steers, 1973, p. 608). However, the isolated context of psychiatric technicians working in a public-sector hospital remains a limiting factor to the generalisability of their research. Further, Porter and Steers (1974) longitudinal claims relating to 'turnover intentions' are generous considering the short period of 10.5 months (notably less than a year) for a study on commitment.

In 1979, Mowday, Steers and Porter argued that commitment had three factors; a strong belief in the organisations goals and values; a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organisation. In order to measure this, Mowday and his colleagues developed the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) that asked respondents to rank their answers to questions such as *'I am willing to put a great deal of effort beyond* [what is] *normally expected in order to help this organisation be successful'* or the reverse coded *'Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organisations policies on important matters relating to its employees.'* Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979, p. 228) did not reveal the response rate to their questionnaire instrument, despite explaining that it was *'administered to 2,563 employees'* in the United States.

The literature elsewhere in OC (i.e. Mowday et al., 1979 QCQ) is capable of measuring positive OC, to the extent that Meyer and Allen (1991) built their AC scale of the TCM using similar questions to the OCQ. Therefore, those only wishing to test positive commitment, as opposed to the three styles that Meyer and Allen offer, or investigate commitment profiles should look no further than the OCQ. The researcher questions why any researcher solely wishing to test positive commitment (i.e. AC) would not simply adopt the OCQ. This remains a misunderstanding and limitation of OC research.

2.4.1.2. Continuance Commitment, (CC)

Continuance Commitment (CC) refers to the need to stay, a development of Becker's theoretical (1960) side bet theory, where it is argued that an employee is constantly assessing their investments within their organisation and calculating the costs associated with leaving. Kanter (1968 p. 504) described this style of commitment as *'cognitive-continuance commitment'* that occurs when there *'is a profit associated with continued participation and a cost associated with leaving.'* Cohen (1988) had a different position, arguing that Continuance Commitment focuses on the perception of the benefits of staying, not on the cost of leaving, but retains the focus on 'costs.'

David and Dawley (2005) were critical and argued that CC should be split further still, claiming that it was more complicated than simple obligations, and should be based on the degree of personal sacrifice associated with leaving, and the a perceived lack of other alternatives. However, these constructs are both included in Becker's (1960) wider definition of commitment.

The focus of CC on the 'cost' and 'profit' between the employee and the employer links continuous commitment styles strongly to SET and the norm of reciprocity, however it is not clear from the theory how CC manifests itself in an organisation. SET focuses on the exchange relationship between two people (employees in this case) and as organisations are made up of multiple employees in different departments, each with different needs, it is not clear exactly how CC is manifested in relation to SET within the context of organisations and interpersonal relationships.

Finally, it should be noted that Becker's (1960) side bet theory was not empirically developed and written only as a series of *'notes on the concept of commitment'* and this could cause an issue where theory is built upon the foundations of one another. Meyer and Allen (1990) tested their scales (including side bet theory, and re-titled CC) within manufacturing firms and a University meaning that the context in which CC was tested remains limited.

2.4.1.3. Normative Commitment (NC)

Normative Commitment refers to the obligation to stay in line with Wiener's (1982) normative theory, the feeling of loyalty, perhaps through earlier periods of success or

previous support from the organisation.   Cohen (2007) argues that the construct of NC is troublesome because it has often been found to overlap with the first construct of the TCM, AC.

Indeed in a similar vein Ko (1997 p. 971) argues that:

> *'the normative component of commitment is based on the belief that it is the right thing to remain with the organization and that AC is attachment to the organization such that the strongly committed individual identifies with, is involved in, and enjoys membership in the organization.'*

Thus, concerns have been expressed that it is unclear how NC can be *'conceptually separable from AC.'*   The TCM naturally omitted a number of other pieces of research, as might be expected in a reductionist approach to data of this sort, but Meyer and Allen (1991, p. 2) argued, in line with their attempts to conceptualise the literature, that these were *'three of the more common conceptualisations'* of OC.

Gutierrez (2012) was critical of researchers who apply the TCM, arguing that many choose to only use the positive scale of AC as being representative of OC, asking *'Why have researchers focused their attention on affective commitment when understanding normative and continuance commitment is equally as important?'*

This is a limitation of some OC research, where a study is only interested in measuring 'positive' or 'affective' commitment, then various other scales exist that are capable of achieving this, not least those offered by Porter and Steers (1979) or Mowday's (1979) original theory from which Meyer and Allen's (1991) conceptualisations of AC was built.   An example of a recent study adopting the OCQ as opposed to the TCM with satisfactory results can be found in the work of Yami, Galdas and Watson (2018).

The dominance of Meyer and Allen's TCM in OC research has become clearer in recent times, generating 12,787 citations against 4,971 citations for the work of O'Reilly and Chatman (2010), it has a prominent and well respected place in the area of Organisational Behaviour and for those interested in measuring OC.   However, this is not to suggest that the model is un-contested, and it is acknowledged that a number

of studies have identified a lack of evidence to support NC in particular, and questioned whether it warrants continued consideration in such models (Jaros, 1997a; Ko et al., 1997; Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). In fact NC, has often been found to correlate strongly with AC, questioning how strongly Meyer and Allen's (1990) second goal of TCM, *'to demonstrate that the measures are differently linked to variables and antecedents'* was achieved. Yet, the value of Meyer and Allen's (1991) work should not be dismissed; and at the very least academics can agree that commitment is multi-dimensional and two sided includes positive and negative constructs (B. Singh *et al.*, 2008).

In more recent research, Herscovitch and Meyer (2001) widened the application of the TCM by combining mean scores for each commitment profile (AC, CC, NC) to develop a total commitment score. Herscovitch and her colleagues were attempting to create a holistic model able to provide a complete (individual) 'OC profile' (OCP). However, to its weakness, this work was not empirical in favour of conducting meta-analysis to assess the *'relations among affective, continuance and normative commitments'* and *'relations between three forms of commitment' (p.20).* However, this considered, Herscovitch and Meyer did test this theory at a later date with university students and hospital nurses in Canada (Meyer et al., 2002).

This study was revelatory as for the first time a single model recognized that an employee may feel more than one way about an organization of employment at the same time. Prior to the proposition of OCPs, there had existed consensus amongst researchers that AC, based on Porters OCQ (Porter & Steers, 1973) and Mowday *et al's.*, (1979) work, was the 'ideal' position for employees. However, Herscovitch and Meyer's (2002) work on OCP position found high AC, followed by high NC and low CC was the 'ideal' position. It is interesting to observe that these claims have arisen despite the on-going critique with regard to the validity of NC and additionally, it is apparent that they have made no consideration for location, occupation or other 'local factors' seemingly in favour of a blanket 'ideal profile.'

The difference between a commitment profile and a commitment construct is the idea that an employee can experience all three forms of the commitment to varying

degrees at the same time. For example, an employee could feel aligned to the goals and values of the organisation and have a desire to maintain membership in the organisation, meaning they are affectively committed, whilst at the same time feeling loyal to the organisation, trapped and unable to leave. The notion of feeling more than one way about an organisation is not completely new, and was proposed as a possibility in the seminal work by Meyer and Allen (1990), however it was not until Herscovitch and Meyer's (2002) empirical work that this idea was fully explored. However, this remains a model tested in a limited context with a limited sample, i.e. students and nurses.

This OCP model was referred to by Herscovitch and Meyer (2002 p. 317) as a *'general model of workplace commitment'* serving to demonstrate the *'mind sets of desire, perceived cost, and obligation'* and able be experienced to 'varying degrees.'   They suggested that an ideal state for an OCP would be a 'high' AC score, followed by a high or low NC score and a low CC score as represented in Figure 2-2.
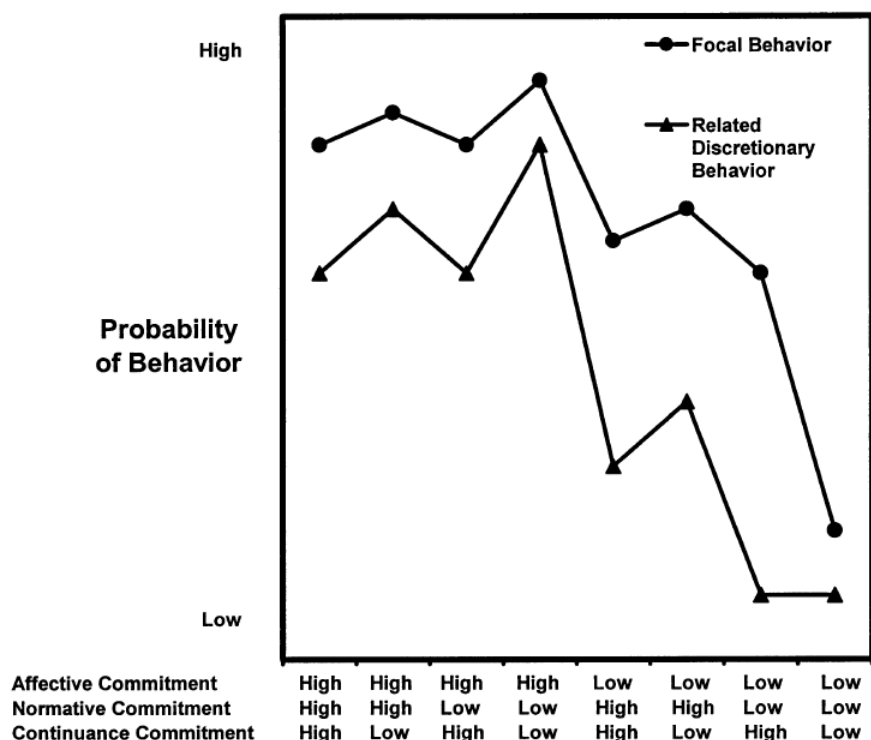
Figure 2-2 Meyer and Herscovitch (2001)

The model has been applied recently in a variety of contexts, including studies to investigate OC's relationship to perceived organisational support (POS) and normative commitment, finding that POS and social exchange (SET) related positively to AC (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Elsewhere, research to investigate the relationship between AC and commitment to supervisors, found that commitment to the organisation precedes commitment to a supervisor (Vandenberghe, Bentein, & Panaccio, 2017) or research investigating the relationship between mentoring in a family business and OC (Dhaenens, Marler, Vardaman, & Chrisman, 2018). However, notably, these studies are all investigations into commitment relative to other phenomena, as opposed to an investigation into commitment itself.

Further, the ongoing success of the TCM has led to a number of studies further exploring the generalizability of the model around the world, including testing the questionnaire across 'six languages' and finding reliable results (Hill & Anka, 2013). And while this is interesting, the statistical North-American approach towards validation of models is limited to the existing paradigm of statistical, cross-sectional and questionnaire measured empirical data that this study is attempting to extend. To reiterate from Chapter 1, this PhD enquiry intends to move away from a dominant focus on the quantitative measurement of OC.

The next model to conceptualise OC is O'Reilley, Chatman and Guion's, compliance, identification and internalisation model.

2.4.2.   O'Reilley, Chatman and Guion's Compliance, Identification and Internalisation Model

In what could be considered to be the proposition of a rival, or alternative, model to the TCM, O'Reilly *et al.,* (1986) developed a three factor model. This model relied substantially on Kelman's (1958) empirical research and argued that OC occurs over three primary phases, *'compliance', 'identification' and 'internalisation'.* This approach is arguably more linear than that contained in other OC models, including Meyer and Allen's work, and attempts to describe the process of building OC. O'Reilly *et al* (1986, P.52) argue that compliance occurs when *'an individual accepts influence because he hopes to achieve favourable reaction from another person or group'* and adopts

suitable behaviour *'not because he believes in it, but because he expects to gain specific rewards or approval by conforming'.*

This approach could be considered as something tantamount to social exchange theory (SET), where individuals act to gain specific rewards and is arguably indistinct from the concept of SET. Further, if O'Reilley and Chatman's theory can be compared to SET and the norm of reciprocity, then the relationship and empirical distinction between the compliance, identification and internalisation model and Becker's (1956) side bet theory should be strongly questioned.   The second stage of the model is identification, where 'an individual accepts influence because he wants to establish or maintain a satisfying self-defining relationship to another person or group.'

This stage differs from compliance because it is theorised that the employee 'actually believes' in the attitude that he adopts. The final stage, institutionalisation, occurs when the employee finds the behaviour *'intrinsically rewarding […] because it is congruent with his value system'* (Kelman, 1958 p. 53).   It can be seen in this model that the employee would progress from simple compliance (presumably the minimum to maintain organisational membership), through to an understanding of the organisations position (identification), to acceptance in internalisation. O'Reilley and Chatman's (1986) work empirically tested Kelman's (1958) ideas, finding 'strong links between commitments based on internalisation and prosocial behaviours.' However they accepted that they had not managed to answer the question of how commitment was established in the first place, and this required further examination.

O'Reilley and Chatman's (1991) empirical data was collected from university employees and students at an unnamed university in the United States and had a total response rate over two studies of 244 (questionnaires).

2.4.3.   Cook and Wall's British, Trust, Commitment and Personal Fulfilment Model

Cook and Wall (1980 p. 39) attempted to rectify the issue of a predominant focus on quantitative North-American biased research with their investigation into commitment from the perspective of *'British, blue collar workers'* in the 1980's. It is noteworthy that Cook and Wall decided to investigate OC relative to work attitudes and trust, and

unlike Meyer and Allen (1991) whose work was grounded in existing theory. Cook and Wall opted to generate the content of their OC scale 'afresh' though they do admit to having consulted with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs as a conceptual guideline, despite recognition that the work is grounded in motivational psychology rather than OC.

Cook and Wall's (1980) measure of OC is limited for a number of reasons. Firstly, the scale has little reliance on preceding OC work, meaning that it exists partly in isolation to other work in the area. Secondly, the authors claim to have conducted interviews with a UK representative sample, whilst admitting that the study was part of a larger piece of work the focus of which remains unknown. Further, there is little evidence of qualitative interviews being conducted in the manner that the researcher understands them; the authors refer to '*interviews introduc*[ing] *each scale with its own explanatory note'* followed by a presentation of statistical results. The researcher considers it most likely that the data collected for this scale was quantitative, with the researchers handing the participants questionnaires. Finally, the researcher notes that Cook and Wall's (1980) study is as much an investigation into personal fulfilment as it is commitment.

The review thus far has explored OC from its conceptual roots in SET to more recent theory, including commitment profiles and multi-dimensional styles of commitment to an employer. However, what is missing from the review so far is a consideration for the manner in which the scales and theory have been developed. If the researcher is to investigate OC within a new context, then the underpinning assumptions and philosophy to OC should be considered. Therefore, the section that follows positions OC theory within the wider social sciences and considers its limitations.

2.5.   Overview and Summary of Organisational Commitment Research

The review thus far has focused on the development of OC theory from its origins in SET through to a multi-dimensional construct where an employee might feel aligned to an organisations goals, while feeling trapped through 'side bets' at the same time (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). However, only limited attention has been dedicated to the manner in which this theory has been developed. The researcher has already

referred to research that is quantitative in nature and tested in a limited geographical context, however this has not been fully explored.

The researcher is keen to understand the philosophical foundations present in the literature and the style of outcome that OC theorists seek. This is a prevalent issue as different approaches to data collection can reveal different results (see: Hassard, 1991). The objectivist paradigm, where generalisations can be made and statistical and questionnaire driven data is prevalent will reveal a style of result that are different in nature to interpretivist approaches that may be more inductive, exploratory or qualitative in nature (Gill & Johnson, 2010).

In order to review the epistemological and ontological foundations of the literature, and to further understand the commitments of existing theory, Table 2-1 has been introduced to provide an overview of the data collection methods and approach of OC theory.   As can be seen questionnaires (quantitative data) dominate the approach of data collection methods and North-America (USA and Canada) dominates the context.

Table 2-1 Data Collection Methods in Organisational Commitment Research

Author	Theory	Data Collection Approach and Geographical Location	Sample	Response Rate	Ontological and Epistemological Commitments
Kelman (1958)	Compliance, Identification, and Internalization Model	**Qualitative** Questionnaire USA The methods refer to qualitative methods, however when the approach is described it aligns closer with that of a questionnaire 'subjects were asked to respond to each item on a 6 point scale' (p.56)	'border state' Questionnaire to 'college freshmen' under conditions of 'salience and surveillance' and 'salience and non-surveillance' - possible use of interviews in part, however this remains unclear.	Unclear, the results refer to N=55 and 'interviews' (questionnaires) with a communicator who represented the *'overwhelming consensus of the campus' (p. 55)*	Objective
Becker (1960)	Side Bet Theory	**Theoretical**	*n/a* 'notes on the concept of commitment'	*n/a*	*n/a*
Mowday Steers and Porter (1979)	Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)	**Quantitative** Questionnaire USA	Questionnaire to employees of 'public sector' 'university' 'hospital' 'bank' 'telephone company' 'scientists and engineers' 'auto company managers' 'psychiatric technicians' 'retail management trainees'	2,563 issued (response rate unclear)	Objective
Cook and Wall (1980)	Trust, Commitment and Personal Fulfilment Model	**Qualitative** The methods refer to qualitative methods, however when the approach is described it aligns closer with that of a questionnaire. *'seven scales took less than 30 minutes to complete'* (p.43).	Questionnaire to male blue collar workers in the manufacturing industry.	Study 1 - 390 Study 2 - 260.	Objective

Weiner (1982)	Normative theory	**Theoretical**	n/a Model of work attitudes, behavioural determinants	n/a	n/a
O'Reilly, Chatman, & Guion (1986).	Compliance, Identification, and Internalization Model	**Quantitative** Questionnaire USA	Questionnaire to University Employees and Students (university unstated)	Two studies – university employees (N = 82) and students (N = 162)	Objective
Meyer & Allen (1990)	Three Component Model / Total Commitment Questionnaire	**Quantitative** Questionnaire Canada	Study One Questionnaire to 'two manufacturing firms and a University.' Study Two – Questionnaire to a retail department store, a hospital and a university library.	Two phases, (N=256 and N=337).	Objective
Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993)	Extension and Test of a Three-Component Conceptualisation	**Quantitative** Questionnaire Canada	Student Nurses and Registered Nurses	Part One 1,000 questionnaires issued to student nurses with a 603 response rate. Part two 'quite extensive' questionnaire issued to registered nurses (numbers unknown)	Objective
Herscovitch & Meyer (2001)	TCM/OCP	**Quantitative** Questionnaire Canada	Study One Questionnaire University Students, Study Two and Three, Questionnaire to hospital nurses.	Study One, N=224. Study Two, N= 157 and Study Three, N=108.	Objective

Source: Adapted from (Kelman 1986, Mowday *et al* 1987, Becker 1960, Cook and Wall 1980, O'Relley, Chatman and Guion 1986, Meyer and Allen 1990 and Herscovich and Meyer 2002).

Table 2-1 provides an overview for the approach adopted by the literature focusing directly on the development of organisational commitment. This has been identified as deductive, methodologically quantitative and objective. Even where Cook and Wall (1980) and Kelman (1958) refer to qualitative data being sought, their execution and analysis reveals a qualitative approach that is analysed using statistical methods. These studies are deductive in nature and seeking generalisable results that can be applied to a wider population. The table reveals a strong preference by the literature for large organisations that are often in the public sector. The organisations that are cited are either public in the case of University's (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; O'Reilly & Caldwell, 2016), large in terms of 'banks, hospitals and telephone companies' (Mowday et al., 1979) or students (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Kelman, 1958; Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986).

In some cases the chosen context is clearly important, Hospitals and Universities have the potential to be large employers with a significant number of employees, and perhaps this is why they have historically been targeted by OC researchers with generalisation and large sample sizes in mind (Gill & Johnson, 2010). However, elsewhere the approach to understand 'employee commitment' should be strongly questioned. In several places researchers have relied on students to answer their questionnaires, Meyer and Allen (1993) relied upon student nurses as opposed to employees (nurses or otherwise) and Kelman (1958) asked college freshman to complete his questionnaire (for context freshman relates to an American University student in their first year of study). The researcher strongly questions the suitability of a first year college student to complete a questionnaire asking about their commitment to a place of work.

The theories in question are objective and seeking to generalise to a population and what is missing from these studies are inductive, qualitative and actor-led investigations into what commitment really means to employees, and considerations of how employees feel about the organisations in which they work. O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) claimed that OC researchers had not managed to establish the *'process through which commitment is established'* meaning that we remain ignorant

towards what influences OC, whilst being able to measure the construct reasonably well. Often deductive researchers assume too simple a link between constructs, which can lead to shallow results and in the case of OC where models have been built upon each other's foundations, a set of compounded assumptions (Gill & Johnson, 2010). There exists an opportunity to examine existing quantitative models using qualitative data within a specific geographical region outside of the context described above.

Meyer and Allen's (1991) TCM is the only model that pulls together research in the OC tradition in a manner that is true to the meaning of each individual construct. For example, the link between CC and Becker's (1960) side bet theory, is accommodated in the TCM, as is the association between NC and Wiener's (1982) work, alongside a strong focus on positive commitment in AC (Mowday et al., 1982, 1979). Further, the TCM is also the most cited model in OC research meaning that other researchers have adopted the TCM when wishing to investigate OC, corroborating the credibility of the model, even if it may have been adopted erroneously by researchers primarily interested in AC (Gutierrez et al., 2012).

In line with the research aim, the researcher is interested in investigating the influencers and outcomes of OC, within the context of Sheffield City Regions, mid-sized businesses. The researcher notes that previous OC researchers have admitted that the influencers of OC have not been properly investigated (Ghosh & Swamy, 2014; Mowday et al., 1979; B. Singh et al., 2008). This is essentially an omission or a gap in the existing focus of the literature. As has been highlighted in this review, the literature in OC has often been built upon the foundations of other work as opposed to returning to the original roots of what influences the overall phenomena.

The researcher accepts that the current models have an important purpose to holistically understand an organisations commitment position. There would be little point in investigating what influences an employee's commitment if the researcher could not firstly demonstrate to what extent employees were committed. Therefore in Chapter 3, the researcher will need to consider how commitment levels can be understood before moving onto the factors that are influential to the same

commitment. The section that follows will focus on the consequences of OC, essentially focusing on the question, *commitment, so what?*

2.6. Consequences of Organisational Commitment

The most explored consequences of OC research is a reduction in employee turnover (Hulin, 1968; Porter & Steers, 1974; Sturges & Guest, 2001; Wagner, 2007), since the beginning of OC research; academics have looked towards commitment as a means to reduce staff renewal rates. In the early days, for example within the context of the research of Becker (1956) and Mowday (1982), when 'men' could expect to work with a single employer for life, then perhaps this topic was less prevalent, however in more recent times, the attraction and attention of employees has remained a constant and important outcome of OC research. However, it is noted that a reduction in turnover is certainly not the sole outcome of OC.

Mindful of this, wider outcomes of OC have been considered for the purposes of this review. For example, if OC is an alignment of personal goals and values to the goals and values of the organisation, does that mean that an employee would have an increased awareness and understanding of the organisations strategy? If strategy is the process of setting the direction in which the organisation is heading, then can OC and Strategic Interest (SI) be considered to be complimentary to each other? Furthermore, if an employee is committed to their employer and aligned to the organisations goals, values and has a desire to maintain membership in the same organisation, then can they be considered as good citizens of their organisation? Does commitment arrive with helpfulness, supportiveness and willingness to go the extra mile for their employer as is the case in organisational citizen behaviour? How does this influence the culture of the organisation, and does culture influence an employee's experience at work?

The related constructs of the employee's psychological contract with the organisation are also considered. Can the unwritten exchanges that make up the relationship between employer and employee influence the employee's commitment to their employer? Can the psychological contract be considered an outcome of OC? Moreover, as the literature dedicates so much focus to the values of an organisation

and the values of the employee, the concept of values themselves are explored. How do organisations decide on their values? What is influential to their decisions when adopting values and do employees have an input into the values of the organisation, or are values simply 'exported' on to employees?

These concepts are explored in the six sections that follow and are explained relative to the wider literature on OC.

2.6.1. Reduced Employee Turnover

The notion that OC can serve to reduce employee turnover has been explored extensively in the literature surrounding commitment. This might not be surprising if the root definition of OC is considered. Porter and Steers (1973) described commitment as a means to measure the reduction in turnover, whilst Angle and Perry (1981) described commitment as *'a strong desire to remain.'* Nen-Bakr, *et al* (1994 p. 455) argued that OC is a ' *better predictor of turnover than job satisfaction.'*

Iverson and Buttigieg (1999) argued that OC also served to measure absenteeism as well as turnover, arguing that employees who are committed *'are less likely to be absent and to voluntarily leave their organisation*.' They argue that this means that organisations should consider the determinants of OC to ensure that they are being met by the organisation. Kanning and Hill (2013 p. 11) also supported the concept that OC served to *'reduce employee turnover.'* Meyer *et al* (2012) argue that all three forms of OC within the context of the TCM will reduce employee turnover, but not always for the same reasons. In the case of AC, an employee would desire to remain through shared goals and values, and presumably commitment to the goals. Equally, in the case of NC, an employee who was loyal to their employer would not be expected to resign or leave the organisation. In the case of CC, the employee would choose not to leave the organisation through side bets in the organisation, but this does not necessarily mean that they would be working in line with the organisations goals and values.

It is important to note that not all employee turnover is necessarily good; an employee who was trapped through access to healthcare would not necessarily care for the

organisation. This is unless Mowday *et al's* (1982) as yet untested claim that behavioural commitment can potentially reciprocally influence attitudinal commitment is true. However, the researcher considers that, in line with O'Reilly, Chapman and Guion's compliance, identification and internalisation model, an employee who was continuously committed would do the minimum to comply with the organisations expectation of them to maintain said membership. In contrast, Jaros (1997a) found that the three components of commitment differed in their significance of the effects on turnover.

The researcher accepts that a reduction in turnover can be seen as an outcome of OC, but questions how practically useful knowledge of this is for an organisation. As has been discussed, a reduction in employee turnover is not always a positive, and there are circumstances under which an organisation may desire a small amount of natural turnover to introduce fresh perspective, experiences and ideas into the organisation. However, these ideas have not been investigated in the literature that assumes turnover should be reduced. This is something that the researcher will seek to investigate empirically, within the context of SCR and MSBs. The researcher is particularly interested to learn the attitudes of employees and employers staff retention in a workplace that has significantly shifted in recent times, and where commitment might not necessarily be expected (Skidelsky, 2017). The section that follows focuses on strategic interest on the basis that OC is an alignment of personal goals to the goals and values of the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1993; Mowday et al., 1979).

2.6.2.   Strategic Interest

Strategy has been described by Johnson, Whittington, and Scholes (2008 p. 4) as *'the long-term direction of an organisation,'* they argue that this can include deliberate and emergent elements of the organisations strategic direction. Johnson, Whittington, and Scholes (2008) argue that successful strategy includes the organisation defining their mission, vision, values and objectives. Once strategy turns its attention to values, vision and objectives, the relevance for OC begins to emerge. It should be clear that the strategy of the organisation will be implemented by the employees internally,

meaning that employee understanding and interpretation is significantly relevant to strategic implementation efforts (Peel & Bridge, 1998).

In fact, if strategy is concerned with setting organisation goals and values then arguably it is extremely relevant to OC. Mowday (1982) points out, the commitment of the employee is an alignment to the goals and values of the organisation. If these values were not explicitly clear or clearly communicated could the employee commit to the organisation in the traditional manner? Johnson, Whittington, and Scholes (2008) argue that the culture of the organisation, stakeholders, resources, industry and macro-environment will influence the strategic choices that an organisation makes.

This process is generally referred to as the process of strategic planning and the wide area of organisational strategy can be generally broken down into two areas, strategic planning (SP) and implementation (SI). Strategic planning is the well-documented process of understanding the external environment, setting organisational goals and positioning, as has been briefly described above. Strategic Implementation (SI) is the phase that should follow strategic planning, essentially the process of implementing an organisations strategic plan.

It is the process of SI that is envisaged to be most interesting and relevant to OC and the wider interests of this project. As Smith (2009) points out, SI *'takes at least 90% of the effort necessary to achieve strategic change'* and as Herscovitch and Meyer (2002 p. 301) reminds us *'commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target.'* However, the two have seldom been considered together. For these reasons, the researcher is keen to investigate this apparent overlap between SI and OC.   If OC can be regarded as an alignment of goals and values between organisation and employee, then why would it not be connected to the process of implementing those same goals and values?

Academics have often highlighted the importance of SI as a means of achieving organisational success (Chebat, 1999; Hickson, Miller, & Wilson, 2003; Noble, 1999) described by Hunger *et al.,* (2010 p. 192) as *'the sum total of the activities and choices required for the execution of a strategic plan and something often omitted in practice.'* This leaves strategic implementation as something of the 'forgotten art' of the strategy

process (Smith, 2009). For clarity and context here, the concept of 'success' has been interpreted as successful implementation of the organisations strategy in line with a pre-determined strategic plan.

The literature suggests that SI has a relationship with OC (and wider organisation success), through the definition of the two terms if nothing else, and research in this area can begin to reveal it. With the notable exception of the work by Smith (2009, 2010, 2014) the area of OC and SI are seldom studied together, and it is noted that even Smith, who has made several calls for research into OC relative to SI, is yet to publish any empirical work himself. Moreover, even if he were to carry out this empirical work, it is likely that based on his style and earlier work that the study would repeat the earlier seen traditions of statistical and positivistic verification already seen. However, it is important to emphasise here that Smith's ideas are valuable in considering that research into this area could inform theory and practice. Thus, in this PhD inquiry the researcher will respond to a 'call for action' and include some provision to test the relationship between SI and OC into his research, as will be discussed in Chapter 3 and 4.

2.6.3.   Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

In the same way that OC research has been defined as unclear and seeking structure, within the concept of Organisational Citizen Behaviour (OCB), academics have noted a lack of consistency in the approach to investigating the topic. Podsakoff, MacKenzi, Paine and Bacharach (2000) identified that OCB had been defined in over 30 different ways. They concluded that seven themes were common to most definitions, including helping behaviour, sportsmanship, organisational loyalty, organisational compliance, individual initiative, civil virtue and self-development.

Organ (1988 p. 4) defined OCB as the *'individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system,* [that] *promotes the effective functioning of the organization.'* They further elaborated:

> *'behaviour is not an enforceable requirement of the role or the job description, that is, the clearly specifiable terms of the person's employment contract with*

the organization; the behaviour is rather a matter of personal choice, such that its omission is not generally understood as punishable.'

The literature relies on the common understanding of the term 'citizen' and the associated wider meaning of being a good citizen of a country, and extends its application to the context of being a good citizen employee.

This construct of being a good citizen within the context of being an employee is of relevance to OC, where a positively committed employee (either through strong AC, or a combination of strong AC and NC with low CC) with an alignment to the organisations goals, values and a desire to maintain membership in the organisation could have similar outcomes to those being described within the context of OCB.

The various outcomes of OCB have been described as follows;

1. **Helping Behavior;** voluntarily helping others with, or preventing the occurrence of work related problems (Organ, 1988).

This construct could be considered to be theoretically similar to Claxton's (2014) theory of 'supportiveness' and the concept that the organization are internally supportive and leaders approachable.

2. **Sportsmanship;** defined as 'a willingness to tolerate the inevitable inconveniences and impositions of work without complaining'

3. **Organizational Loyalty;** defined by Podsakoff, MacKenzi, Paine and Bacharach (2000) as 'promoting the organization to outsiders, protecting and defending it against external threats, and remaining committed to it even under adverse conditions.'

Aside from specifically referring to commitment, the concept of loyalty would appear to best link to loyalty based OC, specifically Wiener's (1982) normative theory, or Meyer and Allen's (1991) normative theory.

4. **Organizational Compliance;** defined as 'acceptance of the organization's rules, regulations, and procedures, which results in a scrupulous adherence to them,

even when no one observes or monitors Podsakoff, MacKenzi, Paine and Bacharach (2000 p. 517).

In the context of OC, this stage is comparable to O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) 'compliance' stage as the first step of commitment.

5. **Individual Initiative;** defined as 'task-related behaviors at a level that is so far beyond minimally required or generally expected levels that it takes on a voluntary flavor' Podsakoff, MacKenzi, Paine and Bacharach (Podsakoff et al., 2000 p. 524).

6. **Civic Virtue;** defined as represent[ing] macro-level interest in, or commitment to, the organization as a whole. (Podsakoff et al., 2000 p. 524).

7. **Self-Development;** defined as 'voluntary behaviours employees engage in to improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities' (Podsakoff et al., 2000 p. 524).

It can be seen that the concept of OCB has been defined and related where possible to the concept of OC, in places it is clearly evident that the literature and theory surrounding OC is of relevance to the theory surrounding OCB. However, particularly in relation to the constructs of *individual initiative, civic virtue and self-development*, the theory of OCB would appear to exceed what would normally be expected from a committed employee, and it may be asserted that this would potentially be an outcome of very strong, positive commitment such as AC. The section that follows considers the wider topic of the culture of the organisation and the employees place within the culture.

2.6.4. Organisational Culture

The topic of organisational culture has received significant attention from academics attempting to describe the internal environment of an organisation (O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991a). Bruhn (2001 p. 36) claimed that *'few concepts have captured the attention of scholars and practitioners as that of organisational culture.'* Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2008 p. 1) define culture as a *'set of taken for-granted beliefs and values that are shared within a particular group.'* Ravasi and Schultz (2006 p. 437) offered a similar definition of culture, defining it as a *'set of shared mental*

assumptions that guide interpretation and action in organizations by defining appropriate behaviour for various situations.' In the case of this thesis, the *'group'* can be taken as the individual case organisation, and the beliefs and values may be taken to represent the culture of the same organisation. For Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2008), culture is an integral part of the strategic framework of an organisation, claiming that it forms an important part of the organisations overall strategic position. This is important to this PhD study as it demonstrates a lack of consensus and understanding for the topic of Culture, meaning that those who wish to apply the term empirically are likely to experience problems.

O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell (1991b p. 487) argue that despite extensive research, culture cannot be easily understood, but researchers *'can at least agree that culture may be an important factor in determining how well an individual fits an organizational context.'* As a result, a number of models attempting to explain the process of managing, developing and changing culture exist (Meyerson & Martin, 1987). The purpose of this thesis is not to contribute to the literature on organisational culture, rather it is to understand cultures place relative to commitment.

It is noteworthy that academic research on culture refers to organisational beliefs and values (G. Johnson et al., 2008; O'Reilly, 1989), and the reader will recall when discussing OC, that beliefs and values of the employees were found to be centrally important to the phenomena (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday et al., 1979). This could mean that there is a relationship between culture and OC in the same way that there is a theoretical link between OC and strategy. In fact, O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell (1991b) go as far as to claim that research on culture usually begins with values and assumptions. This observation is a positive assurance that culture is conceptually linked to commitment and influential to the overall relationship between the pair.

There are recent examples of culture based research projects interested in the perception of justice, relative to commitment within the context of mergers and acquisitions, and therefore a merging of two sets of culture (Maia & Bastos, 2015). However, this is notably not an investigation into culture relative to OC itself. Further

Ramdhani, Ramdhani and Ainisyifa (2017, p. 826) found that commitment can be improved through corporate culture when it consists of *'teamwork, communication, training development and reward-recognition.'* This research demonstrates an empirical connection between culture and commitment in the same way that Sturges and Guests (2001) observed that organisational culture was relevant to commitment for graduates in a UK sample. It remains to be seen if the same finding of culture is prevalent within the context of longer-standing employees.

The section that follows considers the topic of the psychological contract and the employees experience and un-written experience at work.

2.6.5. Psychological Contract

The concept of a psychological contract is often credited to Rousseau (1990) who spoke of an employee's psychological and implied contracts at work. Central to the concept of a psychological contract (PC) is a reciprocal set of obligations or promises related to employment between employer and employee, often not written down in the same way that a normal contract of employment would be (Behery, Paton, & Hussain, 2012). Jabeen, *et al* (2015 p. 103) claim that the psychological contract focuses on the employer and employee relationship at the *'individual level'* which could be of interest to OC, as commitment is a personal experience and likely to vary from employee to employee within an organisation, or even at departmental level.

Behery, *et al* (2012 p. 301) construe that there are two distinct types of psychological contracts, transactional and relational. Transactional psychological contracts *'involve specific economic exchanges between employer and employee,'* and Behery, Paton and Hissain (2012) argue that this type of contract involves limited exchange between parties, essentially representing a trade / exchange relationship. This could be linked to social exchange theory (SET) mentioned in earlier sections of this review, where one party engages with another for social and economic outcomes, and indeed SET has often been linked more widely to OC (Blau, 1964). Relational psychological contracts are *'non-economic, socio-emotional exchanges,'* are *'ill-defined [in] scope and [offer] variable interpretations.'* They revolve around *'trust, respect and loyalty'* (Behery et al., 2012 p. 301). Rousseau (1990) reminds us of the subjective nature of all

psychological contracts, and the associated lack of guarantee that all parties will agree to, or honour the terms as agreed.

The researcher considers that the second type of psychological contract, relational variety will be more relevant to the employee's OC. This is on the basis that it forms an important part of the employees experience at work. However, the results of a study by Jabeen, *et al* (2015), should be noted here; they found that within the context of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), both transactional and relational psychological contracts were found to be able to predict the level of employee commitment towards their organisation, however once again this is within a context outside of the UK.

Behery, *et al* (2012 p. 301) argue that *'organisations expect commitment beyond the simple execution of tasks'* and link the experience of commitment to employees acting as good 'citizens' in the tradition seen earlier (Organ, 1988).   Jabeen, *et al* (2015 p. 104) also make the point that *'organisations nowadays* […] *expect their employees* […] *to be committed.'* The researcher notes that, as far as he is aware, the literature in OC does not explicitly make this expectation clear, in fact as mentioned previously, part of the aim of this project is to investigate <u>to what extent</u> employers expect commitment from their employees in an environment where a 'job for life' can no longer be expected (Skidelsky, 2017). The researcher does however accept the possibility that Jabeen *et al* (2015) used the general meaning of the word 'commitment' as opposed to 'organisational commitment' as has often been confused and was discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Additionally, the social and cultural context of the work should not be overlooked.

Jabeen *et al* (2015) investigated the connection between PC and OC within the context of 'transactional leadership' in the 'United Arab Emirates' (UAE) a federation of hereditary absolute or despotic monarchies, characterised by a lack of democratic rule. They conclude that the *'psychological contract provides a reasonably better way of understanding behaviours and attitudes of an employee's work commitment'* (Jabeen *et al.,* 2015, p. 113).

It is interesting that both relational and transactional forms of the psychological contract, subjective in nature (Rousseau, 1990) were shown to be inherently

connected and influential to OC (Jabeen *et al.*, 2015). However, the location of the research and its context should not be forgotten.

The final part of this section considers the topic of Organisational Values, a concept that is referred to heavily throughout OC research.

2.6.6. Organisational Values

Organisational values run deeply through OC research (Meyer & Allen, 1993; Mowday et al., 1979), and whilst it does not receive full definition in the literature, researchers in the OC tradition are agreed that the values of the employee and the employer should be aligned. Argadoña (2003 p. 16) defines values as:

> *'central desires or beliefs regarding final states or desirable conducts that transcend specific situations, guide the choice and evaluation of our decisions and, therefore central desires or beliefs regarding final states or desirable conducts that transcend specific situations, guide the choice and evaluation of our decisions and, therefore of our conducts, becoming an integral part of our way of being and acting to the point of shaping our character.'*

Argadoña (2003) argues that the meaning of our values is objective, but our interpretations are subjective, reflecting how we feel and experience things. Hultman and Gellermann (2002 p. 5) argue that *'organisations on their own do not have values'* and *'organisations are composed of human beings whose personal values shape the values of the organisation'.* This view is shared by Malbašić and Potočan (2014 p. 438) who argue that it is *'necessary to distinguish between organisational and personal values.'* Many researchers in OC would disagree, arguing that both things are the same and should be aligned for the purposes of achieving *'commitment'* (Mowday et al., 1982).

Argadona (2003 p. 287) claims that values are *'accepted and shared within the organisation.'* However, the researcher is not clear, nor does the literature attempt to explain, exactly how this occurs in a practical sense. How do values become accepted? How are values shared? Does this rely on the values alone? Are they written on the

walls of the organisations, for example? Does it rely on communication from leaders, or are values always known by the employees?   These questions remain unclear.

Perhaps of most relevance here is Malbašić and Potočan's (2014 p. 438) argument that *'organisations radically committed to the business based* [on] *values are more successful than organisations that do not pay attention to the importance of organisational values.'* The researcher is intrigued by this statement and wonders how much attention this has received in the OC literature. When it is considered that so much focus is given to the alignment of values between employer and employee, the development of these values and commitment to them on the part of the organisation is often not considered in OC focused research. This is a gap in the literature and of significant relevance to the concept of OC that focuses so heavily on organisational values.   With this in mind, as part of its investigation of OC the PhD research study should consider how values are developed in organisations, how they are communicated to employees and what steps are taken (if any) to commit employees to values.

In addition, it is recognised that there is a need to consider how values are transmitted and embedded within organisations: are values developed with employees, or are they 'exported' onto them? Considering Hultman and Gellermann's (2002 p. 5) argument that organisations themselves do not have values, do organisations have values at all? Or are organisations simply representative of the people who are employed in the business?

The section that follows explores the limitations of OC research to date in preparation for the identification of how the researcher will design his own research to overcome, mitigate or avoid these limitations.

2.7. Implications and Limitations of Organisational Commitment Research

The concept of OC has been explored throughout this review and the preceding section began to investigate the outcomes of OC. The purpose of the PhD enquiry is to investigate the influencers and consequences of OC within the context of MSBs in the SCR, meaning that the overall topic of OC, including outcomes are of relevance.

The researcher has discussed the preference of the literature for questionnaire testing and generalisations as opposed to alternative methods such as qualitative or inductive approaches. As the literature review has indicated, research into commitment has been developed incrementally and there has been a tendency for researchers to build their work upon existing research. This means that assumptions made in the quantitative tradition have been carried forward to newer models and considered as novel. An example of this can be seen within the context of the Meyer and Allen (1991) TCM where Mowday's (1982) quantitative research was carried through to the construct of AC and Becker's (1956) theoretical 'side bet' theory was carried through to the construct of CC and Wiener's (1982) normative theory was carried through to NC.

As a consequence, a number of limitations exist; Becker's (1956) work was not empirical despite the respect and continued inclusion in academic work it receives. Similarly, Wiener's (1982) normative theory offered propositions, but again was not empirically underpinned, despite this Becker and Wiener's theories represent two thirds of Meyer and Allen's (1993) TCM model, and the TCM model itself relied heavily upon University employees in a single North American context to develop their theory.

The model of OC offered by O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) began to integrate empirical evidence into arguments and models, and took an approach different to Meyer and Allen (1993). Indeed, O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) had a reduced reliance on pulling existing theory and models through into their constructs. However, both pieces of work were developed in the context of North America, often in the United States as opposed to Canada as favoured by Meyer and Allen (1993). This context offers further limitations to the models under critique.

However, there remains a fundamental problem with the context in which the research is set. The United States is not representative of all cultures. The researcher accepts that the United States and United Kingdom appear similar at a high level according to Hofstede (2001), but there remain notable and key differences between the two countries. The example of healthcare was provided as an illustration and limitation, within the context of the UK, Healthcare is generally free, and in the US is generally sponsored through insurance as discussed.

Further, employment is notably different within the two cultures, employees in the UK are generally regarded as having more employment rights than their North American counterparts and termination of employment would be much more difficult in the UK compared to the American *'at will'* system (Summerst, 1952). As this is a significant underpinning factor to CC (and side bet theory), then how relevant and important is CC within the context of the UK? The researcher does not doubt that other factors will influence an employee's 'side bets' in an organisation within the context of the UK, however these are yet to be explored or demonstrated empirically.

Cook and Wall (1980) attempted to address these limitations with 'qualitative' work in the UK, however upon examining their approach carefully, it would appear that their interviews more closely resemble researcher-administered questionnaires, with a researcher on hand to address any questions.

Further, the style of organisation has also been identified as a limiting factor in existing empirical research in OC; in particular, the researcher questions how a student is qualified to complete a questionnaire testing 'employee' organisational commitment, as is the case in the work of Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) and Kelman (1958). Elsewhere, hospitals and Universities have been heavily studied by OC researchers (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Mowday et al., 1979; O'Reilly & Caldwell, 2016), and while these contexts are employers as opposed to students, the context remains severely limited.

The researcher considers that there exists an opportunity to test the influencers of OC within the context of the UK, whilst at the same time testing the appropriateness of a respected scale of OC, the TCM in the same context. The researcher will be able to administer the TCM to British employees working in different organisations in a pre-study, followed by a qualitative measure of the same commitment experience. This method will allow the researcher to understand the commitment of employees using a respected scale in an exploratory (pre-study) phase, followed by an investigation into the employee experiences at work to understand their commitment more deeply.

If this approach is successful, and the TCM is found to be a suitable tool to measure OC within the context of the UK (specifically within MSBs located in the SCR) then it is

envisaged that the researcher will be able to make a contribution to knowledge through the application and use of existing theory in a new way. Having reviewed the literature and considered its position, limitations and assumptions, the researcher now turns to the overall research questions and objectives of this PhD inquiry.

2.8. Research Question and Objectives

The review of the literature has provided the opportunity to better understand the context and knowledge surrounding organisational commitment theory. As has been discussed, the setting in which OC has been developed has been primarily positivistic (in the sense that it is deductive and seeking to find facts). Further, the location of empirical work in OC traditions is often limited to North America (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Kelman, 1958; Meyer & Allen, 1993; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Mowday et al., 1979; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986) or lacks empirical foundation entirely (Becker, 1960; Smith, 2009).

Further, only limited attention has been paid to the factors that are influential to commitment and its consequences (Ghosh & Swamy, 2014; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Porter & Steers, 1973; B. Singh et al., 2008; Wagner, 2007) meaning that the influencers and consequences of OC are not fully understood. The closest project to this that the researcher has been able to locate is Sturges and Guest's (2001) paper investigating the influencers of OC from the perspective of UK based graduates in an early careers setting. However, this is notably not a research project based on mid-sized business, in favour of large organisations as has already been seen in OC research. Further, their work focuses on a small set of employees (graduates) who would typically represent a limited share of the population when compared to the wider organisation. Finally, Sturges and Guest's work was purely qualitative and made no consideration for integrating existing scales into their work, meaning that even Sturges and Guest's work is notably different to the aims of this project.

This considered, and assisted by the literature, the researcher is now able to turn his attention to the aims and objectives of this PhD inquiry.

2.8.1.   Research Question

- Which factors influence organisational-commitment within mid-sized business in the Sheffield-City-Region and what are the associated consequences?

2.8.2.   Research Objectives

- To investigate the organisational-commitment levels of employees in Sheffield City Regions (SCR), mid-sized businesses (MSB).

- To investigate the influencers of organisational-commitment within SCR, MSBs.

- To explore the outcomes of organisational-commitment, within SCR, MSBs paying particular attention to if committed employees have an increased awareness of organisational goals and strategy.

The research question and objectives are informed by the literature. The first objective is designed to allow the researcher to understand the context in which the sample exists, i.e. are the population committed, and to what extent. The second objective seeks to understand which factors in an employment relationship are committing. The third objective seeks to understand the outcomes of OC and is informed from the literature. This is notably to investigate emergent themes from the literature review, if committed employees have an awareness for organisational goals (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday et al., 1979) and awareness for the strategy of the organisation (Smith, 2009). This last objective is also exploratory in nature.

2.9.   Summary of Literature Review

In reviewing the key literature, three areas have been identified as centrally important to the contribution of this thesis, the statistical dependence of the models, the narrow geographical setting in which most OC research has been carried out and lack of research surrounding the influencers of OC. The review has introduced the concepts and begun to prepare the ground for empirical research to investigate this gap.

In particular, the literature review highlighted the importance of Meyer and Allen's (1991) TCM model in OC research, and explored the limitations of the model. Further, the researcher began to investigate the potential outcomes of OC from the perspective of the employee. These include reduced turnover, strategic interest, organisational citizenship behaviour, psychological contract and organisational values. The

researcher is clear that many of these issues have not been resolved or investigated empirically with a focus on OC, and this study can begin to narrow this gap.

Chapter 3 will explain the adopted methodology for this thesis, its design and execution, providing consideration of how these outcomes can be investigated relative to the overall project aim, research question and objectives of the PhD enquiry.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodological choices that were adopted in this study; this includes the research design and execution of the project in line with the research objectives and the philosophical stance of the researcher. Informed by the literature review presented in Chapter 2, this Chapter covers the research domain, conceptual framework, sampling technique and approach to data analysis.   Importantly, the methodology is tasked with positioning the project within the social sciences, business and management research and the emerging issues identified in the literature review surrounding commitment. Finally, the Chapter will explain the advantages and limitations of the selected research approach.

The literature review in Chapter 2 was influential in shaping the research question and objectives. The literature review explored the evolution of commitment research from a simple construct that focused on commitment to a particular focus that was not necessarily an employer or place of work, to OC.   The definition of OC has taken great strides in meaning since Mowday's (1979) claims that the construct was desperately seeking structure; however the core essence of OC, essentially what employees are committed to, or what is influential to commitment remain unclear (Ghosh & Swamy, 2014).

There is a gap in the research methods in the literature, and there is an opportunity to investigate OC from a different perspective, with employees in a new context, smaller organisations and using mixed methods approaches to data collection.

As a result of this, the research aims and objectives are part exploratory and seeking to investigate and identify the influencers and outcomes of OC, and part deductive, seeking to establish the existing commitment levels of the employees within the context defined. The researcher learned early on that there would be little point in investigating the influencers of OC if he could not firstly be sure to what extent the employees were committed. This means that it is likely that more than one style of data will be required to answer the research aims and objectives. Finally, as the

researcher is investigating OC across the SCR, then it is likely that more than one organisation will be required to investigate the phenomena.

In order to achieve this, the researcher adopted a case study approach with three organisations from different economic sectors in the SCR. This chapter outlines the reasoning behind using such an approach and the criteria for selecting multiple cases (three). The case study approach facilitated the use of mixed methods, the decision to use questionnaires developed from the literature (Phase 1, Pre-Study and Context) and to undertake interviews with employees in (Phase 2) and senior employees in (Phase 3). The chapter explains how this approach enabled the researcher to gain depth of understanding of what was happening at each case organisation and facilitated comparison between the cases, contributing to improved reliability, validity and trustworthiness of data.

Three phases of data collection are presented: pre-study questionnaires with all employees; follow-up semi-structured interviews with selected employees; and semi-structured interviews with managers. For each data collection phase, decisions over sampling, research design and execution are discussed prior to an explanation of the data analysis techniques employed, statistical in the case of the quantitative questionnaire data, and framework analysis for the qualitative interview data. Adherence to the principles of research ethics and integrity is highlighted in section 3.6.9. The chapter concludes by summarising the methodological process.

3.2. Philosophical Stance, Theoretical Approach and Researchers Position to ontology, epistemology and axiology

3.2.1. Philosophical Stance

The researcher spent much of his first year considering questions of philosophy, including ontology, epistemology, axiology and their relevance to the overall project. These questions as proposed by philosophers and the question what can be considered as *'truthful'* engaged the researcher's attention for at least six months; these considerations provided the foundations for this chapter of the thesis. Creswell (2009) argues that most research paradigms share three fundamental elements,

ontology, epistemology and methodology; he argues that through understanding these elements, we can begin to shape our understanding and relationship with the environment around us.

The question of ontology is concerned with reality itself, essentially *'what is reality?* Can reality be experienced *'independently of human cognition'* and can it be considered as 'real' and 'objective' or subjective and individually experienced (P. Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Epistemology, on the other hand considers the nature of knowledge itself, namely *'how we know what we know'* and *how do we know what is 'true.'* These topics are made more complicated by academics who cannot fully agree on their use interpretation, or definition. For example Johnston and Duberley (P. Johnson & Duberley, 2000) consider ontological and epistemological positions to be either objective or subjective, and as separate constructs whereas Crotty (1998 p. 10) paid little attention to ontology, in favour of epistemology claiming that both *'issues tend to emerge together.'*

Positivistic approaches are the 'management mainstream' and dominate business research (P. Johnson & Duberley, 2000), it is perhaps unsurprising that someone who had only left industry several months earlier, saw little value in anything that could not be 'proven' considered 'factual' or 'true.' Further, two years later, the researcher can now see that OC research has primarily been carried out in the positivistic paradigm and relies on static and objective truth as a means to measure the construct.

After a several weeks of 'philosophical education' the researcher was convinced that a postmodern approach was the only suitable method to achieve anything, and all other approaches reached un-true and un-justified meaning. The researcher thought that researchers could only offer a singular view of the world that would likely be different on different days and for different researchers (Lyotard, 1984), in fact how could any management research claim objective truths in organisations that are forever changing?

In time the researcher remembered that unless research serves to offer some constructive interpretation or claim about the environment it is representing, then there is little point in investigating anything. The researcher came to align with

Donaldson (2003 p. 333) who said that *'for organizational science to be useful [sic] it has to generalize across many organizations and offer an integrated coherent theory.'*

The researcher then explored the concept of critical theory as a means to investigate OC on the basis that a subjective approach that maintained an objective ontology would be able to offer more meaning than postmodern approaches. Critical Theory retains a postmodern desire to overthrow current knowledge, yet it is left frustrated by its lack of direct interest in politics, 'rights and justice,' whilst maintaining hope that *'knowledge can lead to emancipation and progress'* (P. Johnson & Duberley, 2000). The researcher considered the question of rights and justice relative to OC, and it is possible that OC is related to rights of employees and organisational justice; however it is not the focus of <u>this</u> project. In this project the researcher is interested in the overall influencers and outcomes of OC from the perspective of the employee, meaning that Critical Theory was not deemed to be suitable.

The researcher returned to his research aim and the overall outcome that he was attempting to achieve in the SCR. This meant that heavily subjective approaches such as postmodernism or affirmative postmodernism that he had previously considered as being useful would not be helpful due to their lack of ability to make claims about the environment it was representing (Donaldson, 2003).   Further, the critical theory approach, where researchers should maintain an interest in how employees can 'free themselves from domination' (P. Johnson, Buehring, Cassell, & Symon, 2006 p. 134) was found to be equally unsuitable.

The researcher was attempting to understand 'what was going on' in organisations and how employees experienced commitment to their employer. The researcher had already seen a great deal of research in the OC tradition that tested employee commitment levels; his interest primarily rested in the topic of **why** these employees were committed, and what was influential to the same commitment, in place of testing **if** they were committed or not.

In returning to the researcher's personal outlook on the world, he believes that reality is objective, but is experienced more subjectively.   In the same way that two employees might be offered the same promotion, but react differently, or that two

employees might draw different conclusions from the same presentation given by a manager of an organisation, two people or two employees are unlikely to draw identical conclusions from any experience. This led the researcher to reflect further and his interpretation of reality can be translated to an objective ontology, that reality is real and objective, but experienced more subjectively. This construct is often spoken about as neo-empiricism, or post-positivism, and is introduced in the next section.

3.2.2. Neo-empiricism

Johnson *et al* (2006) described neo-empiricism as inter-subjective and drawing upon the concept of *verstehen* to describe an attempt to capture the meaning that actors ascribe to a phenomena to explain behaviour (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). Johnson and Duberley (2000) argue that within neo-positivist approaches, when wishing to understand human behaviour in organisations *'we must gain access to those actors' subjective interpretations of reality - to access and describe their cultures [through] qualitative methods of data collection.'* Elsewhere, neo-empiricism has been referred to as neo-positivism (P. Johnson & Duberley, 2000), post-positivism (Crotty, 1998) or 'qualitative positivism'(P. Johnson et al., 2006).

The researcher has decided that a neo-empiricist approach suits the style and desired outcomes of this project. This is because the research question and objectives are attempting to understand the phenomena of OC from the context of an organisation, (through the subjective experiences of the employee), and arriving at some kind of interpretation and conclusion. Thomas (2006) argues that any research project is influenced by the assumptions of the researcher performing the analysis, therefore selecting a philosophical position that is also true to the researchers own understanding of the world is a sensible idea.

In the case of this study, it is seeking to understand and interpret what influences OC within the SCR. Johnson *et al* (2006, p. 147) describe a suitable research question in the neo-empiricist tradition to be the *'discovery of the inter-subjective (experience) to describe and explain human action in and around organisations.'* This definition is in

line with the research question and objectives, that seek to investigate the influencers and outcomes of OC from the perspective of the employee.

Central to the concept of neo-empiricism is the possibility of neutrality on behalf of the researcher, and a separation between the knower and the known (Gill & Johnson, 2010). This means that within a neo-empiricist approach, the researcher retains a privileged and unbiased position as the knower when assessing the intersubjective-experiences of the actors (or participants) under investigation (P. Johnson et al., 2006). The researcher's interpretation of neo-empiricism as a philosophical position is;

> *A position that respects positivist traditions, whilst at the same time, allowing for qualitative approaches, including subjectivity on the part of the actor (or participant) and objectivity on the part of the researcher.*

Furthermore, as the researcher is an external person to the organisation, and has no relationship with the participants beyond the interview, the researcher is able to maintain objectivity and neutrality as allowed in neo-empiricist approaches.

Those critical of neo-empiricism or non-quantitative approaches to data collection argue that qualitative approaches can lack the rigour and transferability of purely positivistic approaches, and that researchers in the subjective tradition should provide 'audit trails' to allow their audience to reach judgement for themselves around the questions of trustworthiness and rigour of the data. Guba and Lincoln (1994 p. 114) argue that approaches in the post-positivist tradition can achieve rigour in four stages, internal validity (*isomorphism of findings with reality*), external validity (*generalizability*), reliability (*in the sense of stability*), and objectivity (*distanced and neutral observer*). The researcher will explain over the course of this chapter how each of these criteria has been addressed.

The philosophical stance has shaped the research design of the study as the chapter will now discuss, starting with a discussion of the choice of a case study approach.

3.3. Conceptual Thinking and its influence on Research Design

As discussed in earlier sections of this thesis, the researcher is investigating the Meyer and Allen (1993) TCM in relation to the SCR to investigate which factors influence the OC relationship between the organisation and their employer. The literature review

also considered the potential outcomes of OC, asking the question, *commitment so what?* This enabled the researcher to outline his understanding of OC research within the context of influencers and consequences and related to the research question and objectives. The researcher has outlined this work in a theoretical framework model in Figure 3-1.

Maxwell (2013, p. 154) argues that a theoretical framework forms a key part of the research design and is constructed by the researcher rather than found elsewhere, but incorporates *'pieces that are borrowed from elsewhere'*. The conceptual framework explains the research process in a visual way, highlighting the key factors, concepts of variables, and in line with Maxwell's (2013) arguments, has been constructed by the researcher on the basis of his understanding of OC research to date.

The conceptual framework outlines the theory surrounding OC, its influencers and outcomes. As has been discussed, the literature surrounding influencers of OC is limited and academics in the OC tradition have often investigated antecedents as opposed to influencers (Steers, 1977). The outcomes of OC are better studied, but not in the context defined, several theoretical arguments are presented from the literature review including the idea that strategic interest can be an outcome of OC (Smith, 2009).

Conceptual Framework		
Process of Organisational Commitment (OC)		
Influencers	**Meyer and Allen (1990) - TCM**	**Outcomes**
Culture (Sturges and Guest, 2001) Comfort (Sturges and Guest, 2001) Helpfulness (Sturges and Guest, 2001) Pre-Joining Expectations met (Sturges and Guest, 2001) Psychological Contract (Organ 1988) Social Exchange Theory (Blau 1987)	**Affective Commitment (AC)** **Continuous Commitment (CC)** **Normative Commitment (NC)**	Strategic Interest (Smith, 2009) Values Alignment (Mowday (1979) Reduced Turnover (Porter and Steers, 1973)
Adapted from the literature review, theoretical influencers of OC. Investigation into **WHY** employees are committed	Designed to test to what extent the employee is committed. Some consideration for style of commitment, aligned to goals, trapped or obligation (loyalty) based.	Designed to reveal the outcomes of OC - commitment so what?

Figure 3-1 Conceptual Framework, post-literature review, pre-data collection

The conceptual framework visually demonstrates the theory under investigation in this thesis. In the sections that follow, the researcher explains the methods that have been adopted to collect relevant data to answer the research question and objectives in line with the conceptual framework.

3.4.   The Case Study Approach

The decision to select a case approach was taken early in this project and was supported by the research aim and objectives and the philosophical stance of the researcher. Yin (2003 p. 1) describes a case study in the social science tradition as one that exists alongside other methods such as *'experiments, surveys, histories and the analysis of archival information.'* Yin (2003) describes case studies as being suitable to investigate projects with a 'how' and 'why' question with a real life context. This section will explain the criteria and style of case study approach that was adopted and its value in the research project under investigation.

Yin (2003) argues that within a case study five criteria are especially important 1) a case study question, 2) it's propositions 3) its unit of analysis, 4) the logic linking the data to the propositions and 5) the criteria for interpreting the findings. Interestingly, Yin reveals his own research preference in his use of language here and critics of Yin's

approach have described it as being overly 'positivistic' and not compatible with qualitative and theory building methods (Eisenhardt, 1989). This is an important consideration for studies in the neo-empiricist tradition. In the case of this PhD study the researcher is respectful of positivistic traditions, including maintaining an objective ontology, whilst allowing for subjectivity on the part of the participant, the foundation provided by Yin allows the researcher the opportunity to frame the case in a suitable manner.

In line with Yin's (2003) approach, in the case of this study the context is not an organisation, rather the organisations(s) are the phenomena under investigation. The context of the project may be defined as the geographical location in which the organisations sit, the Sheffield City Region (SCR). As will be explained later in this chapter, the SCR is undergoing significant change, notably a shift away from heavy industry and a 'job for life' culture to a service sector environment and the researcher is interested to understand how this has influenced the OC relationship of employees in the region. Further, the seminal work and most respected model in OC measurement (TCM) has been developed and tested in the context of North America, the context of the SCR provides an opportunity to assess the suitability and relevance of the model in a new context.   This leaves the Sheffield City Region in a meaningful context for the research project.

Once the context has been defined, Yin (2003) describes that the unit of analysis should be considered, essentially, what is the 'case' itself?   While this step might be considered obvious, as Yin points out, the unit of analysis is at the discretion of the researcher. In this case, the unit of analysis is the organisation(s) that were selected to participate in this project, as opposed to the employees being researched.   This is an important distinction and one that informs the wider project, as by selecting the organisation as a case over the employee, the options for analysis widen.   In this situation the researcher is able to analyse the case and then cross compare at organisation level, which would be less practical if the employee was selected as the unit of analysis. In line with Yin's (2003 p.47) advice, the evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and according to Herriot and Firestone (1983) it can be regarded as being more robust, helping to answer the question of internal and

external validity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Further, the multi case approach with multiple data points (through a phased approach) in each organisation serves to help address issues of internal validity. However, the question remains as to how many cases are able to answer the research question.

Yin (2003, p. 41) describes the process of selecting multiple or single cases, arguing that a single case is justifiable when it is *'critically testing existing theory, extreme, unusual, a common case, or when the case might be revelatory or longitudinal'*. In this instance the researcher is attempting to investigate existing theory and build new theory within the context defined, i.e. how employees in the SCR experience their work and how this experience can be compared to the existing Meyer and Allen (1991) TCM. The researcher is attempting to generalise to theory, as opposed to critically test existing theory, and the cases will not be sought as extreme or unusual and this aligns better with Yin's multiple case approach over a single case.

Moreover, as Bryman (2016) points out, the possibility to generalise to a population in qualitative research is unknown because it is impossible to discern if one or two cases can be representative of all cases. This means that a single case is unlikely to be sufficient to answer the research question, and in this context multiple cases are better served to understand the phenomena under investigation. This also helps to address Guba and Lincoln's (1994) concerns surrounding generalisability in qualitative research. The researcher is not seeking generalisability in the positivistic sense and agrees with Myers (2000) that small scale research in the qualitative tradition cannot be generalised in the same way, but studies of this type have 'redeeming qualities' that are interesting and useful for practitioners in a wider context. Herriot and Firestone (1983) also support the argument that evidence from multiple cases is often considered to be more compelling and robust than data taken from a single case.

This means that the researcher has the best opportunity to reveal new insights into the phenomena under investigation with multiple cases that exist within a single context. This shared context will assist the researcher to compare data from each case in order to increase internal validity and reliability (stability) of data (Guba & Lincoln, 1994); this approach was defined by Yin (2003) as an 'embedded design'. This

provided the researcher with some clarity with regards to the approach he was pursuing. The researcher was not seeking to find cases that are 'literal replications' to test their 'comparability' as is recommended by Yin (2003); rather the value here arrives in using cases from different economic sectors to inform the issue of the influencers and consequences of OC, and to gain a more holistic and broader picture of the issues than if the study were single case focused. The researcher will be an external observer of each organisation, and will have no relationship with the actors beyond the interaction required for the interview. This has been purposively designed to increase objectivity on the part of the researcher in line with a neo-empiricist approach.

In summary, the researcher is adopting a case study approach with multiple cases. This was defined by Yin (2003) as an embedded approach and includes multiple embedded units of analysis to investigate a pre-defined context. Further, the choices have been made with consideration for internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The section that follows explains the approach to mixed-methods, and the data that is required in order to answer the research question and objectives.

3.4.1. Mixed Methods Approaches

The benefits of mixed methods approaches are that we are able to offset the weaknesses of any individual method against another, to strengthen and enlighten our overall position, allowing for more robust overall analysis (Caracelli and Greene 1993; Tashikorri and Teddie 2003). The case study tradition is sympathetic to mixed approaches, advocating the use of *'multiple sources of evidence'* (Yin, 2003 p. 34). However, as is often the case in management research, what constitutes a 'mixed method' has not been widely agreed, but according to Bryman and Burges (1994) mixed methods make use of at least one quantitative and qualitative method within a single study. Gray (2004) elaborated, claiming that they are methods where neither type is inherently linked to any particular paradigm.

Yin (2003 p. 65 - 66) agrees that within a case study approach:

'mixed methods research can permit researchers to address more complicated questions and collect richer and stronger array of evidence than can be accomplished by any single method alone.'

The selection of a mixed methods research design should come down to understanding which approach will assist the researcher in what they are attempting to achieve, as opposed to forcing a method to fit their study. Creswell (2009) identified the six most popular, mixed methods approaches that were adopted by researchers, and while it is accepted that a reduction of this type has likely omitted important and relevant methods, the researcher identified that an embedded designs, that *'embed the type of data within a larger study,'* (Creswell & Clark, 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) in this case embedding quantitative data into qualitative data to provide context and depth to the phenomena under investigation. Within an embedded design, the process of collecting quantitative or qualitative data collection can be followed by another phase of quantitative or qualitative data with the end goal of integrating both sets to *'produce a more complete picture'* of the phenomena under investigation (Creswell, 2009 p. 639). This is in line with an embedded case approach where each style of data is integrated to enlighten the contribution to the overall phenomena under investigation.

In this thesis the researcher will collect two types of data to produce a more complete picture of OC. The first phase of the study will involve quantitative data collection to establish how committed employees are to their organisations. In the second and third phases, qualitative data will be collected to investigate what influences their commitment, and to understand the management perspective of the phenomena. The two types of data that will be gathered locally within each organisation can be compared at context level (SCR) and will be purposively collected in order to increase internal and external validity and generalisability.

3.5. Sampling - Selecting a Case Organisation

One of the first practical steps in the data collection process was the selection of case organisations for the purpose of meeting the research aims and objectives outlined in Chapter 1. As discussed in relation to the choice of an embedded case study approach,

the purpose of selecting a sample in this PhD research inquiry is not to seek direct replications of each other as Yin (2003) suggests as an option; rather, the researcher is interested in the depth that arrives with selecting a sample of diverse organisations from different economic sectors within the context defined (SCR). The section that follows explains this process and the purposive sampling approach that was adopted.

3.5.1.   Purposive Sampling

Bryman (2016) argues that qualitative approaches usually employ 'purposive sampling' over the well-known 'probability sample' often used in positivistic research. Creswell (2009) argues that within interpretivist approaches, the sample should be selected on the basis that they can help the researcher to answer the research problem under investigation.

This is because, unlike purely quantitative methods, qualitative approaches are not seeking to generalise to a population, instead, the results serve to generalise to theory (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The researcher accepts that his project does include a quantitative method, but notes that this is not included with the end goal of generalisation beyond the defined context. This leaves purposive sampling in a position where the research question and objectives become the primary audience for selecting a suitable sample to be surveyed (Bryman, 2016; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In order to investigate OC, a purposive sample of three organisations, drawn from different economic sectors, within the Sheffield City Region was chosen, it was decided that smaller number of diverse case organisations, studied in depth would provide a richer picture of OC in line with the research objectives. This focus would offer a research contribution as it is acknowledged to be in contrast to earlier research in OC, where generalised results were being sought, often from a single organisation or economic sector (Bergman, 2006) (see: Chapter 2).

As explained in relation to the choice of a case study approach, the embedded unit of analysis for this thesis, is the organisation (as opposed to the employee), and as a result, it was considered that a sample of three organisations will produce a significant amount of analysable data. It was decided that data collection methods across the

three case organisations would be replicated as closely as possible. Therefore, it was envisaged that a comparable set of data would be produced for each organisation.

Although diversity of case organisations was being sought, it was still recognised that there would need to be clear a sampling selection criteria, in line with the decision to seek a purposive (or deliberate) sample. The first parameter that was set related to size of organisations under investigation. Notably, business size is formally acknowledged as a factor of distinction in examining business performance, strategy, and not least organisational behaviour and employee experience.

3.5.2.   Mid-Sized Business

As the project is attempting to investigate the commitment of employees, it was realised early on that case organisations should be employers, as opposed to organisations that do not employ staff or only employ a very small number of people. The literature generally labels very small organisations as 'micro-sized businesses' and according to their definition, can employ up to nine employees.   In accordance with the research question and objectives that seek to investigate the influencers and consequences of OC, the researcher believes that these organisations are unlikely to assist the researcher in answering this question and in accordance with Creswell's (2009) argument that purposive samples should be chosen on their ability to answer the research objectives, a focus on micro-sized businesses was immediately discounted.

The researcher did not wish to repeat the earlier traditions of OC research and investigate large organisations, nor could he conduct his research in very small organisations owing to the research topic under consideration. The researcher accepts that 99% of businesses in the UK fall under the category of 'SME' (Small to Medium Enterprise), but adds that, of those 96% are considered to be 'micro-sized' and not employers of staff, or employ fewer than 10 employees (Rhodes & Ward, 2014). If the researcher were to conduct his research on SMEs, then he would be dealing with organisations with a very small number of employees, that might not have a management structure or defined strategy, or he would deliberately have to select

larger SMEs that fit the criteria for an investigation of this type. In both cases, the approach would not be a fair representation of the environment.

Therefore, it was clear that case organisations should be large enough to employ a number of staff and have some form of management structure in place. As Fuller-Love (2006) identified during their investigation of management in micro SMEs, often in these organisations, the Owner-Manager would self-identify as 'running the firm' leaving little room for management structures and employee interpretation of strategy. They concluded that this environment made it very difficult to establish roles, as the organisations were essentially *'extensions of [their owners] own ego.'*

This led the researcher to conclude that each case organisation should be established and employing sufficient number of employees to investigate the phenomena under investigation, whilst at the same time not being so large that they were based in multiple locations outside the context of the study, or repeating the traditions already seen in OC research. Thus organisations needed to fall somewhere in the middle, with respect to business size, essentially 'medium-sized businesses, or mid-sized businesses.' These are organisations that are likely to benefit from being larger than their micro counterparts, but not large enough to be outside the scope of this research study. These organisations are classified as 'mid-sized businesses.'

The definition of mid-sized businesses as set by the UK Government is; *'an organisation with a turnover of more than £10 million and/or more than 20 employees'* (GOV.UK, 2017). Alternatively, the European Commission suggests, that medium-sized businesses should have *'less than 250 employees and either less than €50 million in turnover, or €43 million in balance sheet assets.'* The researcher has adopted the British classification and will apply the definition when identifying the sampling frame from which to select the sample of case organisations to be investigated.

3.5.3. The Context - Sheffield City Region

The researcher has already spoken of a context for OC research that is primarily dedicated to North America and its public sector, and the purpose of this section is to introduce the context in which this research project has been set. This includes

justification for and consideration of the limitations of the study context adopted, notably the Sheffield City Region.

The Sheffield City Region (SCR) is a political partnership designed to unite nine local authorities in the Sheffield area (Barnsley, Bassetlaw, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Derbyshire Dales, Doncaster, North East Derbyshire, Rotherham and Sheffield). The concept of a City Region and Local Enterprise Partnership (LEPs) was established by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (then the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills) with the primary goal of *'steering growth strategically in local communities'* (National Audit Office, 2016, p. 8).

There are 38 LEPs across England, and the researcher notes that Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales have separate arrangements and the concept of LEP only applies to regions across England. The LEP responsible for Sheffield and its neighbours is the Sheffield City Region, Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) (see: https://sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/).

The SCR, LEP is responsible for economic development in the region and has identified an output of *'more than £31 billion per year, 68,000 businesses and world class specialisms in advanced manufacturing'* (Sheffield City Region, 2018). Furthermore, the SCR LEP's long term strategy for the region includes the creation of *'70,000 new private sector jobs and 6,000 new private businesses over the next decade.'* The SCR, LEP claims to have already made progress in this regard with a *'gain of 37,000 jobs between 2014 and 2017'* however it is not clear how many of those jobs can be directly related to the LEP's efforts (Sheffield City Region, 2018).

It should be acknowledged that the official declared role of the LEP as a means to influence job creation and growth within targeted regions, simultaneously reflects the current British Governments ongoing policy to reduce public spending in line with their wider plan to reduce the deficit (HM Treasury, 2018). As a result of the spending cuts, total UK, public sector employment has fallen from an all-time high of 6,459,000 in September 2009 to 5,492,000 in September 2017 (the latest data that is available at the time of writing) (Office for National Statistics, 2017) meaning that the Government is turning to the private sector to fill the gap in employment.

The SCR has undergone significant changes in recent times. Sheffield or the Steel City as it is affectionately known has a history for heavy industry and employment in associated sectors. However, more recently, and in line with the SCR strategy (Sheffield City Region, 2018) and wider environmental factors, the region has experienced a significant shift in employment demographic, from heavy industry to an emerging service sector. The shift in styles of employment and likelihood that many employees in long term heavy industrial employment will have been required to change industry or jobs is relevant to the topic of OC.

The researcher has targeted the SCR on the basis that the UK and the North of England more specifically is under-represented in management research. As part of the UK Government's LEP agenda, it has committed to spending £13 billion to develop transport links to the North, as well as investing in High Speed rail (HS2) to the Sheffield City Region from Birmingham and London. This agenda for growth is linked to this project and the concept of mid-sized businesses on the basis that mid-sized business have increased in number and demonstrated the most economic growth potential over recent years (BDO, 2017; Dakers, 2015). Growing recognition of the importance of mid-sized businesses in the UK economy is acknowledged. There are reports that the number of medium-sized firms in the UK is on the rise (Dakers, 2015) and these have been argued to be *'propelling the UK economy'* (BDO, 2017). As employers competing for sizeable populations of employees, this type of business has been identified to be worthy of research interrogation in the context of OC.

Further, as identified in Chapter 2, OC research to date has typically focused on large public-sector organisations and the purpose of selecting mid-sized business in the SCR is to address this limitation of OC theory. Therefore, the SCR and MSBs are a suitable and worthwhile context for this study. The section that follows explains the process of selecting individual case organisations for inclusion in the PhD inquiry.

3.5.4. Selecting Case Organisations

Further to the discussion in section 3.5, the researcher was seeking three case organisations that could contribute to answering the research question and objectives. The researcher also believed that a practical contribution would give the participating

organisations more reason to participate in the project. As the project had been designed to test commitment levels across the organisation, followed by in-depth semi-structured interviews with employees the researcher was confident that these results would be interesting and useful for any organisation who agreed to participate.

In order to 'advertise' the project and attract cases, the researcher arranged for an overview of the project to be published through the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) (2016). The Sheffield Star (local newspaper), Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the University Press Department were also contacted with the same objective. Sheffield Hallam University published a press release through their website and social media channels (Sheffield Hallam University, 2016). Finally, the researcher contacted the Federation of Small Business, a UK business organisation representing small and medium businesses who published an article in their weekly email newsletter.

The criteria for participation was clearly defined: mid-sized businesses that were located in the Sheffield City Region (SCR), with more than £10 million in turnover and/or more than 20 employees. In practice the number of employees was more important to the researcher than the financial turnover, but the researcher maintained the UK government definition of MSBs (GOV.UK, 2017).

This resulted in the researcher being contacted by several organisations that did not necessarily meet the criteria for the project, i.e. self-employed entrepreneurs with no employees, or newly established companies with a limited number of employees. However, each application was considered on its own merit. In the end, only one organisation who eventually participated in the project was recruited at this stage.

As the methodology required multiple cases, the researcher began contacting organisations directly on the basis that they met the criteria defined. The researcher contacted 23 organisations using a two-phased approach, (Table 3-1) as follows;

Table 3-1 Overview of the PhD sample communication process

Introductory e-mail
An email was sent to a senior figure (CEO, HR Director) in the organisation by way of introduction. The email contained the research aim, objectives and a short description as to why the organisation was relevant for this project, and an explanation as to how they could benefit from participation. The email also promised to follow up more formally in writing and included a link to the SCCI Article and SHU press release as above.
SHU Headed Letter: Follow up
Approximately one week after the original email, the same contact at each organisation was written to, requesting a meeting. The letter included contact details and a proposed date for an introductory meeting. If the organisation did not respond to the original email or letter they were deemed un-interested and not contacted again.

Of the 23 organisations contacted, 15 replied. In some cases the organisations declined to participate due to the *'current environment'* or because they were *'too busy'* however this approach led to the recruitment of five case organisations.

The researcher selected more organisations than were required for the final sample on the basis that he expected at least one organisation might withdraw from the study. This instinct was borne out; two of the five organisations were unable to commit to the research. In one instance the organisation agreed to participate, but could not issue the Phase One (Pre-Study) questionnaires due to 'union problems' and in the other case, organisation simply stopped replying to emails and were excluded by the researcher through 'lack of engagement'. This left a final sample of three organisations.

3.5.5.   The Final Sample

The final sample included three organisations drawn from different economic sectors in the Sheffield City Region, all three organisations agreed to give the researcher access to their premises and employees as required and consented to the interviewing

of employees (subject to individual consent) without the managers knowing exactly who had been interviewed. This anonymity was recognised to be vitally important given the potentially sensitive nature of the research.

The final sample is shown in Table 3-2:

Table 3-2 The Final Sample for Data Collection

Organisation Code	Profile	Turnover	Employees
ALB	**Advanced Engineering, Design & Project Management** Project Management (Service), Design and Supply for the following markets: Automotive, Nuclear, Rail, Defence, Renewables, Machine Knives, Energy Sector **Export - worldwide**	£7 million	80
PBS	**Fenestration Industry** A B2B supplier of composite doors for the Construction Industry **Import - China / Taiwan**	£45 million	90
MGY	**Professional Sports** Compromising: Community Foundation (Outreach Programme) Sports College Professional Football Club Professional Rugby Club	Between £5 - £25 million* *(undisclosed for improved anonymity)	80

In line with purposive approaches (Bryman, 2016), this sample represents a group of MSBs in the SCR, who agreed to participate in this project after contacting, or being contacted by the researcher. Further, and in line with the desire for a practical outcome, these organisations were selected on the basis that the nominated contact appeared willing to engage with the results to improve their employee OC (Gray, 2004).

3.6. Research Execution

The purpose of the research execution stage is to design a data collection protocol with the intention of answering the research questions and objectives. The objectives call for an investigation into the influencers and consequences of OC whilst allowing some provision for understanding the existing commitment levels for improved understanding of context. Therefore, a three phased mixed-methods approach has been designed to achieve this. The first phase is a pre-study designed to understand the context of each organisation and to prepare for the secondary qualitative phases designed to investigate the influencers and outcomes of OC. The sections that follow explain this approach in detail.

3.6.1. Phase One (Pre-Study and Context) - Quantitative Data

The first phase of data collection is a pre-study designed to reveal the context of each organisation and allow for some understanding of the current commitment levels in each organisation.

The Meyer and Allen (1993) TCM questionnaire was distributed to all employees in each case organisation. The TCM was chosen due to its prominence in the literature and relevance to the aims and objectives of the study. The benefits that the questionnaire can provide include the opportunity afforded to the researcher to enter the interviews in phases two and three with a level of understanding about the employee commitment levels in the organisation under study than would be the case through qualitative only research.

At this stage it is useful to remind the reader that the TCM questionnaire that was adopted in Phase One was initially developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) and measures three styles of organisational commitment, described in the literature review as: AC, (wishing to remain with the organisation), CC, (feeling the need to remain with the organisation) and NC, (feeling obliged to remain with the organisation through loyalty).

The scale measures each item using an 8-point scale, and the revised 1993 scale measures the same constructs using a 6-point scale. According to Meyer and Allen

(2004), the results from both scales are 'comparable' and they can be used interchangeably for researchers wishing to use the TCM.

The scale includes several questions that are either positively or negatively worded to assess an employee's commitment in the AC, CC and NC traditions. In line with Meyer and Allen's (1993) original TCM scale, the negatively worded (or reverse coded questions) are clearly distinguished in the table below (in red), and while the seminal authors offer researchers the option to remove such questions, the researcher retained them on the basis that they were reflective of the original work.

The reverse coded items are helpful for researchers wishing to test the reliability of a scale as a respondent answering *'strongly agree'* for every item would not be consistently answering the questionnaire, as the equivalent answer for a reverse worded scale would be *'strongly disagree.'* The TCM to its weakness does not have a consistent spread of reverse coded questions and the reader will notice that affective scales contain three reverse coded scales, normative only one and continuance contains no reverse coded items. The reasons for this are not made clear in commitment literature and hence remains a limitation of the work (Jaros, 1997b).

The full contents of the Meyer and Allen Affective, Continuance and Normative scales are detailed in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3 the TCM questionnaire, adapted from Meyer and Allen (2004)

TCM Type	Description
Affective Commitment	*I would be happy to spent the rest of my career with [this organisation]* *I really feel as if [this organisation's] problems are my own* *I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to [my organisation] (R)* *I do not feel emotionally attached to [this organisation] (R)* *I do not feel like part of the family at [my organisation] (R)* *[This organisation] has a great deal of personal meaning for me*
Continuance Commitment	*Right now, staying with [my organisation] is a matter of necessity as much as desire* *It would be very hard for me to leave [my organisation] right now, even if I wanted to* *Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave [my organisation] now*

	I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving [this organisation] *If I had not already put so much of myself into [this organisation], I might consider working elsewhere* *One of the few negative consequences of leaving [this organisation] would be the scarcity of available alternatives*
Normative Commitment	*I do not feel any obligation to remain with [my current employer] (R)* *Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave [my organisation] now* *I would feel guilty if I left [my organisation] now* *[This organisation] deserves my loyalty* *I would not leave [my organisation] right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.* *I owe a great deal to [my organization]*

In implementation, Meyer and Allen (2004) recommend that the three scale items, each containing six items, should be randomly mixed to avoid the respondent answering multiple banks of similar style questions. This was achieved using excel and by assigning each question with a random number and then ordering the questions to give a random and mixed sequence to the scale items. The researcher checked the questions to make sure that they were randomly mixed, before adopting this sequence as a master for all questionnaires.

Further, the third objective also calls for an understanding of the organisations goals and strategy. The TCM scale directly asks employees about their interest and understanding of organisations goals; however it does not refer to employee understanding of strategy. In line with the research objective, a scale was included to measure strategic knowledge and understanding in order to provide the context required in line with Smith's (2009) argument that the two concepts are connected. The scale assessing strategy was designed to be similar in nature to the TCM, commitment scale, however as it was a new scale it was included separately and post-OC questions.

Table 3-4 Strategic Interest and Awareness Scale

Strategic Interest and Awareness Scale	*I know what the strategy of [organisation name] is* *I am interested in the strategy of [organisation name]* *I understand what the management of [organisation name] are*

	trying to achieve
	I understand my role in implementing [organisation name] strategy
	I feel as though I am working towards the strategy of [organisation name]
	I believe the strategy of [organisation name] is achievable

Further, the questionnaire collected demographic data from employees including age, tenure, and education to provide a richer overall context and to assist the researcher when seeking correlations and relationships between constructs during the secondary analysis phase (see appendix 10.2 and 10.3). The questionnaire sought responses from respondents using a 7 point scale as recommended by Meyer and Allen (2004) and this was consistent across commitment and strategy scales. An example of the final questionnaire can be seen in Figure 3-2 this demonstrates the 'mixing' of the AC, CC and NC and reverse coded scales.

Figure 3-2 Overview of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was issued in two formats depending on the preference of the case organisations and their style of workplace. The content of both paper and online

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questionnaires was identical, and the layout was designed to be as similar to each other as practically possible. A blank copy of the full paper questionnaire can be seen in Appendix 10.2, and a cached version of the online questionnaire can be accessed by using the link in Appendix 10.3. In all cases where paper questionnaires were used, the organisation provided a locked box for completed surveys that was collected by the researcher. This was to ensure that all data was stored securely in line with the University research data management guidelines. It also served to help protect the anonymity of the participants.

Further, in line with Phase One being a pre-study to provide context, the questionnaire was also used as a sampling tool for Phase Two of the research. Employees were asked to provide their names and contact details at the end of the questionnaire if they were willing to take part in a follow-up interview with the researcher. This approach was particularly useful for the research project as it would allow the researcher to interview participants in the knowledge of their individual commitment profile as provided through their responses. It was believed that drawing on a sample of respondents from Phase One would assist in building up a richer picture of OC in line with the research objectives and the case study methodology.

The response rate to the questionnaire was high in all cases, and a significant benefit to adopting a case study approach. Table 3-5 outlines the response rate for each organisation and the overall project.

Table 3-5 Questionnaire Response Rate

Case	Format	Total Sample	Completed Questionnaire	Uncomplete (Paper)	Final Sample	Final Percentage
Case MGY	Online	80	60 (60 online)	0	60	75%
Case PBS	Online + Paper	90	47 (31 online)	10	37	41%
Case ALB	Paper	80	53 (53 paper)	3	50	63%
Total	Online + Paper	250	160	13	147	58%

Section 3.6.6 explains the process of analysing the questionnaire, and provides an overview of the researcher's first task to re-group the questions back into their original scales for the purposes of obtaining the commitment scores for each organisation and for each scale (i.e. AC, CC and NC). The next section discusses Phase Two, the second stage of the three-phased approach to data collection.

3.6.2. Phase Two - Qualitative Data

Once the Phase One pre-study had been completed in each organisation, the researcher was able to begin Phase Two. The benefit of such an approach was that it allowed the researcher to understand an employee's perception and experience with some knowledge of context from Phase One. This enabled the researcher to understand how employees feel about their places of work, and to consider if the TCM was capturing the depth and meaning associated with their experience.

In this vein, Silverman (2004) argues that, qualitative interviews afford us the opportunity to explore our research subject's points of view. Further when investigating a sensitive topic such as OC, the privacy and anonymity of the participant should also be taken into account to give rich data the opportunity to emerge. The researcher could have conducted focus groups or observations, however focus groups may have led to employees being more reserved, or acting more committed in front of their colleagues and observations would not have necessarily have led to an explanation of their feelings about commitment. The researcher originally questioned if the style of interviews should be structured, semi-structured or un-structured as Saunders, *et al* (2009) offers us as our most common options. The prospect of investigating a commitment relationship to an organisation within the restriction of structured interviews did not seem practical due to their restricted nature, and were easily excluded; it was the distinction between semi-structured and un-structured interviews that caused a research headache.

It was important to be able to prompt and probe responses where necessary in order to enable depth of understanding in line with the ideas of Silverman (2004) and Bryman (2016). Thus, a semi-structured face-to-face personal interview method was selected. The benefits of this method were that they allowed for flexibility without

losing sight of the interview focus and purpose, they enabled clarifications to be readily made where necessary with respect to questions posed and responses given, and the interview setting provided interviewees with a private space to provide personal reflection.

As the researcher had already visited all of the case organisations first hand when securing their involvement in the project, and they were all within a reasonable commuting distance from the university, there was no additional benefit in offering alternative interview arrangements such as telephone or Skype interviews. Visiting the case organisation in person also contributed to the researcher's ability to build up a more detailed understanding of the case organisations under study.

In all cases, employees who provided contact details on the Phase One questionnaire and consented to be approached for a follow up interview (n = 21) were offered an interview, and with only one exception, all of these employees were interviewed (n = 20). The contextual data from the pre-study allowed the researcher to check that his interviewees were representative of the population of the organisation. The researcher was able to address this and to attract further participants through 'snowballing', by asking the initial interview participants if they knew of other employees (in specific positions) who would be willing to be interviewed. If this was not successful, the researcher asked his main contact at the organisation for contact details of employees who fell into a particular category.

Phase Two contributed to the question of internal validity through cross checking of questionnaire data with interview data, and to external validity through comparing the results from each organisation to another at employee level. Reliability was addressed, through being able to cross check the employee experience at two points, and objectivity was achieved through being clearly demarcated as an external person to the organisation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

In total, the researcher interviewed 20 employees who provided their names and contact details on the questionnaire for interview, and a further 15 employees through snowballing techniques the match-day event research at MGY. The total number of employees interviewed in Phase Two was 33. The researcher asked for permission to

audio-record all interviews and did not experience any resistance to this request. In order to avoid technical issues and loss of data, the researcher recorded the interviews on two separate devices where possible (laptop and mobile phone).

3.6.3.   Phase Three – Qualitative Data

Phase Three of the study specifically focused on the senior employees of each case organisation. Once again, a semi-structured, face-to-face interview method was employed.   The purpose and scope of these interviews were slightly different to the employee interviews in Phase Two; the researcher was essentially feeding-back the learning from the project, and asking the owner and managers for their reflection and perceptions of what was happening (relative to what the researcher had found). The data had been analysed to a certain extent, but had not been fully integrated; the researcher collected the data and transcribed the recordings as soon as possible after each interview, but the analysis was by no means complete. Indeed, part of the purpose of Phase Three was to clarify the researcher's ideas and his early understanding of the emerging data. The process of handling this data is discussed in detail in Chapter 4, where the researcher's ongoing sense making procedure is explained.

Due to the schedules and availability of senior employees, the interviews were not all conducted as 'one-to-one.' This presented less of a problem than it might have done in the corresponding employee interviews in Phase Two, as the researcher was not investigating the Owner or Director's commitment to the organisation, rather they were explaining the organisations position, and their understanding of the environment in which the organisation existed. Where time and availability meant that only shared interviews were possible, they were considered to be an acceptable interview format in place of personal interviews. This was only an issue in case MGY where the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) could only meet the researcher at the same time, forming a two-on-one interview. In case PBS, the researcher met with the CEO and HR Director individually and in case ALB only the CEO was in a position to receive this feedback (due to the structure of the organisation).

The interviews in Phase Three were not designed to reveal the owners commitment to the organisation (nor does the researcher consider that this would have been a viable topic to investigate, as a Director would be unlikely to admit to being un-committed, rather they would be expected to sell the company line). The purpose of these interviews was to feedback the researcher's high-level understanding of the findings in each organisation. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, this was sometimes very useful as it helped the researcher's ideas (in the case of a lack of communication of organisational values in the case of ALB), or that something had been considered before, but was not viable (in the case of an employee wishing to wear a body camera during match-day events in MGY). The results greatly served to strengthen the researchers own understanding of all levels in the organisation. The approach to audio-recording interviews was identical to Phase Two.

Phase Three served to increase internal validity of the data by cross checking with another internal source, external validity through comparing the senior employees perceptions and reality against the other organisations, reliability by checking the employees experience was in line with a known phenomenon internal to the organisation, and objectivity through having another point of reference within the organisation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

In summary, Phases Two and Three were designed to be complimentary in nature and feeding into each other in line with an embedded design. Phase Two was designed to reveal the employee feelings and experiences, and Phase Three to cross-check internal validity of the data through speaking to senior employees.

3.6.4. Overview of Interview Participants

The table in Table 3-6 provides an overview of the interviews conducted in Phases Two and Three. The table explains who was interviewed in each case organisation, their level in the MSB, and their tenure in the organisation. In places, the employee's job title has been written in a manner to assist anonymity; this is because in mid-sized businesses, often a single employee might represent an entire department.

An example of this would be 'Football Manager' – clearly only one of these roles exists and would have been amended to 'Management' (for clarity, the Football Manager was not interviewed).   In total, 38 interviews were conducted; the average length of the interviews was 1-hour 3-minutes with the shortest interview lasting for 12-minutes, and the longest for 2-hours 15-minutes.   In total, 40-hours 28-minutes of qualitative data was collected, resulting in a total transcript word count of 296,807 words.

Table 3-6 Overview of Interview Participants

Case	Employee Role	Tenure	Interview Style
Case MGY	Foundation Officer	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Management	3 - 5 Years	one-on-one
	Foundation Officer	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Management	Less than 1	one-on-one
	Match-Day Steward	11 - 15 Years	one-on-one
	Customer Service	11 - 15 Years	one-on-one
	Football Officer	Less than 1	one-on-one
	Stadium Operations	6 - 10 Years	one-on-one
	Match-Day Steward	11 - 15 Years	one-on-one
	Customer Service	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Match-Day (event only)	11 - 15 Years	one-on-one
	Security Officer	6 - 10 Years	one-on-one
	Security Officer	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Match-Day (event only)	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Match-Day (event only)	11 - 15 Years	two-on-one
	Chief Executive Officer & Chief Operating Officer	6 - 10 Years 11 - 15 Years	two-on-one
Case PBS	Internal Sales	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Accountant	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Operations Manager	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Human Resources Officer	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Quality Control	6 - 10 Years	one-on-one
	Management	6 - 10 Years	one-on-one
	Head of Operations	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Chief Executive Officer	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Human Resources Director	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one

Case ALB	Estimator	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Quality Control	20 Years +	one-on-one
	External Sales	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Expeditor	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Marketing Officer	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Estimating Manager	11 - 15 Years	one-on-one
	External Sales	Less than 1	one-on-one
	Welder	11 - 15 Years	one-on-one
	Plater	20 Years +	one-on-one
	Design Engineer	3 - 5 Years	one-on-one
	General Operative	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Administration Assistant	1 - 3 Years	one-on-one
	Chief Executive Officer	20 Years +	one-on-one

Table 3-6 provides an overview of the participants in this research project. In the findings and discussion chapters that follow, the researcher has adopted a coding system to identify which participants are speaking or being spoken about. The code refers to the organisation and participant number of each interviewee, for example ALB-P1 or [ALB-P1]. The researcher intended to retain this system as it identifies the participant but does not link it to their job role for improved anonymity. However, once the researcher began to write up his findings, this system felt impersonal, and as though he was not speaking about real people. Therefore, in addition to employing the coding system each participant was given a personal pseudonym. For example, the fictitious 'Lee Bullen' from ALB would become John [MGY-P1]. To distinguish between employees and senior employees, they were referred to as Leaders or 'L', within the alphanumeric coding, for example CEO from the same organisation would become Johnny [MGY-L1].

This system also makes it easier for a reader to keep track of each participant, as a reader is much more likely to remember an example relating to John [MGY-P1] rather than just being told that [MGY-P1] had experienced something.

3.6.5.   Approach to Data Analysis

Once the data had been collected, the researcher's attention turned to data analysis, focusing on how the information gathered could be meaningfully analysed in line with the research focus, research philosophy and case study approach. As the embedded case and phased approach sections have explained, this project has generated two sets of data (one pre-study and quantitative and one qualitative). These datasets needed to be *'integrated to produce a more complete picture of the phenomena under investigation'* (Bryman, 2016). In the first instance, and in line with Meyer and Allen's (1991) TCM, an element of statistical analysis was clearly required. In order to address some of the concerns surrounding the lack of rigour sometimes present in qualitative approaches, the researcher has adopted a rigorous and respected method to analyse his qualitative data, Framework Analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994).

3.6.6.   Analysis of Quantitative Data

The questionnaire collected data from employees in three organisations and sought information pertaining to employee commitment and strategic interest and awareness. At the same time the questionnaire collected demographic data that would allow the researcher to search for relationships and correlations between constructs and scales.

In the first instance, the researcher needed to re-group the questions from each scale that had previously been mixed for the purposes of data collection. This meant returning to the master spreadsheet that logged the order of the questionnaire. Once the scales were back in their original order (i.e. all AC, CC, NC items together) the researcher had a set of data from each organisation and from each scale, this meant that he was aware of the various commitment levels for each organisation, and holistically at sample level.

The raw data was exported from the online provider and where paper questionnaires were collected the researcher manually inputted the paper questionnaires to the online provide with the end goal of having a uniform and consistent data set. Figure

3-3 demonstrates the coding framework adopted for the questionnaire and how the process of un-reversing the reverse coded items took place.

Figure 3-3 Overview of the Coding Framework for the Questionnaire

Once this phase was complete the researcher had a set of numbered raw data that could be analysed for the purposes of providing context as required in the Phase One, Pre-Study and Context stage.   The researcher worked in Microsoft Excel and SPSS for the purposes of analysis, once the responses to the questionnaire were converted from text (i.e. strongly disagree to 1) then the researcher was able to calculate the mean scores for each commitment and strategy scale.   The conversion process took place using the find and replace function in Microsoft Excel where the researcher would 'Find' all instances of 'Strongly Disagree' and replace it with the number '1,' this process was repeated until all responses were represented numerically.

Meyer and Allen (1993) explain that the mean scores of each scale should be calculated and that the higher the score the stronger the commitment.   This means that theoretically a score of 7 would be a perfect commitment score and 1 would be the lowest commitment possible. This applies to the AC and NC scales where a higher score is desired but the opposite applied to the CC scale where the feeling of 'being trapped' in an organisation is being measured. Once the mean scores are calculated the commitment of the employees will be known for the second and third phases. The   mean   score   was   calculated   using   Microsoft   Excel   through   using   the =AVERAGE(XX:XX) function.

The demographic data was also coded in line with the Likert style data, i.e. Male = 0, Female = 1 (see Figure 4-1). The researcher was then able to use the Microsoft Excel function (=STDEV.P(XX;XX)) to identify standard deviations and correlation information across the data set.

The process of calculating mean scores for each scale can be seen in Figure 3-4.   In addition, the process was repeated at Case level as well as at sample level meaning that the researcher had four documents (one for each organisation for each scale (i.e. AC, NC and CC) and one for the entire sample), this was particularly useful for the Second and Third Phases of data collection as the researcher could take the organisation specific spreadsheet into the interviews alongside the holistic sample level document.

	Demographic						Normative Commitment						Continuance Commitment						Affective Commitment						Strategy Scale						MEAN AC	MEAN CC	MEAN NC	MEAN SI
	GEN		TEN	EDUCA	EMPLOY	LT	OCN	OCN	OCN	OCN	OCN	OCN	OCC	OCC	OCC	OCC	OCC	OCC	OCA	OCA	OCA	OCA	OCA	OCA	S	S	S	S	S	S				
116	1	1	3	2	0	4	6	6	6	6	4	6	4	6	4	4	4	6	6	6	4	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6.17	4.67	5.67	6.00
117	1	1	1	2	0	2	4	2	4	5	4	4	5	5	4	3	5	5	2	2	5	3	4	3	6	5	6	6	6	5	3.17	4.50	3.83	5.67
118	1	0	1	4	0	6	6	6	6	5	6	6	6	2	2	6	2	2	5	3	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5.33	3.33	5.83	6.00
119	1	1	0	3	0	6	6	6	6	6	7	6	6	6	1	1	6	1	6	6	6	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6.50	3.50	6.17	6.00
120	0	3	3	3	0	6	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	2	2	2	5	2	6	6	6	6	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6.17	3.17	5.83	6.00
121	1	2	1	1	0	5	6	6	5	5	7	6	1	1	4	4	4	1	6	4	6	2	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	5.33	2.50	5.83	6.00
122	0	2	2	4	0	1	6	6	6	6	7	6	4	2	4	4	5	1	6	6	6	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6.50	3.33	6.17	6.00
123	0	3	3	3	0	6	6	5	6	6	6	5	1	2	2	1	1	1	6	6	6	7	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6.00	1.33	5.67	5.83
124	1	3	1	3	0	4	6	5	4	5	5	6	4	3	3	5	3	4	4	6	6	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	5.17	3.67	5.33	6.00
125	1	2	2	2	0	6	6	6	5	5	6	6	4	2	2	2	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6.00	3.33	5.67	6.00
126	0	1	3	2	1	6	6	6	5	4	4	6	2	4	3	1	4	4	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6.00	3.00	5.17	6.00
127	0	2	0	1	1	6	6	6	5	6	7	6	3	2	2	2	3	4	6	6	6	4	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5.67	2.67	6.00	5.50
128	0	3	4	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	7	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	4.00	1.00	2.00	1.00
129	1	3	3	3	1	6	6	6	6	4	4	6	1	2	3	5	6	4	6	6	6	6	6	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6.17	3.50	5.33	6.00
130	0	2	2	0	1	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	6	4	4	6	5	4	4	5	4	3	2	3	5	4	5	4	4	3	3.50	4.83	3.33	4.17
131	1	4	2	1	1	6	6	6	3	6	6	6	1	2	1	1	5	2	6	3	6	3	2	6	6	6	6	3	4	5	4.83	2.00	5.50	5.00
132	0	3	3	1	1	6	6	6	4	5	5	6	5	4	5	4	4	2	6	2	6	4	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	4.83	4.00	5.33	6.00
133	0	3	3	3	1	5	2	2	2	2	3	6	2	2	2	2	2	2	6	6	5	6	6	2	6	6	6	6	6	6	5.17	2.00	2.83	6.00
134	0	1	3	3	1	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	2	2	5	2	5	2	6	6	6	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6.50	3.00	6.00	6.00
135	1	3	1	3	1	6	6	6	6	6	7	6	4	2	1	2	6	1	6	5	6	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6.33	2.67	6.17	6.00
136	1	1	1	1	2	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	2	4	4	4	3	5	2	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	3.67	3.67	3.33	4.17
137	0	3	3	1	2	6	6	6	6	4	4	6	5	4	4	5	4	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6.00	4.50	5.33	6.00
138	0	1	1	3	2	6	6	6	6	3	3	6	1	1	2	1	5	2	6	6	6	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6.50	2.00	5.00	6.00
139	0	5	3	3	2	6	6	6	5	6	5	6	2	4	5	2	4	2	6	6	6	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6.50	3.17	5.67	6.00
140	1	1	2	4	2	4	5	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	3	5	5	4	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5.17	4.33	4.50	5.67
141	0	2	1	5	2	6	6	6	5	6	7	6	2	1	1	1	2	1	6	6	6	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6.50	1.33	6.00	6.00
142	0	0	1	2	2	4	6	6	5	5	6	6	2	2	6	6	6	2	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5.83	4.00	5.67	5.83
143	1	2	0	1	2	6	6	6	4	2	6	6	2	2	2	2	2	2	6	5	6	6	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6.00	2.33	5.00	6.00
144	0	1	0	4	3	4	6	2	4	5	6	6	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	2	4	3	3	4	5	6	6	6	5	6	3.33	4.67	4.83	5.67
145	0	1	1	1	5	6	5	2	4	5	3	6	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	2	4	4	3	3	6	6	6	6	5	6	3.33	4.67	4.17	5.83
146	0	1	1	3	5	4	6	2	4	5	3	6	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	2	4	4	3	2	6	6	6	6	5	6	3.33	4.67	4.33	5.83
147	0	1	1	3	5	6	6	6	5	4	6	6	5	4	4	4	4	6	6	6	6	3	2	6	6	5	6	6	5	6	4.83	4.50	5.50	5.83
148	0	3	1	1	5	6	1	6	5	4	6	6	6	6	1	2	4	5	4	4	6	5	6	6	4	5	6	6	5	6	5.17	4.00	4.67	5.17
149	0	1	1	3	5	2	2	5	5	2	4	4	3	4	5	4	2	3	3	3	2	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	3.33	3.50	3.67	3.83
150																															5.06	3.60	4.88	5.36

This approach facilitated analysis at case, sample and individual level. In several instances and where a participant had provided their name to be interviewed, the researcher was able to take a commitment profile for the employee into the interview itself. This was useful as it allowed the researcher to compare the employee's words to their individual commitment profile and to the commitment profile of the wider organisation. The section that follows is concerned with the analysis of the qualitative data.

3.6.7.   Analysis of Qualitative Data

Bryman (2007) argues that analysing qualitative data can be cumbersome because it quickly generates a large database of content such as interview transcripts or documents. Miles (1979) described qualitative data as an attractive nuisance, because of the attractiveness of its richness, but the difficulty of finding meaningful analytical paths.

Bryman (2016) discusses the difficulty of finding a *'path through the thickest of prose that makes up your data [which] is baffling to many researchers confronting such data for the first time.'* Indeed, critics of qualitative data on the whole point to this lack of structure and agreed format for analysis. They claim that qualitative approaches lack rigour, and are therefore potentially less meaningful than their quantitative, statistically analysed counterparts (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

The researcher considers that qualitative analysis should be carried out with an audit trail, to be certain that other researchers can replicate their results and fully understand how the results of the analysis were reached. There are a number of methods already available to qualitative researchers that enable thorough and systematic analyses of data, and the researcher has chosen to use 'Framework Analysis' (FA) to achieve this.

3.6.8.   Framework Analysis

Ritchie and Spencer (1994) and Spencer *et al* (2003) offer Framework Analysis (FA), a means to analyse qualitative data within a defined framework. The benefits of using such an approach are that they provide a clear audit trail for subsequent readers

(Bryman, 2016). Essentially, within FA, the themes and interpretations made by the researcher can be easily traced back to the raw data. This is argued to be a significant advantage for *'inexperienced qualitative researchers'* and for *'external reviewers'* who wish to see the source of the findings (Parkinson, Eatough, Holmes, Stapley, & Midgley, 2016). However, as with any structured approach, the limitations of FA are that we are at risk of *'unthinking'* if the researcher undertaking the analysis as a series of *'mechanical steps to follow'* in place of properly engaging with the data (Parkinson et al., 2016).

Gale, et al (2013) developed the seminal approach of FA to include the process of transcription; transcription, familiarisation, coding, developing an analytical framework, applying the analytical framework, charting data into the framework; and interpreting the data. The two approaches, Ritchie and Spencer (1994) and Gale et al, (2013) are shown to resemble each other and it can be reasonably assumed that both styles of FA include comparable steps (i.e. step one, transcription is presumably a 'pre-FA activity' within the original Ritchie and Spencer approach). However, this does introduce some uncertainty as to which approach should be followed within the FA tradition. The researcher considers that within a qualitative approach, it is reasonable to assume that transcription of interviews would be completed before the analysis stage, and therefore does not consider transcription to be the first stage of analysis proper. In this case, transcription, organisation and anonymization of transcripts have been included as a pre-analysis task within overall FA.

FA is similar in nature to other methods of qualitative data analysis, including Thematic Analysis, as both approaches rely on a series of steps to interpret qualitative data. In fact, Gale et al (2013) describe Framework Analysis as an approach sitting *'within a broad family of analysis methods often termed thematic analysis or qualitative content analysis.'* Braun and Clark (2006, p. 86) describe the stages of thematic analysis being *'similar to the phases of other[s] in qualitative research'* meaning that the stages are *'not unique to thematic analysis.'* FA is notably different to Thematic Analysis in the later stages of analysis where data is charted into a matrix and mapped to interpret the data as a whole (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). However, in line with Gale's comments,

the two approaches belong to the same family of qualitative data analysis and are subsequently similar.

In order to demonstrate the process of FA that has been adopted, and associated steps in FA, the researcher has provided a table in Table 3-7.

Table 3-7 Overview of Framework Analysis applied to Phase Two and Phase Three Data

Stage	Action Required
Pre-Analysis: Organisation	Transcribe Interviews to Microsoft Word Organise Transcripts into Cases Anonymise Transcripts
Stage One: Familiarisation	Immersion with the data (Rabiee, 2004) Identifying Recurring themes (Ward, Furber, Tierney, & Swallow, 2013) Discuss the emergent issues in the data (Parkinson et al., 2016)
Stage Two: Indexing (Theoretical Framework)	Reading line by line, apply code Open coding (inductive studies) Look out for the Unexpected (inductive) (Gale et al., 2013) Recurring themes added to a chart on paper or computer (Ward et al., 2013) Develop a 'draft framework' (Ward et al., 2013)
Stage Three: Indexing	Organise transcripts into framework categories (Gale et al., 2013) Apply the draft framework back to the transcripts (Gale et al., 2013)
Stage Four: Charting	Summarise data by category Chart the data into a 'matrix' (Gale et al., 2013)
Stage Five: Mapping & Interpretation	Pulling together key-characteristics of data Map and Interpret the data as a whole Findings and patterns in the data Sense-making of the data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994)

This five-step process, adapted from Ritchie and Spencer (1994) enables the researcher to get closer to his data in a meaningful way, whilst being respectful of the research aim and objectives.

3.6.9.   Ethics

In line with Sheffield Hallam University regulations, the researcher received ethical approval from the University Ethics Committee (through SHUREC-1) at the research design stage.   The researcher complied with the research ethics and integrity requirements and research data management protocol of the university throughout the study. A summary of all the major ethical considerations can be seen in Table 3-8.

Table 3-8 Overview of Ethical and Health and Safety Procedures

Type of data	Protocol
Questionnaire data	In all cases, participant were free to participate or decline participation. All participants were volunteers and free to withdraw at any point (in line with the consent form and participant information sheet) The data that was collected in questionnaires was obtained through Google Forms and saved online (a service that was available through the researchers student account at the university). Once it was downloaded, it was saved on the University's encrypted Q-Drive. The paper versions of the questionnaire were manually uploaded to the same spreadsheet that google provided. The manual copies were retained and stored in a locked drawer in the researcher's office. In case that the participant had provided their contact details for interview in phase two, the researcher contacted the participants directly using the contact details they provided.
Interview data	Interview participants were offered an Interview by email; this request included a copy of the Participant Information Sheet (PIS). The PIS and consent form explained to each participant that they were being asked to participate in the interview as a volunteer and were free to withdraw at any point during the interview, or up to 14 days after the interview. The researcher has an archived copy of the consent form for each interview with the exception of two where the researcher was working at the Football Stadium on a match day and took the opportunity to interview two stewards who were working on the exit gate. In this instance the researcher handed over a copy of his

	business card in case they decided to withdraw. This process was agreed with the University.
Data management	The researcher requested 20GB of data within the University's secure data storage area (Q drive). This was designed to cover the secure storage of data such as, interview recordings, transcripts, N-vivo files, questionnaire data, SPSS data, and participant consent forms.
Health & Safety	In order to protect the researchers own Health and Safety in the field, the researcher completed a research risk assessment form ahead of the data collection and confirmation of PhD process. The risk assessment included details of travel to each location and general safety precautions at the venue. The researcher provided details to his partner about where he was traveling to each day. In all cases except one, the interviews were conducted in the case organisations main offices. In one case the participant was also visiting the university and asked for the interview to be held in a private room at the university.

3.7. Reflections on Conducting Case Study Research

This section will explain the practicalities of working with three organisations on a case basis. In places this was a significant benefit for the researcher, as it allowed for an increased understanding of how the organisation functioned and enabled the researcher to understand the surface culture of the business.   This proximity of the researcher to the organisation was practically useful and undoubtedly helped the researcher to achieve such a high response rate to questionnaires and the willingness of participants to be interviewed.

This relationship was perhaps most effective during the questionnaire phase of the research. The COO of case MGY asked the researcher to distribute the questionnaire with their branding (as well as the University branding). They explained that this would enable them to remind the employees this was a project being undertaken for mutual benefit.   The COO of MGY made it clear to the researcher that in line with their culture and high profile (from the Football and Rugby Clubs), they received numerous requests to participate in research related activities, so their internal

branding and CEO support would greatly assist in achieving employee 'buy-in' for the project.   Alternatively, during a meeting with the Chief Executive of ALB, it was made clear that any 'local' B2 branding would be likely to reduce the participation of employees, as the culture of the organisation would not lend itself to an open discussion around commitment.   The owner recommended to the researcher that the project should be sold to the employees on the basis that this was a University PhD project, and the data serves primarily for academic purposes.

This was interesting for the researcher, as it ultimately led the researcher to take control of internal communication at ALB (as opposed to the administration of the questionnaire being led by the employer in the case of MGY).   The CEO was comfortable with this approach and confident that it would lead to better results and openness – the researcher hosted open meetings with all employees where the purpose of the project was explained and the individual employees could complete the questionnaire and discuss their interest in completing an interview.   When compared to MGY, the approach was very different, but the researcher achieved the same end goal, a high number of TCM questionnaire completions, and a number of volunteers for interviews.

PBS offered the researcher reduced guidance on what may lead to best results.   The researcher still benefited from proximity to the organisation and access to management employees, but as they had recently engaged with the University for other research projects, they were not anticipating issues and left the researcher to conduct the project as he saw fit. All case organisations agreed that interviews should be arranged by the researcher and management should not be involved at this stage. Interestingly, the Chief Executive of ALB recommended that the researcher should wear casual clothes, and that meetings should be held in their casual 'break out room' rather than their main meeting room. This was because casual clothes would likely make the employees (who were generally based on the shop floor and had limited experience working with academics) would feel more comfortable with a researcher. It was also noted, that the main meeting room was only used internally for disciplinary procedures, and therefore negatively regarded by employees internally.   Other organisations offered no advice in this regard.

3.8.   Summary of Methodology

This chapter has focused on the research methodology. The researcher has outlined his philosophical stance, including the reasons why an objective ontology had been adopted with a more subjectively focused epistemology that falls within the category of a 'neo-empiricist' approach that might be spoken about elsewhere as qualitative positivism or post-positivism.

The researcher also discussed the decision to adopt a multi-case approach to data collection in line with Yin's (2003) embedded tradition. As the methodology discussed, all three case organisations were based in the Sheffield City Region (SCR) and were mid-sized businesses (MSB), partly in reaction to the limitations of earlier OC researchers explored in the literature review but also in view of the potential value of the research more broadly to the SCR.

Finally, the researcher discussed the practical approach to data collection, including an overview of the proposed data collection process, notably a three phased mixed methods approach where data from the TCM questionnaire would serve to recruit volunteers for interviews in the second phase where the influencers of OC could be explored. The final stage of the data collection was focused on the senior employees of the same MSBs, and their interpretation and reaction to the data from the Phase One Pre-Study and Phase Two. Chapter 4 focuses on the data analysis process of both sets of data: quantitative (Phase One, pre-study) and qualitative (Phase Two and Three).

Chapter 4 Data Analysis

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how the data gathered for this thesis was organised and analysed. As Chapter 3 explained, this thesis employed a mixed method, embedded design in the case study tradition using both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection.   This chapter outlines how both sets of data were analysed and integrated within the embedded tradition.

The first part of this chapter explains the process of quantitative data analysis for the phase one pre-study outlined in Chapter 3 pertaining to the adapted Meyer and Allen (1993) TCM questionnaire. The second part of the chapter is concerned with the qualitative data collected in Phase Two, and the application of Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) 5 step framework analysis. Next, the chapter discusses the analysis of Phase Three data relating to the semi-structured interviews with senior employees of the three case organisations. The chapter also explains the process of combining the data within an embedded design, notably focusing on how each type of data (quantitative or qualitative) was integrated to produce a case study of the Influencers of OC in mid-sized businesses in the Sheffield City Region. It should be noted that 'embedding' refers to the process of entrenching each set of data into an overall case picture to achieve richness of data. Creswell, *et al.* (2003 as cited in Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006 p. 67) identify the embedded design to be *'a mixed methods design in which one data set provides a supportive, secondary role in a study based primarily on the other data type.'* In this study the quantitative data collected in Phase One was deliberately intended to support the qualitative data collected in Phase Two. Thus, it is important to emphasise that the study is primarily focused on Phase Two data (i.e. the employee experience). As a result of this, Phase One is explicitly referred to as a 'pre-study and context' stage.

The final part of this chapter pulls together the researcher's thinking post-data analysis and presents the 'Influencers of Organisational Commitment' (IOC) model. This is an empirical model designed to provide an overview of the findings and inform the discussion chapters that follow (Chapters Five, Six and Seven).

4.2. Quantitative Data

The quantitative data was collected for each case organisation using an adapted version of Meyer and Allen's (2004) TCM questionnaire as outlined in Chapter 3. In total, 160 completed questionnaires were received, with 13 questionnaires being discarded as incomplete as outlined in Table 3-5. The data was combined (at case level) for overall understanding of the data in line with the process described in Chapter 3, Section 3.6.6.

The Meyer and Allen (1991) OC, TCM questionnaire has generally been analysed using statistical methods including correlation, regression or Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) approaches (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Gellatly, Meyer, & Luchak, 2006; Powell & Meyer, 2004). However, as Meyer & Allen (2004) point out, researchers are able to calculate a commitment profile for any given organisation by plotting the mean commitment scores against each other. This process was completed as outlined in Chapters Three.

The data presented in this section is limited for a number of reasons and this should be taken in to account as part of the wider study. In the first instance the data is wholly self-reported meaning that the researcher cannot be certain that the participants on an individual level have responded truthfully (Brutus, Herman, & Wassmer, 2013). This is an issue throughout self-reported quantitative research as the researcher cannot offer an interpretation of the scales truthfulness, however the second and third phases were designed to allow for this, and particularly when the phase two interviews take place in the knowledge of the phase one pre-study results, an assessment can be made. Further, the data presented in this section is cross sectional and gathered at a single point in time. Bowen and Wiersema (2009) suggest that this is a limitation of the data and while commitment theorists suggest that OC is a stable phenomena (Mowday et al., 1979) there is a lack of direct empirical research to prove this. This study cannot claim to be longitudinal, however nor is it cross-sectional as data was gathered over a period of time, and over three phases and addressing a weakness of OC research.

The results from the questionnaire, including Alpha Coefficient, mean scale scores and breakdown at case level can be seen in Figure 4-1.

Means, Standard Deviations and Alpha Coefficients

				MGY		PBS		ALB	
Variable	α	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1. Age	-	2.16	1.35	1.72	1.39	1.97	1.15	2.82	1.16
2. Gender	-	0.33	0.47	0.42	0.49	0.41	0.49	0.16	0.37
3. Tenure	-	2.02	1.64	1.82	1.62	1.65	1.07	2.54	1.87
4. Employment	-	1.62	1.35	1.23	1.36	1.46	1.62	2.20	1.22
5. Education	-	2.72	1.35	2.95	1.51	2.54	1.26	2.58	1.17
6. AC Scale	.88	5.05	1.23	5.27	1.02	5.34	1.11	4.59	1.39
7. CC Scale	.73	3.59	1.10	3.94	1.09	3.30	1.02	3.40	1.06
8. NC Scale	.86	4.87	1.06	5.09	1.08	5.10	1.00	4.45	1.41
9. SI Scale	.91	5.36	1.06	5.49	0.94	5.47	0.95	5.03	1.20

N = 147. For age, 0 = 18-24, 1 = 25-34, 2 = 35-44, 3 = 45-54, 4 = 55-64, 5 = 65-74 and 6 = 74+. For gender 1 = female and 2 = male. For Tenure 0 = less than one year, 1 = 1-3 years, 2 = 3-5 years, 3 = 6-10 years, 4 = 11-15, 5 = 16-20, 6 = 20+. For Employment 0 = management, 1 = experienced (non-manager), 2 = general operative, 3 = entry level (junior), 4 = match day staff, 5 = other. For education 0 = no formal education, 1 = GCSE or equivalent, 2 = A Level, 3 = college, 4 = university degree, 5 = post graduate degree. AC = affective commitment: CC = continuous commitment; NC = normative commitment.

Figure 4-1 Overview of Mean, Standard Deviation and Alpha Coefficients

Field (2018) argues that a key stage in reporting the results from a questionnaire is validating the reliability of scales, Kimberlin and Wsinterstein (2008) argue that testing the reliability is important as it allows a researcher to reduce error in the measurement process. In addition, for measurement scales with a high 'internal consistency,' a researcher can be sure that the scale has been completed properly by respondents and is reliable in the sense that questionnaire items are measuring the same constructs correlate (Cronbach, 1951).

The reliability of each scale was measured and compared to the seminal work using the same scales (Meyer & Allen, 1993). Meyer and Allen (1990) reported a reliability of .87, .75 and .79 for their AC, CC and NC scales respectively meaning that the alpha values obtained in this context are comparable (and higher in the cases of AC and NC). The sole scale that was not present in Meyer and Allen's work, the SI scale, scored .91, which is considered to be e*xcellent* in terms of strength of positive correlation between items measuring the same construct (J. Cohen, 1977b). In the case of Cronbach Alpha 1.0 would represent a perfect correlation between two tests, or in this case questionnaire scales or items that measure the same construct (Cronbach, 1951; Pallant, 2010). The scales are therefore reliable.

Further, and in order to provide further context for the scale items being reported and the demographic of the participants of the questionnaire, Figure 4-2 has been included to provide a breakdown of the entire sample.

Demographics for participating organisations

	Case MGY	Case PBS	Case ALB	Entire Sample
Number of Participants	60	37	50	147
% Response rate	75	41	63	58
% Female	41.6	40.5	16	32.7
Age				
% 18-24	21.7	5.4	6	12.2
% 25-34	31.7	37.8	6	24.3
% 35-44	16.7	21.6	20	18.9
% 45-54	15.0	27.0	40	26.4
% 55-64	13.3	5.4	24	14.9
% 65-74	1.7	2.7	4	2.7
Tenure				
% < 1	31.7	10.8	16	20.9
% 1- 3	15.0	45.9	18	23.6
% 3 - 5	15.0	13.5	18	15.5
% 6 - 10	23.3	27.0	20	23
% 11 - 15	11.7	2.7	12	9.5
% 16 - 20	0.0	0.0	4	1.4
% 20 +	3.3	0.0	12	5.4
Education (highest level attained)				
% No formal education	3.3	2.7	6	4.1
% GCSE or equivalent	23.3	24.3	16	20.9
% A-Level or equivalent	10.0	16.2	8	10.8
% College or professional qualifications (HNC)	18.3	37.8	60	37.2
% University degree (BA)	28.3	10.8	4	15.5
% Post-Graduate degree or above	16.7	8.1	6	10.8

Figure 4-2 Overview of Demographic of the entire survey sample

The researcher did not have access to the gender or further demographic data for the total employee populations in each organisation, but observed through engagement with each organisation that case MGY and ALB were predominantly male, and PBS was more balanced. Interestingly, often in OC research, more Females have traditionally completed the TCM in each context. However, this could be due to context alone and might reflect occupational gender balances, for example in Herscovitch and Meyer's (2002) research the TCM was distributed to Nurses. The researcher engaged with the key contact at each organisation to check that the sample of employees was representative of the wider population. The high return rate for the questionnaire is supportive of this (see: Table 3-2).

The analysis of the data, as well as correlations and limitations of the sample as a whole will be reported in the findings, in Chapter 5 (Section 5.2).

4.2.1.   Problems Encountered

The analysis of the quantitative data was generally completed without issue. As the questionnaires were based on the original TCM developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) and designed to be identical for each case organisation, potential issues that generally arise when building new questionnaires and scale items were avoided.

One area that did cause an issue was the reverse coded items present in the TCM questionnaire, Meyer and Allen (1991, 1993) included these items within their questionnaire design to test reliability. An example of a reverse coded question in the TCM may be provided:

I do not feel like 'part of the family' at [this organisation]

The reverse or negative nature of the statement complicated the questionnaire coding process. This meant that Strongly Disagree became Strongly Agree (coded as '1' for most disagreement with a positive statement) should be coded as '7' (most disagreement with a negative statement - in essence a positive statement). While the reversal of the codes on the 7-point scale was theoretically straightforward, initially the researcher did not have a rigorous system to check if the items had already been reversed.   When undertaking the analysis, he noticed that the results for MGY

appeared low compared to the draft data that had already been given to the organisation for their reference. The researcher checked the original questionnaires in case a mistake had been made and could see that reverse coding had taken place twice (i.e. back to raw state). In investigating this issue further, the researcher learned that Pallant (2010) advised that this issue could be avoided if the original and un-reversed raw data was retained and stored adjacent to the same cell in reversed format. The researcher followed this advice and adopted the headings 'AC4R' and 'AC4reversed.'

The sections that follow provide an overview of the process of analysing the qualitative data in line with Framework Analysis (FA).

4.3. Qualitative Data Analysis

Once the Phase One contextual (Pre-Study) quantitative data had been collected and analysed, the researcher was able to design Phases Two and Three in the knowledge of the OC context and appetite for interviews. As the methodology chapter explained, the researcher sought to collect qualitative data in these phases through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews to reveal further insights into the phenomena under investigation. In total 39 interviews were conducted, of which 33 were with employees in the organisations and 5 were with owners and managers of the same organisations. As discussed in Chapter 3, in Phase Two, 20 interviews came from volunteers from the Phase One pre-study questionnaire, and a further 13 came through snowballing or through support from management. The data for both groups was combined and analysed in line with Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) Framework Analysis as will be explained in the following section.

4.3.1. Framework Analysis (FA)

The Framework Analysis (FA) approach adopted for the analysis of the qualitative data was mentioned in Chapter 3. Notably, the stages in the processes used by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) and Gale et al (2013) were noted. The researcher has adopted the original five step method (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994) due to its simplicity and clear structure.

In order to include all steps that the researcher has undertaken, in place of adapting the original FA approach, the researcher has included a pre-analysis stage that includes the often overlooked steps in the analysis process such as transcribing and organising the data into a uniform format. Ritchie and Spencer (1994) argue that within FA, the steps will naturally overlap and cannot always be clearly split into distinct stages. The researcher found that a great deal of overlap did occur at each stage in the analysis as will be explained. However, despite these blurred boundaries between stages, the researcher replicated the original structure as closely as possible.

The first notable difference between FA and the data analysis process adopted by the researcher is the stage 'pre-analysis' (PA) that includes several vital administrational tasks such as including transcription, organisation of files and anonymization of data.

4.3.2. Pre-Activity - Transcription, Organisation and Anonymization

Once the first set of qualitative interviews had been completed, the researcher began to transcribe the interview recordings into Microsoft Word. This process proved to be useful and the researcher followed the advice of Bryman (2016) who recommended that researchers who transcribe their own interviews will have an advantage, including the opportunity to recall the interview and correct their own *'natural limitations'* of memory. Bryman (2016) argued that researchers who transcribed their own transcripts also benefited from the opportunity to self-familiarise with the data. The pre-analysis activity could be argued to overlap with the general 'familiarisation' stage listed as Step 1 (S1) in the Ritchie and Spencer (1994) five step FA model.

For context, Phase Two data collection began in February 2017 and transcription began at the same time, immediately after the first interview. Often, the researcher was able to complete less than one transcript per day and where interviews lasted more than one hour, and due to other commitments, it was not unusual for the researcher to take one week or more to transcribe a single interview. This meant that the transcription process for Phases Two and Three was not completed until July 2017. The researcher transcribed the interviews in a straightforward manner, with the question as a heading, and the participants response typed in plain text, meaning that

it was always clear who was speaking and the researcher could read through the transcripts quickly when familiarising himself with the data post-transcription.

The researcher followed the advice of Lofland and Lofland (1995) who recommend that the process of transcription should be started during data collection, as opposed to after the process has been completed. This advice proved to be very useful, as it allowed the researcher to understand his own interview technique, whilst there were more interviews to be conducted. The researcher learned that often he was interrupting participants as they were speaking mid-sentence. This was frustrating to note as often the interruption would break the flow of the participant's response and re-starting the conversation post-interruption was more difficult. The researcher was able to correct this after the first two interviews had been completed and transcribed, and as a result the conversations flowed more naturally in subsequent interviews. A further benefit of starting the transcription process in parallel with the interview process was the proximity that came from working with the data, once a number of interviews had been collected.

Transcribing and interviewing at the same time enabled speculation as to what the early themes might look like. This was useful as it allowed the researcher to test the ideas with the participants, and at times, it served to dismiss the early ideas of the researcher. For example, in the early stages, the researcher thought that leadership was emerging as a theme, and he had an opportunity to probe later stage interviewees about their views on this topic. They began to describe their experiences of being led by their managers, an area for questioning that had not originally been highlighted (in the coding of the interview data 'leadership' actually emerged as a sub-theme of 'organisational direction' based on the experiences that were offered). In terms of overall sense-making, repeating back ideas to the interviewees proved valuable.

As the researcher was working with cases organisations from different industry sectors (sport, advanced engineering, fenestration), and he considered OC to be a personally experienced phenomenon, he was not seeking to generalise from the data. However, once the first two case studies had been completed and the transcriptions were all but

completed, a significant overlap was observed, both within cases and across the two cases, in terms of data themes.

Once comparable qualitative data began to emerge from the third case (ALB) the researcher knew that 'thematic/data saturation' had occurred (O'reilly & Parker, 2013). This means that the researcher was faced with repetition in his answers, for example to the question 'What does a committed employee look like?' the answers were almost the same for all participants and no new information was being revealed.

After once the Phase Two interview transcriptions were completed, the researcher stored each set in a dedicated folder and anonymised each transcript by organisation code and participant number, i.e. Lee [PBS-P1]. The coding process was discussed in Chapter 3.

4.3.3. Stage One - Familiarisation

Ritchie and Spencer (1994) argue that the process of familiarisation is essentially the researcher taking a general overview of the collected data, and immersing themselves in that data. In order to achieve this, the researcher 'read' back each transcript whilst listening to the audio recording. This process aided familiarisation and immersion with the data, as well as allowing for minor mistakes in the transcripts to be corrected.

As a final step in the familiarisation process, once the above activities had been completed, the researcher printed and bound the entire set of transcripts and re-read the collection for a final time whilst making notes in his note-pad and on the transcripts themselves. This process of immersion (Borkan, 1999) helped him to 'get under the skin' of what was happening. The photograph in Figure 4-3 demonstrates this process of familiarisation, including the steps of note taking and annotation of the transcripts.
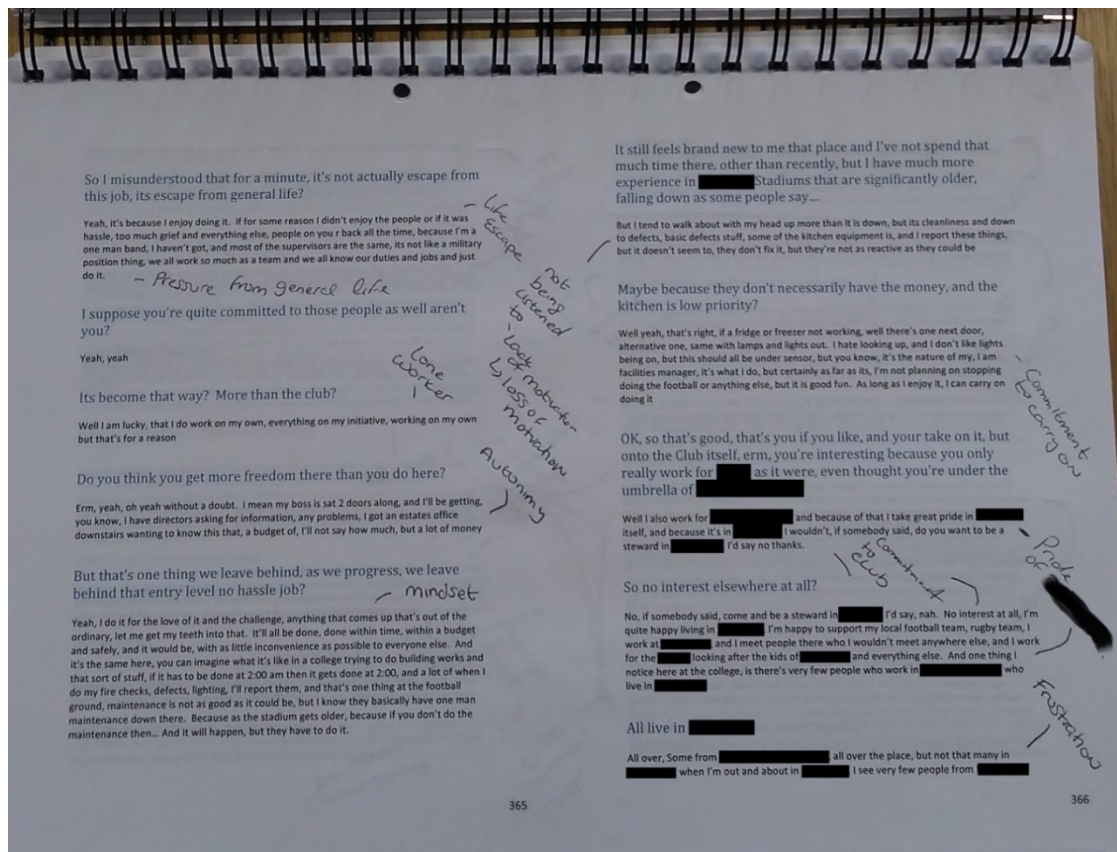
Figure 4-3 Stage One - Familiarisation

The immersion process was followed by a process of crystallisation (Borkan, 1999), to enable the researcher to reflect on the analysis experience.

4.3.4. Stage Two - Theoretical Framework - Identify Themes

The steps undertaken in Stage One revealed a large number of early observations or notes. In total the researcher made over 1,800 individual observations (notes) describing what was going on, and was overwhelmed by the amount of meta-data.

The first stage in FA only assists with familiarisation of the data and does not formally code the data itself; in any event the approach to coding has not yet been discussed.

This section will focus on the adoption of coding software and the researchers approach to coding the data.

4.3.4.1. Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software

It was clear that a more structured method of generating codes was required for the analysis to be meaningfully organised.   This led the researcher to consider using a more structured computer led method, something that researchers in the FA tradition often call, *'computer aided qualitative data analysis software'* (CAQDAS).   Considering that FA was being adopted, and that other researchers in this tradition had already used and recommended, N-vivo (Parkinson et al., 2016), the researcher decided that this would be a suitable tool to assist in the meaningful analysis of the data.

The drawbacks of N-vivo are said to be that it is expensive, and requires time to learn. However, as the University already had an unlimited subscription to the software, the issue of finance did not exist. The researcher imported the transcripts into N-vivo into three case folders meaning that the raw data was ready to be coded.

4.3.4.2.   Approach to Coding in line with Framework Analysis

Gale et al (2013) describes a system of 'open [and] unrestricted coding' for inductive studies where the researcher codes in an un-restricted manner, allowing the data to speak, this can then be 'refined' after the codes have been generated to identify themes. This is against deductive coding where the researcher would pre-select codes based on previous literature theories or the specifics of the research question.

The researcher has already discussed Gale *et al's* (2013) argument that FA sits within a qualitative family of research methods, including thematic analysis that share many traits and similarities. In other qualitative approaches, including thematic analysis, this approach might have been titled inductive or bottom-up coding, described by Patton (1990) as an approach where the themes are strongly linked to the data themselves. Braun and Clark (2006, p. 83) describe inductive coding as *'a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame.'* Therefore, the approach to coding the data was inductive, bottom-up and unrestricted in the sense that the researcher was allowing the data to speak ahead of his own pre-conceptions.

An example of this coding can be seen in Figure 4-3 where the researcher has made notes directly on the transcript to describe what the data was saying in a condensed

way. However, once again this process produced a significant number of un-structured codes that required *'refinement of themes'* (Gale et al., 2013)

In line with FA, Parkinson *et al.,* (2016) recommends that researchers should attempt to identify a framework, *'to organise the data in a meaningful way for subsequent retrieval, exploration and examination during the final stages.'* The researcher began to look through the list of unstructured codes that had been identified through open coding. It was clear that several recurring observations had been identified multiple times, but as they were unstructured and not organised in a meaningful way, attempts to sort the data caused frustration.

In line with 'open' and 'inductive coding' the researcher returned to the data to see where multiple codes (or nodes as described by N-vivo) were describing similar issues. This approach was successful and helped the researcher to reduce the number of nodes from over 1,800 to a list of fewer than 20 nodes that were often in two layers. For example, codes *'feeling listened to'* and *'passing info on'* became *'communication'* and *'recognition'* and *'skills recognised'* became *'feeling valued.'* The benefit of N-vivo at this stage was that it kept track of the number of references in each node, meaning that the researcher could easily see which nodes were becoming more prominent, and how they related to each other (Ward et al., 2013). Once the coding had been completed, the researcher had 12 categories of nodes and 235 total nodes.

In order to get closer to the data and to understand what was happening within the categories and how they might be inter-related, the researcher decided to present the categories and sub-categories on flip-chart paper (Figure 4-4).
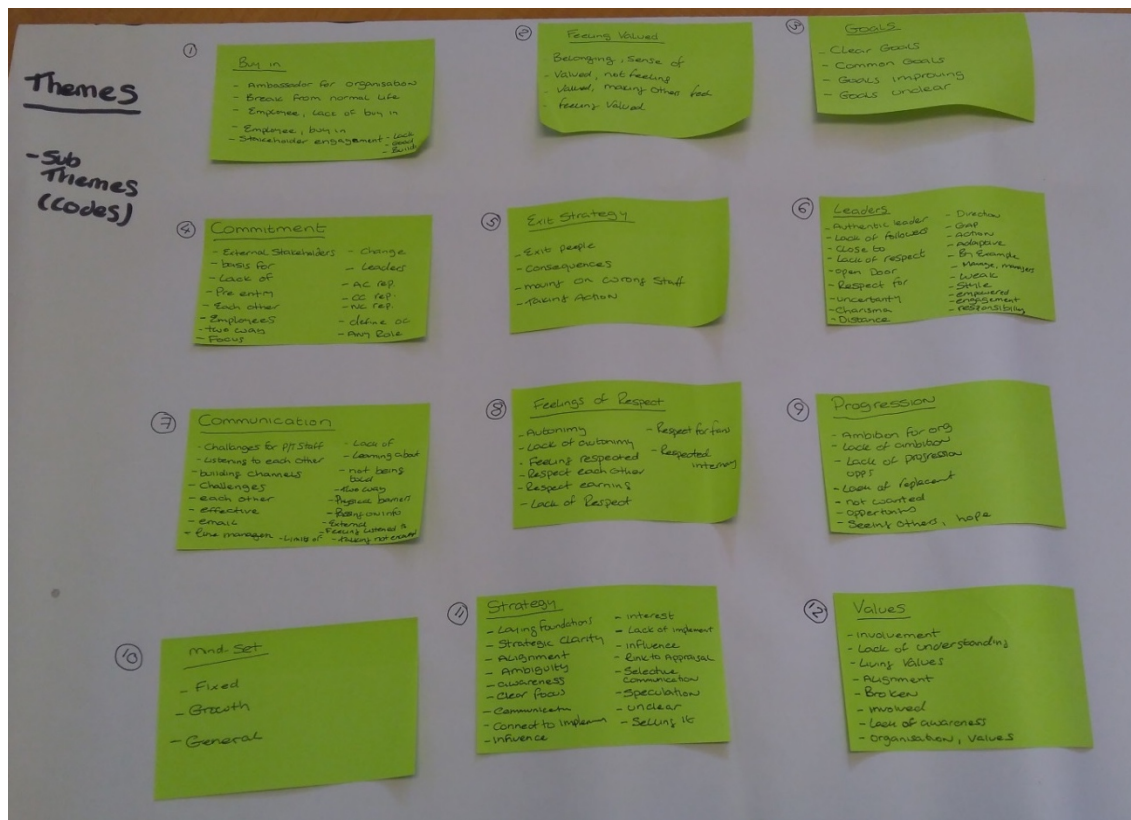
Figure 4-4 - Development of Categories and Themes

This process was greatly helped by N-vivo as for the first time; it enabled the researcher to understand what was happening in the data. However, it was clear that more work was required in order to arrive at the final list of themes; the researcher was mindful of Creswell's (2009) assertion that researchers who have identified 8 categories or more are unlikely to have finished their analysis to reduce overlap and redundancy across categories.

4.3.5. Stage Three - Indexing

Once the researcher had identified the initial categories and nodes, he was ready to begin Stage Three in FA, the indexing process. This essentially involves organising transcripts into framework categories (Ward *et al.,* 2013). The purpose at this point was to organise the nodes into framework categories (Gale et al., 2013).

As explained in Chapter 3, FA was initially developed for use in research teams, its structure and clear list of processes allowed multiple researchers to work on the same

project in an organised manner (Parkinson et al., 2016).   This feature of FA was not necessarily being sought for this thesis, but it did allow the researcher to work with his supervisors who offered to independently code a sample of transcripts themselves without knowledge of the researchers coding framework.   Bryman (2016) argues that third party independent coding allows for more robust analysis of the data and credibility.   In this case it allowed the researcher to cross check his codes against his supervisor's codes for improved rigour in the development of themes.

The researcher provided two of his supervisors with a sample of the interviews to be coded. One supervisor coded three interviews from each case, and another supervisor coded one interview from each case.   Both supervisors coded the interviews without prior knowledge of the researcher's codes and independently from each other.   The plan was to discuss the supervisor's interpretation of the data at the next supervisory meeting.

The supervisory team made independent notes and codes on each set of transcripts and provided the researcher with a list of the themes and codes that they considered to be most important.   Table 4-1 presents their findings and the words in bold represent the themes that each supervisor considered to be most dominant.

Table 4-1 Stage Three - Supervisor coding

	Themes Observed
Supervisor One (S1)	**Respect**
	Inspiration
	Pride
	Reward
	Relationship
	Communication + listening
	Trust
	Collectivism
	Family
	Motivation
	Opportunities

	Personal Development
	Socialisation
	Values
Supervisor Two (S2)	**Organisational Culture**
	Line Managers Attitude
	Employee Involvement
	Team Working
	Peer Support
	Employee Expectations
	Two way communication
	Building Personal Relationships

In line with FA, the researcher was working to reduce the number of codes and to reduce overlap and redundancy among categories. The feedback from the supervisory codes greatly assisted this process and helped the researcher to ensure that his coding had been undertaken in a robust manner. In order to reduce the existing codes from 10 categories and 235 further nodes, the researcher returned to the original codes identified in Stage Two of the Framework Analysis to identify where they could be reduced and grouped into common themes.   Once the supervisory coding was available, the researcher took some time to reflect on their interpretation of the data, and considered how their coding related (or not) to the overall findings of the researcher.

A period of personal reflection, followed by researcher-led supervisory team discussion revealed that some of the coding from S1 was carried out on a higher level than the researcher had been coding.   In discussion, the researcher realised that this was probably down to experience; S1 was able to code at a thematic level more easily than the researcher.   This was most obviously noticeable for the S1 theme of 'Relationship.'   The researcher had no coding that described relationship, but when he saw the segments of transcript that this applied to, he noticed it had been coded under different names in his own analysis.   This is demonstrated visually in Figure 4-5 and Figure 4-6.

That's it, and you become custom to it, and talk to people and, if you see a few little things, change this to make it like that, make everyone – think, great. I want to come to work, we all come to work for one reason, for money, so for me – there is some enjoyment, and satisfaction.

Nodes\\00 Relationship\01 Feeling Valued (MD)

Figure 4-5 - Sample of N-vivo coding

That's it, and you become custom to it, and talk to people and, if you see a few little things, change this to make it like that, make everyone – think, great. I want to come to work, we all come to work for one reason, for money, so for me – there is some enjoyment, and satisfaction.

✱ Relationships.

Figure 4-6 - Sample of S1 coding

The researcher had coded the segment of transcript under *'Feeling Valued'* on the basis that it represented an employee's personal feeling that they were *'valued'* at work. S1 coded this same passage under the code of *'Relationships.'* This was interesting and the researcher considered where relationships sat within his coding framework.

The researcher then realised that he had not missed a theme, rather his supervisor was coding at a higher level, and several of his themes were descriptive of the overall relationship. Therefore, with support from coding from S1 and S2, a major theme had been identified. The categories of *'employee buy in', 'feeling valued', 'feelings of respect', 'trust' and 'personal values'* were all describing the employer: employee relationship in some form and the final theme was subsequently titled **'Relationship.'**

00 Relationship	0	0
01 Buy-In	36	323
01 Commitment	38	752
01 Feeling Valued	37	563
01 Feelings of Respect	37	418
01 Trust	22	81
01 Values (Personal)	32	218
Consultation (Lack of)	8	12
Desire to be Involved	23	56
Disinterested in product	10	15
Dissatisfaction	8	12
Ego	10	17
Friends	19	36
Honest	1	1
Jealousy	3	5
Networking	4	6
Relationship (General)	25	100

Figure 4-7 Overview of theme 'Relationship'
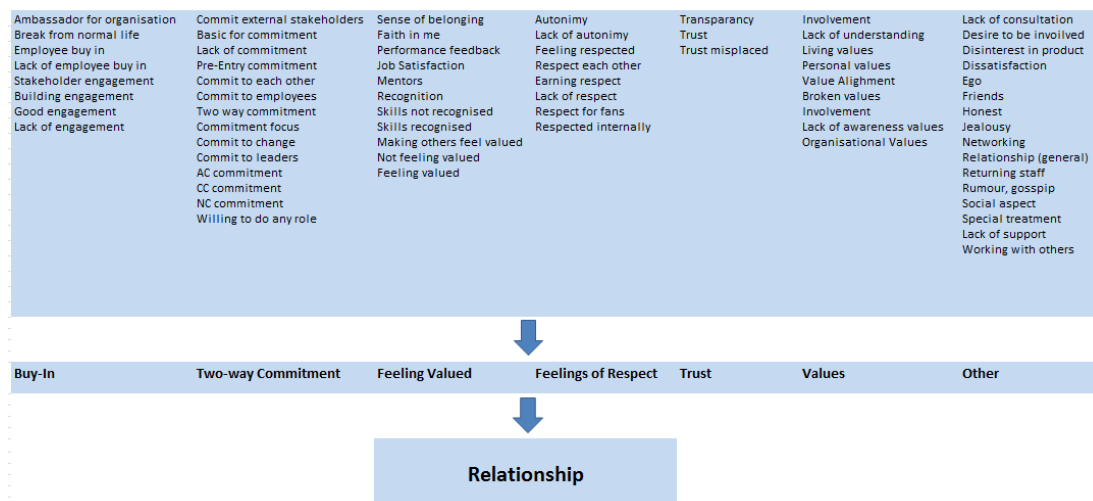
Figure 4-8 Development of Themes, Relationship

This approach was applied to the list of nodes that remained. The researcher was aware of Creswell's (2009 p. 266) process of thematic analysis where he argued that researchers seeking to inductively generate themes will go through a process of reading, identifying segments of information, labelling, reducing redundancy and creating a model of important categories. The researcher was at the stage of reducing

overlap, and as Creswell argues, researchers with more than 8 themes are unlikely to have fully completed the reduction process.

The process of reduction had been greatly assisted by the coding from S1 and S2 that ultimately lead to the discovery of the first major theme, Relationship. However, a large number of un-grouped codes remained. In places these un-structured codes had already been placed into categories, examples such as the category 'Communication' which had 19 child-nodes representing multiple types of communication and the category of 'Family Environment and Experiences to work' included three child-nodes of family environment, family influence to work and family strain. The researcher needed to understand how all these themes related to each other in line with the research question.

The next theme was developed from the categories and nodes that were remaining, including the categories of communication, community, mind-set, working conditions, exit strategy and family experiences to work. These categories were all describing the internal environment of the organisation and how it worked on a practical level. The researcher therefore labelled this category as **'Culture'**
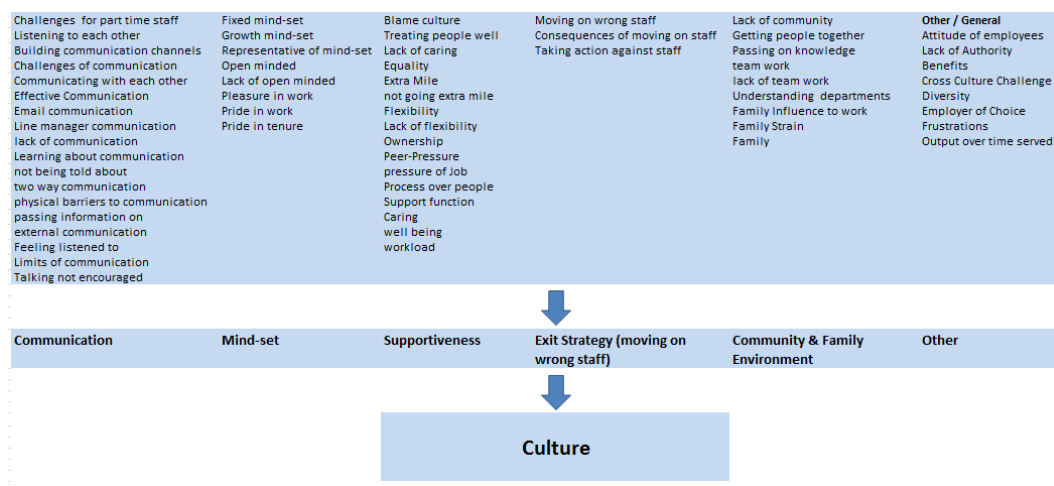
Figure 4-9 - Development of Themes, Culture

00 Culture	38	172
00 Communication	36	633
00 Community	32	200
00 Mind-Set	37	435
00 Working Conditions	0	0
01 Exit Strategy	15	78
01 Family Environment and Experience to work	30	105
Attitude of employees	16	47
Authority (Lack of)	9	14
Benefits	10	15
Cross Culture Challenge	5	6
Diversity	2	5
Employer of Choice	9	17
Frustrations	21	55
Going Native (Negative)	1	1
Helping Stakeholders	14	29
Hierarchy	17	30
Irrelevant Tasks	2	2
Output over time served	10	28
Propaganda	8	12
Sickness (Reduced)	3	3
Time over Output	2	6

Figure 4-10 - Overview of Theme Culture

The researcher went back to the data to understand what it revealed specifically in relation to the overall research question and objectives.

The researcher observed that the remaining categories were concerned with the organisations goals, finances, leaders and strategy. A number of individual nodes had also been coded in a similar vein.   The nodes of organisational growth, learning, internal ambition and professionalization were all descriptive of the direction in which the organisation was heading, leading the researcher to identify the overall theme as '**Organisational Direction**'

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Ambition for organisation	External ambition	Authentic leadership	Clarity	Advantages of being small
Lack of ambition for organisation	Clear goals	Lack of followers	Laying foundations for future	Challenges
Lack of progression opps.	Common goals	Close to leaders	Market penetration	Challenges of diversification
Lack of replacement (for staff)	Improving Goals	Lack of respect for leaders	Opportunity missed	Lack of Change
Progression not wanted	Unclear Goals	Open door policy	Organisational growth	Crisis of growth
Progression Opportunities	Internal ambition	Respect for leaders	Lack of planning	Diversification
Seeing others progress	Underachieving	Leaders change	Power of brand	Excitement
Safety of position		Charisma	Ran better than competitors	Realistic expectations
Seeking other employment		Distance (Power)	Strategic clarity	Identify expectations
Succession planning		Direction	Strategic alignment	Organisational learning
Lack of Training		Gap	Strategic ambiguity	Personal growth
Turnover of Staff		Action	Strategic awareness	Politics
Role Variety		Adaptive style	Clear focus	Professionalization
		Leading by example	Strategic communication	Recruitment process
		Managing managers	Connection to implementation	Stability
		Weak	Influence / Interest	Sustainable
		Empowerment	Link to appraisal	Toxic environment
		Manager responsibility	Selective communication	Money
		Old fashioned style	Unclear	Wages Low
		Leader Engagement	Selling strategy	

Progression in Organisation	Goals	Leaders	Strategy	Other

Organisational Direction

Figure 4-11 Development of Themes, 'Organisational Direction'

00 Organisational Direction	38	1969
00 Progression (in Organisation)	36	308
01 Finances	17	38
01 Goals	29	124
01 Leaders	35	533
01 Strategy	38	589
Advantages of Being Small	6	9
Challenges	18	31
Challenges of Diversification	18	51
Change (lack of)	8	19
Crisis of Growth	6	11
Diversification	8	11
Excitement	11	19
Expectations (Realistic)	8	17
Expectations (Unrealistic)	6	9
Identify and Fix Problems	16	33
Organisational Learning	7	11
Personal Connection	16	26
Personal Growth	19	42
Politics	11	13
Professionalisation	14	16
Recruitment Process	9	21

Figure 4-12 - Overview of Theme Organisational Direction

This stage greatly assisted the researcher in making sense of the data and reduced the number of categories and nodes from over 235 to a more manageable and meaningful

set of three major themes that were representative of what was happening in the case organisations.

In order to summarise Stage Three, the major themes identified from the data are - ***Relationship, Organisational Direction and Culture.*** The stage that follows is responsible for summarising the data into a framework and is often described as 'charting.' (Gale et al., 2013).

4.3.6. Stage Four - Summarise Data into Framework

Charting includes summarising, organising and indexing the data from transcripts into charts (Parkinson et al., 2016). This stage was possible because the coding framework had already been finalised in Stage Three.

The benefits of charting include that we are able to see the data at a high level and reduce it so that it becomes more manageable. In order to achieve this, a researcher is required to chart their themes into a table that demonstrates how the themes relate to and are represented in each sub-theme. This stage essentially connects the themes and sub-themes to the raw data. This can be easily achieved using N-vivo, which includes a feature that enables the data to be easily charted. The researcher learned through trial and error that he could see the overall representation of data at thematic level by aggregating the coding from 'child' nodes, essentially a process where N-vivo pulls the data from child nodes to parent node for the purpose of high level analysis. This enabled the researcher to chart the results from the codes at 'full thematic level' and 'child level' for each participant in a systematic way.

The indexed and charted data can be seen in Figure 4-15. Each case has been presented at 'coding reference' level, meaning that each reference is counted once, demonstrating the overall representation of data at each level (i.e. a transcript is coded 10 times under communication, coding reference 10). This style of table, where the data is represented numerically is not often included in FA, but the researcher considers it to be useful and interesting within a comprehensive analysis process. For instance, in Table 4-2 Overview of the frequency count for each participant for each theme in line with Framework Analysis, it can be seen clearly that

the leader of ALB (Michael) is speaking about culture as frequently as his employees, and that Cathy [ALB-P12] had little to say on every major theme except 'relationship' (this is accurate when it is considered that Cathy [ALB-P12] was a part time employee who was initially employed through a parent). This approach and adaptation of FA enhances the overall quality and transparency of the data at a holistic level. However, in line with more traditional approaches (Gale et al., 2013; Parkinson et al., 2016), the researcher has also summarised the qualitative data for each participant and theme in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2 Overview of the frequency count for each participant for each theme in line with Framework Analysis

	Themes		
	Culture	Organisational Direction	Relationship
1 : ALB - Leader 1	47	43	39
2 : ALB - Participant 1	42	36	53
3 : ALB - Participant 10	35	16	41
4 : ALB - Participant 11	24	28	20
5 : ALB - Participant 12	2	5	12
6 : ALB - Participant 2	16	17	16
7 : ALB - Participant 3	26	18	30
8 : ALB - Participant 4	27	32	30
9 : ALB - Participant 5	18	49	31
10 : ALB - Participant 6	21	16	20
11 : ALB - Participant 7	23	21	31
12 : ALB - Participant 8	21	44	25
13 : ALB - Participant 9	32	34	37
14 : MGY-Leader 1 and 2	35	36	50
15 : MGY-Participant 1	16	32	23
16 : MGY-Participant 10	23	14	27
17 : MGY-Participant 11	5	7	10
18 : MGY-Participant 12	14	12	29
19 : MGY-Participant 13	15	14	27

20 : MGY-Participant 14	10	12	13
21 : MGY-Participant 15	4	3	10
22 : MGY-Participant 2	18	20	33
23 : MGY-Participant 3	15	26	33
24 : MGY-Participant 4	29	26	50
25 : MGY-Participant 5	46	17	48
26 : MGY-Participant 6	25	44	51
27 : MGY-Participant 7	10	5	11
28 : MGY-Participant 8	51	46	69
29 : MGY-Participant 9	30	25	49
30 : PBS - Leader 1	8	22	11
31 : PBS - Leader 2	29	26	35
32 : PBS - Participant 1	46	35	48
33 : PBS - Participant 2	53	42	52
34 : PBS - Participant 3	47	50	64
35 : PBS - Participant 4	41	45	46
36 : PBS - Participant 5	27	22	25
37 : PBS - Participant 6	49	57	61
38 : PBS - Participant 7	27	28	46

The data has been represented at thematic level for each participant using numbers to represent each coded section of transcript; however it is more common for researchers in the FA tradition to include a table of themes and participants with a summary of the data that it represents.   Parkinson *et al* (2016) demonstrated this process in their worked example of FA and they suggest that researchers should provide a summary for each category and participant. In practice, this summary information would appear similar to Figure 4-13, but it would additionally include the researcher's interpretation of the participant's words (in place of an occurrence count).   The attempt to summarise the contents of qualitative data into a simple and concise table is a limitation of FA, and it is likely that charting will often result in the production of a table of significant length.   The accompanying Table 4-2 has been designed to support the reader's overall insight into the data.

The researcher has provided a sample of the charting table in Figure 4-13. The advantages of this approach are said to be that summaries can be read across a case, theme or participant at each level (Ward *et al.,* 2013). This data summary process is effective and enables the researcher to read thematically and by participant in an efficient way, often it also highlights where there might be gaps in sub-themes. This can be seen in Figure 4-13 where the sub-theme 'break from normal life' represents the experience of a part-time employee speaking about their second place of work as being something similar to a 'break' from normal life/work. This is naturally empty for full time staff as is highlighted by FA.

Figure 4-13, Figure 4-14 and Figure 4-15, visually represent the data on three levels for all themes and nodes. The purpose of these Figures is to demonstrate the depth of analysis and richness provided by FA (as opposed to them being easily readable). 'Relationship' has been shown at a low level, 'Organisational Direction' at a medium level and 'Culture' at a high level.

	A : 00 Relationship	B : 01 Buy-In	C : Ambassador for Organisation	D : Break from normal life	E : Employee (Buy in Lack)	F : Employee (Buy in)
1 : ALB - Leader 1	I have done it. Now then, that is a bit weird, because I have heard that before your visit, I know about it. But the culture, that we created in this building by the past owners, what happened with me, I worked for them for 20 odd years and the opportunity came to buy, but we had a autocratic system. Two people that, you know the partition boards, well they did the office with partition boards, so people couldn't even talk, so - it, and that seems to have. There is still people who have been here a long time, who are going ohh. So, just communications, probably educating me - a question. If someone is talking ten minutes to talk about last night, seeing a show, baby being born, my attitude, as long as you know, there is a job to do, and you get on with the job and know that. I have to portray that, I have changed, because I was under that regime, so I know what they are saying, but I don't necessarily	There is a balance, getting the balance right, and obviously and the moment, the balance isn't right. They work hard, they work tremendously hard these people, I am trying to engaged and this week, one lad, his wife came off a horse and all he is worried about, was scared to go to the hospital. I have an appointment, can you help - I said just go! So, the managers, but that comes down to me, I take - what I am being, managing the managers has to change, I have to change the culture, of creating a team atmosphere

I understand what you are saying and some people don't, and I am not talking about anyone, but it is a minority that want to move forward, it's like me saying to you that the site supervisor is leaving, as soon as he intimated that he would leave to me, he was going to go. | | | There is a balance, getting the balance right, and obviously and the moment, the balance isn't right. They work hard, they work tremendously hard these people, I am trying to engaged and this week, one lad, his wife came off a horse and all he is worried about, was scared to go to the hospital. I have an appointment, can you help - I said just go! So, the managers, but that comes down to me, I take - what I am saying the buck stops here, and if I am being, managing the managers has to change, I have to change the culture, of creating a team atmosphere | I understand what you are saying and some people don't, and I am not: talking about anyone, but it is a minority that want to move forward, it's like me saying to you that the site supervisor is leaving, as soon as he intimated that he would leave to me, he was going to go. We tried to keep him, over the month, but unfortunately for us, he lost his mother-in-law, and another turn in his life, so I am off, and other things. So, we have gone to the market, looking for fabricators and Susan was doing an interview in the canteen, and I can't wait for the kettle to boil, and I went in, and they are talking away, and he mentioned site. So I walked over and said, we haven't met have we - said to him, that's what I used to do, but we have not captured this in the induction. He's saying I have got this and this and can go on this site, have my training, and really want to do the appointed person, have a |
| 2 : ALB - Participant 1 | I have always thought that everyone makes mistakes, and if you don't make a mistake, you don't do nothing. It's not a mistake until it does out of the door.

I think if you beat people up they learn nothing, because they are frightened to do it again

It slows stuff down doesn't it?

It does, and a lot of it is a trust thing, and erm, yeah, I mean there are certain methods here that I could | I have always thought that everyone makes mistakes, and if you don't make a mistake, you don't do nothing. It's not a mistake until it does out of the door.

No, estimating. But to a certain extent, you don't want to be totally involved and leave them to it, one thing I think, is missing. is the - and we are trying to get it, involvement and peoples experience, it's something you can't learn in a text book. Sounds awful to say to someone from a university, but a guy can come with a qualification, | | | I have always thought that everyone makes mistakes, and if you don't make a mistake, you don't do nothing. It's not a mistake until it does out of the door.

No, estimating. But to a certain extent, you don't want to be totally involved and leave them to it, one thing I think, is missing. is the - and we are trying to get it, involvement and peoples experience, it's something you can't learn in a text book. Sounds awful to say to someone from a university, but a guy can come with a qualification, | People want less hours, because money is all right, but life is more valuable than money. I just said that, bear in mind you're offering me a wage, and you're buying my most valuable asset, my time, my life, and that don't come cheap. |

Figure 4-13 FA Relationship (Low Level)

Figure 4-14 FA Organisational Direction (Mid-Level)

Figure 4-15 FA Culture (High Level)

In line with a key benefit of FA, the matrix-summary links the raw data back to the themes whilst positioning the data alongside all other interviews. This is useful and is facilitated through N-vivo.

The matrix coding of the data was powerful, and demonstrated to the researcher how intrinsically linked his data was. This can be seen in the extract from the summary of the theme 'Culture.'

[Speaking of the Culture]

Now then, that is a bit weird, because I have heard that before your visit, I know about it. But the culture that we created in this building by the past owners, what happened with me, I worked for them for 20 odd years and the opportunity came to buy, but we had an autocratic system. Two people that, you know the partition boards, well they did the office with partition boards, so people couldn't even talk, so - it, and that seems to have. There is still people who have been here a long time, who are going ohh. So, just communication probably, educating me. [Michael, ALB-L1]

The researcher was surprised to see the same passage appear in the summary of the theme 'Relationship' and was initially concerned that a coding mistake had been made. However, when he went back to the raw data, it could be seen that the passage had been coded under multiple nodes, including 'Feeling Respected' that became category 'Feelings of Respect' and the theme 'Relationship,' and 'Growth mind-set' that became category 'mind-set' and theme 'Culture.' This learning occurred as a result of FA and aligns with Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) observation that the stages in FA are often overlapping.

Further, when approaching the charting stage, the researcher observed a limitation to FA. FA requires researchers to chart their themes against the interviews themselves, as is seen in Figure 4-13. However, this process of summarising the content of themes can easily turn into re-starting the coding process. The researcher had this problem in the early stages of charting, where the Nvivo summaries were not short enough, and the researcher decided to summarise further using key words or bullet points. In practice, these summaries began to resemble the nodes they represented. For instance, when summarising the data under category 'working conditions' the data will invariably be speaking about the working conditions in the organisation, meaning that researchers who are not careful could begin to apply similar node style summaries back to their data. The researcher therefore reduced the urge to summarise the data, and made a conscious decision to leave the summaries in their raw content, and clearly linked to the themes themselves.

Once the coding matrix had been completed the researcher had three Microsoft Excel spreadsheets that contained the data that made up his themes, meaning that he was ready to begin mapping and interpretation of the data.   This is the stage that enables the researcher to show what the findings represent relative to the aims and objectives of the project.

4.3.7.   Step Five - Mapping and Interpretation

The final stage in the FA process makes an important shift from 'data management' to data 'understanding' (Parkinson et al., 2016).   This stage is particularly important for the findings chapters that follow, as it summarises the overall findings of the thesis for the reader.

This stage also allows the researcher to compare themes and sub-themes and to check the original transcripts to ensure the overall findings are appropriate to the overall context (Ward *et al.,* 2013).   The researcher had discovered his main themes at this stage that answered the research question:

> *Which factors influence organisational-commitment within mid-sized business in the Sheffield-City-Region and what are the associated consequences?*

Therefore, he is tasked with presenting the findings and data in a way that are meaningful and easily understood for the reader.   The primary influencers of OC were found to be **Culture, Organisational Direction and Relationship**. These findings were developed from interviews with employees and employers from the region and developed using FA.   The model that follows (Figure 4-16), the **Influencers of Organisational Commitment Model** (IOC model) has been developed by the researcher and outlines the primary findings of this project.
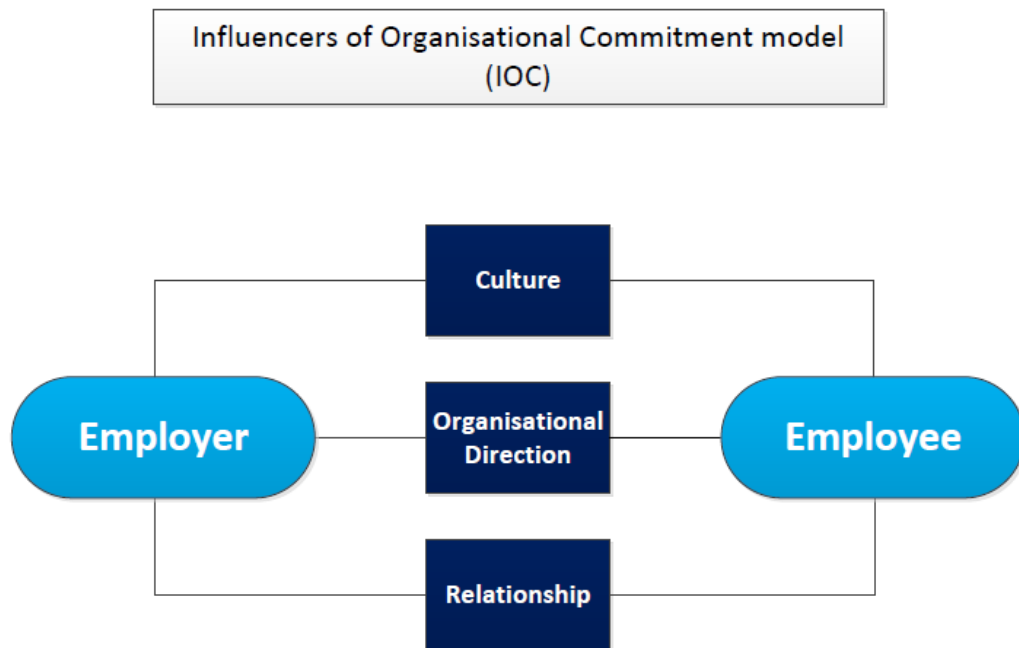
Figure 4-16 - Influencers of Organisational Commitment Model (IOC)

The IOC model demonstrates the three primary themes discovered in this research and serves to inform the findings chapters that follow. Chapter 6 focuses on Culture, Chapter 7 examines Organisational Direction, and Chapter 8 considers the theme of Relationship.

4.3.8. Summary of FA

The process of FA was an essential phase in the analysis of data. It enabled the transformation of the data from a set of loose transcripts to a systematically and thoroughly analysed set of data that can be meaningfully interpreted and understood by the reader. The FA process was adapted from its original five step process (based on Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) five step Framework Analysis), to a six step process that included 'pre-activity.' This was not intended to signal that the process of FA had fundamentally changed, but it serves to highlight the lesser articulated, important activities in the analysis process including, transcription and organisation of data. In reality, the pre-activity stage overlapped heavily with the stage of familiarisation, however, as each took several months to complete the researcher deemed that they were worthy of separation.

The process of data familiarisation, identifying an initial framework, indexing and summarisation greatly helped the researcher to make meaning from the data. It was only by working through FA that the researcher was able to understand and settle upon his final themes. Furthermore, the assistance from others in this process greatly helped the researcher to develop his understanding of and confidence in his final themes. Supervisor support in particular was vitally important to the overall analysis and development of themes.

4.4. Summary of Data Analysis

This chapter has outlined the processes of data collection and analysis for the three phases of data collection that were discussed in Chapter 3. In the case of the quantitative data, the process of issuing the questionnaire, managing the data and eventually combining the data was also explained. The researcher described the quantitative analysis techniques that were employed, and the results of the OC scores were presented ahead of the discussion in Chapter 5.

The process of analysing the qualitative data collected in Phases Two and Three was also outlined and a worked example of FA was provided. The final results of the qualitative analysis are demonstrated through the design and presentation of an empirical model, The IOC model (Figure 4-16). The IOC model demonstrates the overall findings from the data and FA analysis, and explains the primary influencers of OC within the context of mid-sized businesses in the SCR.

The chapters that follow, Chapter 5, 6, 7 and 8 provide a discussion of the results from the quantitative per-study phase (Chapter 5) before moving onto the qualitative data **Culture, Organisational Direction and Relationship** in Chapters, 6, 7 and 8 respectively.

Chapter 5 Results of Pre-Study and Context

5.1. Introduction

In line with the mixed methods approach introduced in section 3.4.1, the purpose of the first phase was to provide an overview of each case organisation ahead of the second and third qualitative phases. The questionnaire was based on Meyer and Allen's (1990) three component model (TCM) and designed to measure three styles of OC as well as collecting demographic data. Further, in line with the research aim and objectives, the researcher also included a scale to measure the employee interest and awareness of strategy (SI). The combination of these scales and the inclusion of demographic data was useful as it allowed the researcher to understand the context and internally reality of each organisation ahead of the qualitative phase of data collection. The researcher analysed the data to look for correlations and meaning before the interviews took place in line with the process described in section 3.6.7.

Further, and ethically, the first phase was also useful for the overall project as it allowed for employees to volunteer for interview in the later phases of the project. This was a useful approach as the employees had the ultimate choice regarding their participation, and further if they provided their names; the researcher could check their commitment levels ahead of the interview.

This chapter is designed to be shorter in nature as the results of the pre-study are formative and intended to support the wider data collected as part of the PhD inquiry.

5.2. Results

Figure 5-1 provides an overview of the results, means, standard deviations and intercorrelations relative to the demographic data collected in the questionnaire. The results are presented at sample level, in Figure 5-1 and case level in Figure 5-3. It can be seen that only weak relationships were observed between the variables; the strongest relationships not between the scales were between normative commitment (NC) and education (0.499 at a 95% level of confidence), tenure and age (0.482 at a 99% level of confidence) and between tenure and gender (0.482 at a 95% level of confidence).

Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Intercorrelations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age	2.16	1.35	-								
2. Gender	0.33	0.47	-.081	-							
3. Tenure	2.02	1.64	.482 **	.482	-						
4. Employment	1.62	1.35	-.060 *	-.237	-.88	-					
5. Education	2.72	1.35	-.162	-.007	-.197	-.207 *	-				
6. AC Scale	5.05	1.23	-.014	.175	-.020	-.395 **	.169	(0.88)			
7. CC Scale	3.59	1.10	.024	.041	.207 *	.062	-.234 **	-.078	(0.73)		
8. NC Scale	4.87	1.06	-.016	.197	-.100	-.217 **	.499	.770 **	.187 *	(0.86)	
9. SI Scale	5.36	1.06	-.019	.100	-.176 *	-.256 **	.119	.571 **	.073	.588 **	(0.91)

Note. Alpha coefficients are presented on the diagonal in parenthesis. For age, 0 = 18-24, 1 = 25-34, 2 = 35-44, 3 = 45-54, 4 = 55-64, 5 = 65-74 and 6 = 74+. For gender 1 = female and 2 = male. For Tenure 0 = less than one year, 1 = 1-3 years, 2 = 3-5 years, 3 = 6-10 years, 4 = 11-15, 5 = 16-20, 6 = 20+. For Employment 0 = management, 1 = experienced (non-manager), 2 = general operative, 3 = entry level (junior), 4 = match day staff, 5 = other. For education 0 = no formal education, 1 = GCSE or equivalent, 2 = A Level, 3 = college, 4 = university degree, 5 = post graduate degree. AC = affective commitment: CC = continuous commitment; NC = normative commitment. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Figure 5-1 Overview of Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations

5.2.1. Correlation Coefficients

Figure 5-1 demonstrates the correlations between the various variables, and while the purpose of the pre-study in phase one is not deductive as has been observed in earlier OC research, the results from the correlations serve to support the first research objective of understanding the overall context ahead of the second phase. Pallant (2010 p. 128) explains that correlations *'provide an indication that there is a relationship between two variables'* but does not *'indicate that one variable causes another.'* In any event, the philosophical position adopted would not allow claims related to causation, however in relation to the case organisation scores it is interesting to observe that a strong correlation between SI and the AC and NC scales is suggested at level 0.01 level of significance.

The very strong correlation relationship between AC and NC (Figure 5-1) is consistent with other research in the OC tradition where the two styles of OC have been found to correlate (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). This is useful for the researcher who can be sure that his research is consistent with earlier work, but otherwise not an interesting finding in itself. The high score for NC should be interesting for researchers investigating the phenomena of OC, as generally in similar research, a lack of prominence has been observed for the normative scale (Jaros, 1997a). This could be an interesting avenue for future research within the geographical context of the SCR; however, this is notably not the main focus of this PhD research inquiry.

Of more interest here is the positive relationship between SI and AC/NC. As acknowledged in Chapter 2, Smith's (2009) hypothesised that SI and OC were connected. Smith argued that OC could be used as a tool to achieve employee interest and support for strategic planning on the basis that both had an interest in the organisations goals. From a strategy perspective, and according to Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) definition, *'commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target'* and from a strategic perspective, OC is the course of action itself. The findings in this section show that within the context of this research, where N=147, a large correlation is indicated between AC and SI where (0.571 with a 99% level of confidence) and a large

correlation is indicated between NC and SI where (0.58 with a 99% level of confidence). The researcher notes that a higher correlation coefficient is observed between SI and NC when compared to SI and AC. This is interesting as researchers often treat AC as the core essence of OC (Bergman, 2006; Mercurio, 2015) and the style of commitment that employers should seek.

As highlighted, only a weak relationship was observed between variables, NC and education scored most highly (0.499 95% level of confidence), however this is notably not significant in line with Cohen's (1977c) advice that a large correlation should exceed .50. Perhaps unsurprisingly, tenure was found to increase with age (0.482 95% level of confidence) and weak correlations were found between tenure and CC (0.207 95% level of confidence). However no other significant correlations were found between variables.

In line with the theoretical support for Becker's (1960) side-bet theory and preposition that it increases through a lack of alternatives, the researcher tested the relationship between CC and education. This was on the basis that employees with low formal education might feel more trapped than their more highly educated counterparts.

Figure 5-2 provides an overview of the plotted relationship between levels of education, AC, CC, NC and SI scores. It was found that CC (representing the feeling of being trapped in an organisation) is highest when employees had no formal education (score mean average of 5.00), compared to employees who were qualified at post graduate level or above (scoring mean average of 3.08). SI was found to increase with level of education (with the exception of point 'A-Levels' where the scale takes a dip), while CC was found to decrease with level of education (in line with the theory that a lower CC score is better). Notably, this finding is in line with Becker's (1960) theory that employees would become trapped in employment through (perceived) lack of alternatives, in this case through education. In this PhD study loyalty based commitment was found to be at its highest with an Undergraduate degree (slightly lower for those with Post-Graduate degrees) and lowest of all for those with no formal education.

129
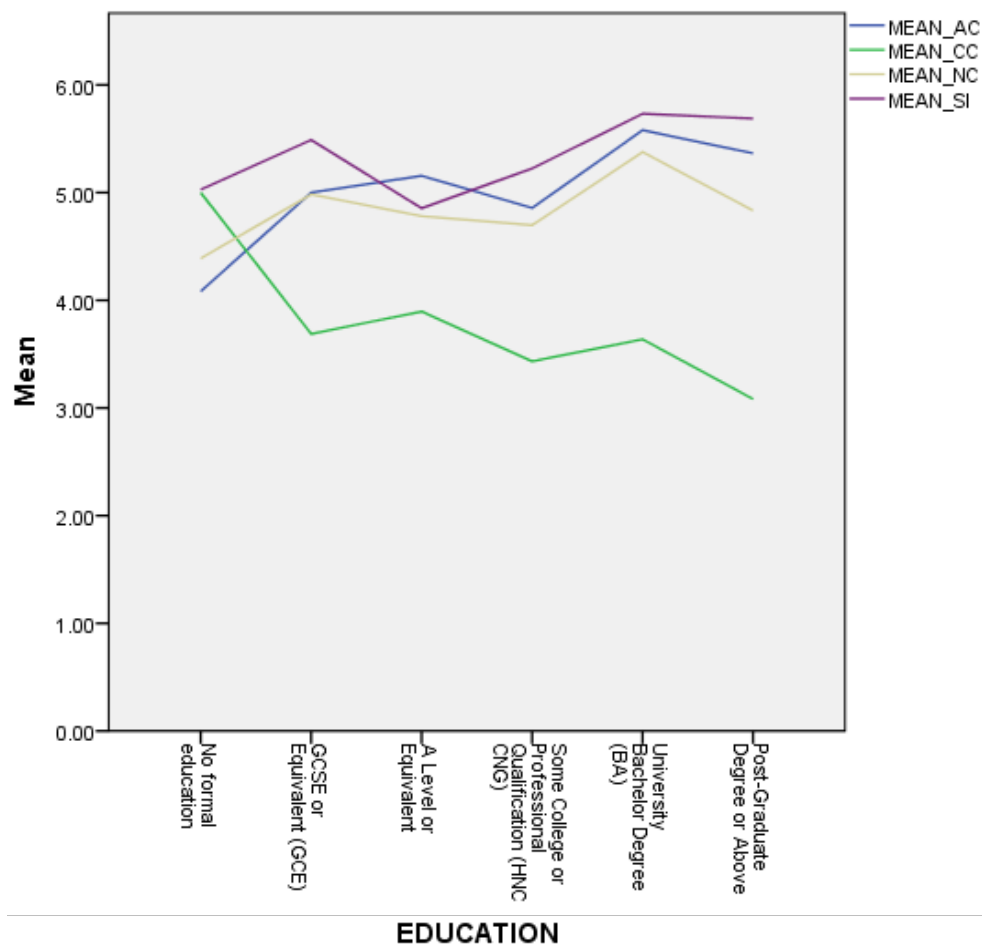
Figure 5-2 Comparison between TCM and SI scales relative to education

The section that follows provides an overview of the results of the TCM questionnaire at sample case level in line with the overall case approach.

5.2.2.   Overview of Case Level Organisational Commitment Results

Figure 5-3 demonstrates the results at individual case level and that employees in all three individual case organisations are committed to their organisations in different ways.

The employees in case **MGY** were strongly committed in the AC (5.27) and NC (5.49) traditions, and the literature suggests that this is positive, however the CC in this organisation (3.94) was also high, meaning the researcher should be aware of this possible 'trapped' feeling during the Phase Two interviews (Gellatly et al., 2006).

In case **PBS**, the employees benefited from a strong AC (5.34) and NC (5.10), and a lower CC (3.30). This represents the highest score in the sample for the positive scale AC and the lowest score for the negative, trapped CC. The researcher should use the qualitative phases that follow as an opportunity to understand what is happening internally to support such a strong OC profile.

The final case, **ALB** reported the lowest AC (4.59), and a moderate NC (4.45) and CC (3.40). The researcher can take this data into the phases that follow, and contrast against case PBS who scored significantly higher for positive commitment. The researcher will be able to compare the internal environment in PBS, to the environment in ALB to reach a conclusion about why these scores are so different.

The results at sample level demonstrate that the employees are committed in the AC tradition (5.05), have a strong NC (4.87) and weak CC (3.59). The SI throughout the sample was high (5.36) and therefore understood by employees.

The researcher notes that the scores can also be converted into a percentage (through dividing the score by seven and multiplying by 100. i.e. AC 5.05 = 72%, CC 3.59 = 51% and NC 4.87 = 69%) and for the purposes of this thesis the two interpretations will be used interchangeably.

Figure 5-3 demonstrates the relationship between the commitment scores and strategic interest (SI) in each case study. In case ALB, SI awareness was 5.03 and this represented the lowest score in the sample, at the same time ALB also scored the lowest for AC and NC, but not CC (where a lower score is preferred). In case PBS, where the SI score was 5.59, the highest in the sample, the AC was the highest in the sample (5.34) and NC was second highest (5.10). This raises some interesting questions to be explored in relation to Phases Two and Three data as to how employees understand strategy and its relationship to OC. The researcher questions if the two constructs of OC and SI are related and if strategic awareness and interest on the part of the employee is influenced by their commitment levels.

	AC	CC	NC	SI
MGY	5.27	3.94	5.49	5.49
PBS	5.34	3.3	5.1	5.59
ALB	4.59	3.4	4.45	5.03
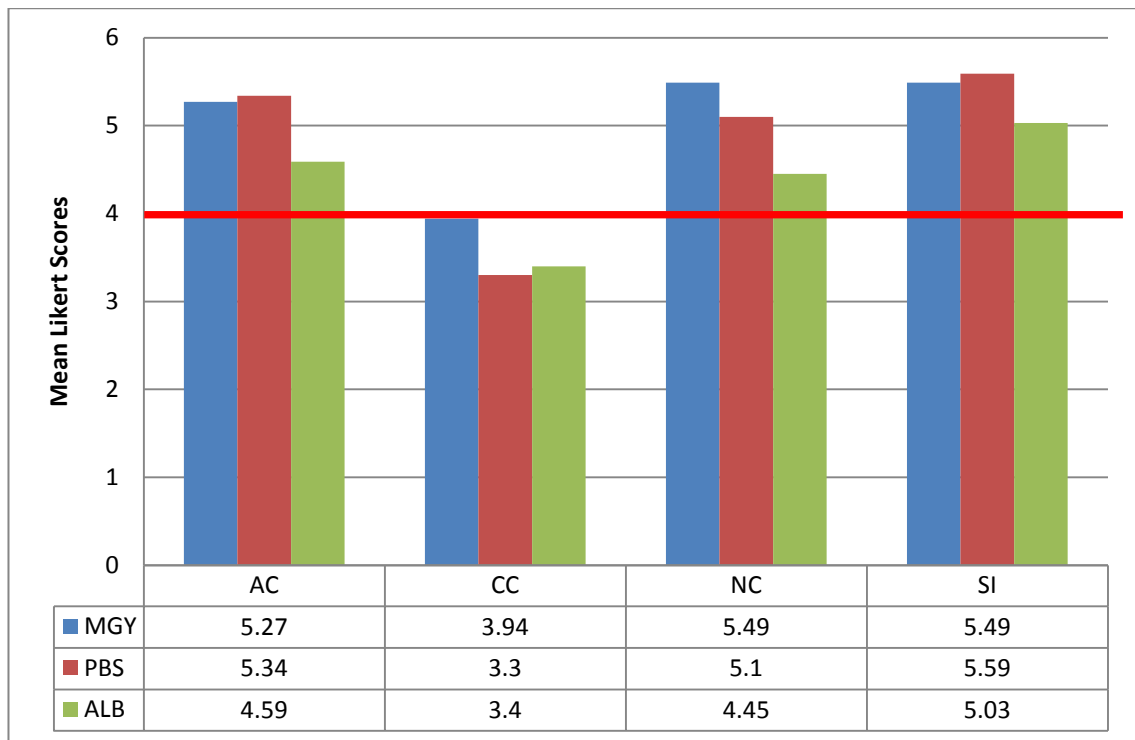
Figure 5-3 Chart demonstrating the OC and SI results for case organisations

5.3. Limitations of the TCM Questionnaire Measures

The questionnaire tested all three scales on a seven-point scale ranging from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (7) 'strongly agree' with a mid-point (4) of 'neutral' (Appendix 10.4). The original authors of this scale did not offer guidance as to what constituted a committed employee within the scale, meaning that the researcher was required to interpret the scale. It was clear that disagreeing (in any form) with a statement such as '[organisation name] *has a great deal of personal meaning for me'* did not constitute a committed employee, and only by (5) agreeing, (6) slightly agreeing, or (7) strongly agreeing was the employee showing some form of commitment, the problem arose with the (4) 'neutral' item.

The literature appears to have ignored this issue, with Meyer and Allen (2004, p. 4) commenting that the *'higher the scores'* the *'stronger the commitment'*. The researcher interpreted the scale in a logical manner and decided that a score of 4 (neutral) was tantamount to disagreement or apathy when being asked about the organisation and its problems. Therefore, a score of 4 was taken as the baseline, and uncommitted, while 4.01 was taken as the first stage of a weak commitment

relationship whereas a score of 7 would be a perfect, full commitment score. It should be noted at this point, that this interpretation only works when applied to a 7 point scale, as opposed to the 5 point scale that is also offered (Meyer & Allen, 1993).

Secondly, the inclusion of reverse coded items within scales is not clear from the perspective of each scale. In the first scale, AC there are three reverse coded items, in CC there are none and within the construct of NC there is one. To its weakness, the literature does not attempt to explain the logic for including reverse coded scales.

The section that follows provides a summary for this Chapter.

5.4. Summary of Phase One, Pre-Study and Context

The purpose of the first phase was to provide contextual information for each organisation and the overall sample ahead of the qualitative stages of data collection in phases two and three.

The results from the pre-study demonstrate that employees in each case organisation were committed, with case PBS scoring the highest and case ALB scoring the lowest. In traditional OC research the diagnosis of commitment is usually enough alone. However this study has been designed to allow for exploratory phases of data collection that are designed to understand why employees are commitment and its consequences.

The Phase One pre-study provided the context of each organisation and provided the researcher with a group of employees who were willing to be interviewed in Phase Two. The three chapters that follow are concerned with the results from the qualitative phases, influencers and outcomes of OC in the knowledge of the pre-study context.

Chapter 6 Culture

In Chapters 4 and 5 the approach of data collection and analysis was outlined and the IOC model was presented based on empirical data. The IOC model highlighted the three primary influencers of OC within the context of the SCR and mid-sized businesses. This chapter is the first of three qualitative findings chapters that will provide the results and discussion in relation to each primary influencer of OC: 'Culture;' 'Organisational Direction;' and 'Relationship.'   As this Chapter is the first to present qualitative data, the first part explains the overall approach of structuring the data and presenting the findings.

This chapter focuses upon the first theme - Culture. It discusses the results of the Phase Two and Phase Three interviews in line with the research aim and objectives and the literature presented in Chapter 2.   As explained in Chapter 4, the qualitative data analysis facilitated the identification of themes, sub-themes and categories in line with Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) five step Framework Analysis (FA) model.   Five sub themes were identified as contributing to the overall emergent theme of 'Culture' 1) communication 2) mind-set 3) supportiveness 4) family environment and community and 5) exit strategy.   These sub-themes are considered, in turn in the next section.

For reference, the IOD model developed in Chapter 4 has been reproduced in Figure 6-1 with a focus on Chapter 6 Culture and the sub-themes are shown relative to the overall theme.
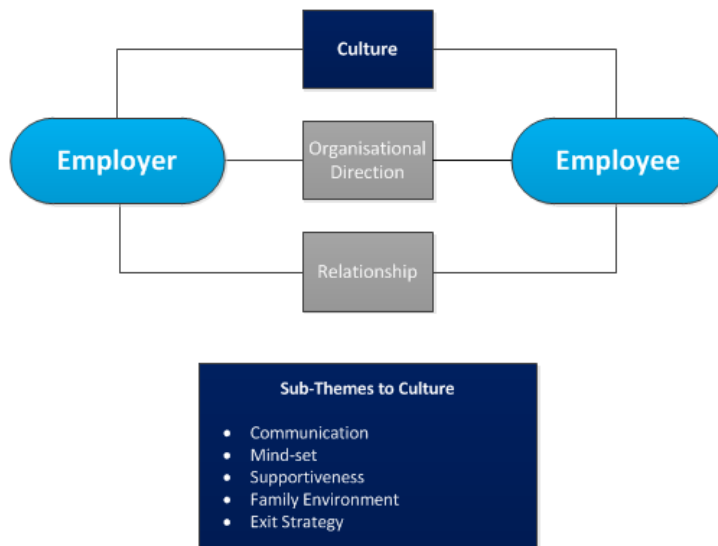
Figure 6-1 IOD Model - Culture

6.1.   Approach to Structure Findings

The purpose of this section is to explain the overall process and structure of exploring the qualitative findings in this Chapter, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8.   In line with FA and 'open' and 'inductive' coding (Gale et al., 2013; Patton, 1990), the researcher coded the data *'without trying to fit* [it] *in into a pre-existing coding frame,'* as the researcher was allowing the data to speak (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83).

In the first instance this led to a list of around 12 themes that described the reality of the employees experience at work and their relationship with their employer. In the later stages of FA and in line with Bryman's (2005) argument that researchers with over 12 themes are unlikely to have completed their coding efforts, the researcher worked with his supervisor to complete the organisation of the data and reduce the list of themes from 12 to three. The three themes represented the major findings from the data collection phase.

The three themes are descriptive of the employee's commitment relationship with their employer. Within these themes are various sub-categories (or child nodes as described by N-vivo) that describe the overall theme (i.e. communication as a part of culture). The themes were identified because they represented what the data was

saying in line with the 'open' coding approach, as opposed to making data fit pre-existing theory or a hypothesis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Gale et al., 2013).

The relationship between the three themes is also considered relative to the entire research question and objectives. For example, communication (which is a sub-theme to culture) was found to influence the employee perception of the 'progression opportunities' that were available to them, itself a sub-theme to 'organisational direction.' This means that 'communication' influences 'progression opportunities' and therefore the second theme 'organisational direction' is influenced by 'Culture.' Therefore, there is a relationship between both themes as will be explored.

The structure of each findings Chapter will begin at thematic level before moving into sub-theme level (i.e. Culture followed by Communication). The researcher will introduce quotations to support or critique each sub-theme in line with the employee's comments (Corden & Sainsbury, 2002a). The researcher will also explain the overall context of the theme and interpret its meaning ahead of the overall discussion in Chapter 9. It is a limitation of qualitative approaches and thesis design that researchers are not able to include all of their qualitative data in their findings. This has led to researchers in the qualitative tradition being accused of being *'airy fairy'* or unclear in their approaches (Labuschagne, 2003, p. 100), however it would be impractical, confusing and repetitive to the overall argument being made to include *all* data relating to a theme or sub-theme. Through the adoption of clear and detailed approaches such as FA, the researcher has minimised this qualitative critique. The process of data reduction can be seen in Table 6-1.

The researcher presents verbatim quotations from the transcripts themselves throughout Chapter 6, 7 and 8. However, in line with Corden and Sainsbury's (2002b) argument that quotations should *'enhance readability,'* the quotations are often edited from their original form to enhance general flow of text and arguments. The purpose of editing is not to influence the argument being made; rather it is to reduce redundancy and to support the overall discussion. An example of this would be the removal of conversational terms such as *'erm,' 'do you know,'* or *'bla, bla, bla.'* An example of this process can be seen in Table 6-1.

Table 6-1 The approach to structure the findings, a worked example

Transcript Data	Edited Data for Inclusion in Thesis	Initial Code	Sub-Theme	Theme
Researcher: So [this is] a calm, happy place to work? It's not the happiest place, because there is long periods of uncertainty, but it's deadly silent for hours and hours. We look up every now and again, I am one of those who break it up, say it's like a morgue in here, let's break it up, get a bit of banter going. But it's only for five minutes, then we are back to silence. **Researcher: I have heard other people say the silence is quite deafening…** Yes, it is noticeable, how quiet it is	_It's deadly silent for hours and hours._ We look up every now and again, I am one of those who break it up, say it's like a morgue in here, let's break it up, get a bit of banter going. But it's only for five minutes, then we are back to silence. [Steve, ALB-P10]	'Talking not encouraged'	Communication	Culture

Researcher: So, the first question is do you feel a personal connection with this company, MGY? Erm, I personally do, I just going back to the like hierarchy of the club and the CEO and them kinda things, they all know your name, stop and speak to you they'll say hello and pretty much every single member of staff will give you the time of day to, talk to you, ask how you are, that kinda thing. **Is that important?** Yeah, its, doesn't put barriers then, when going to talk to them, or, it doesn't make you feel unwanted by them kinda people, it's not like us and them mmm, it's not that he's… it breaks down a few barriers.	*The […] hierarchy of the club and the CEO […] they all know your name, stop and speak to you, they'll say hello, <u>pretty much every single member of staff will give you the time of day, talk to you, ask how you are</u> [Ricky, MGY-P1]*	*'Buy-In'* *'Communication'* *'Feeling Valued'*	*Employee Buy-In*	*Relationship*

The following section introduces the qualitative data relating to the first theme 'Culture.' The first sub-theme to culture is communication.

6.2. Communication

This Chapter relates to Culture as the first theme of the IOC model. The first sub-theme to be discussed is communication. Schultz and Breiger (2010) paid significant attention to communication. They referred to a system of 'weak' culture where 'small talk' and 'levelling' topics such as sport and music can lay the foundation for more meaningful and important connections between groups. White and Davey (2003 p. 231) described communication as a *'basic building block to inclusion.'* Schultz and Breiger (2010) argued that small talk is an essential pre-activity to more meaningful communication within organisations. During the Phase Two qualitative interviews the concept of communication was identified as a sub-theme within the construct of culture as the way in which employees communicated with each other was found to have a significant impact on the reported employee experience at work.

In Case ALB, for example, it was noted that the culture of the organisation did not allow for 'small talk' or chatting *'for me, sometimes you can hear a pin drop'* [Val, ALB-P3] communication was not encouraged within the culture of the organisation, leading to a silent office and this appeared to negatively impact the employee experience;

> *It's deadly silent for hours and hours. We look up every now and again, I am one of those who break it up, say it's like a morgue in here, let's break it up, get a bit of banter going. But it's only for five minutes, then we are back to silence.* [Steve, ALB-P10]

This lack of communication was noted to have further reaching impact on the employee perception of their working environment;

> *It's that quiet it's deafening, feels oppressive, that silence* [Charles, ALB-P1]

It was interesting that the issue of a silent office was acknowledged explicitly by one of the senior managers in ALB during his Phase Three interview. Michael's response is reminiscent of the embedded, persistent nature of organisational culture particularly in a context where employees have remained within an organisation for a substantial period of time:

> *[Researcher: The employees speak about the 'silent office' and feeling 'oppressed through silence' are you aware of this problem?]*
>
> *Now then, that is a bit weird; I have heard that before your visit, I know about it. But the culture that we created in this building by the past owners, they [separated] the office with partition boards, so people couldn't even talk. [Even though I have removed them] <u>there [are] still people who have been here a long time, who [still don't think they can talk]</u>* [Michael, ALB-L1]

The senior manager was reflective and enthusiastic to change the culture of the organisation; however, as can be seen above, despite removing the partition boards and physical barriers to communication, mental barriers still remained in the minds of the employees and managers:

> *If someone is taking ten minutes to talk about last night, seeing a show, baby being born, my attitude, as long as you know there is a job to do, and you get on with the job and know that. I have to portray that. <u>I have changed, they need to know that</u>* [Michael, ALB-L1].

This issue relates to the observations by Schultz and Breiger (2010) who claimed that where employees are not able to communicate in line with a 'weak culture' it would lead to further reaching impact. If Schultz and Breiger are correct in their deductions, then ALB will not benefit from informal 'weak' conversations that are the foundation and starting point for more meaningful communication:

> *It's very quiet, very quiet, when you are talking to customers, you get a bit loud and feel, <u>if I have a conversation with a customer, I will go outside,</u> rarely in the office* [Steve, ALB-P10].

Employees who had recently worked elsewhere were better able to reflect upon the wider benefits of informal conversation between colleagues:

> *I think <u>you need that talking – to break down barriers is a big thing, because you put them up and they take a lot of getting away</u>, it's little things that helps […] we're not in the 1950's anymore, [we're] not going to beat people with a stick* [Charles, ALB-P1].

Dwight had recently worked elsewhere and spoke of the consequences of culture

relating to employee turnover;

> *If you want communication the [employees] need to face each other […] the turnover is ridiculous, <u>people come for 6 months and leave, it's not fun to work [in this office], not nice</u>* [Dwight, ALB-P5].

Dwight's argument that a lack of conversation or communication could led to employee turnover and impact employee retention has been an issue important to previous OC research (Ben-Bakr et al., 1994; Collins, 2016). Further, in line with Mowday's (1979) argument that OC is a set of shared 'goals and values' between employer and employee, the researcher questions how closely this desire to communicate can be linked to the goals and values of the organisation. The questionnaire in the Phase One pre-study revealed that employees in ALB had the lowest SI score (with a mean average score of 5.03) whereas, case MGY scored more highly (mean average score, 5.49). At this point it was useful to consider whether improved communication channels (and also communication styles) impacted the employee's awareness of organisational goals (or strategy):

> *<u>There's an open-door policy,</u> I can knock on [Neil, MGY-L2]'s door, if I want anything I can go an knock on [David, MGY-L1], he'll say yeah come in have a tea, coffee, come in ask me any questions* [Ricky, MGY-P1]

Ricky's reflection of his manager's willingness to communicate and how this altered his perception of his employer and wider organisation is in contrast with Dwight's experience at work as it led to an increase in turnover in line with a *'weak culture'* (Schultz & Breiger, 2010)*.* Further, this communication relationship between employer and employee aided Ricky's understanding of the organisations goals:

> *No one's higher than others, <u>we're all on the same level and we all want to achieve the same thing</u>* [Ricky, MGY-P1]

In the cases of MGY and PBS, employees reported that they were clear about the goals of the organisation, and their leaders in the organisations were actively building two-way communication channels to communicate the strategy to employees. Contrastingly, in case ALB, the effort to build communication channels from management were not seen to exist in the same form, often leaving the employees

frustrated and feeling out-of-touch with the organisations direction:

> *It doesn't* [seem] *<u>like the managers liaised between themselves,</u> because your manager, my immediate manager will say, we want this, do this and then the operations manager will say, why are you doing that? What needs doing?* [Daryl, ALB-P9]

> *There's very little strategy, <u>we don't get feedback,</u> I don't know* [Steve, ALB-P10]

Further, it was found that the opportunity to communicate in line with a 'weak' culture and on topics outside of work had wider reaching impact on an employee's experience at work. Keith describes his experience of working with his line manager and his approach to communication:

> *I have Costa Coffee breaks with* [my manager] *now and then. <u>We'll go and have a chat about how things are, not just work, but how things are outside work,</u> cos if you're not happy outside work, you probably can't perform your best during work hours* [Keith, MGY-P2]*.*

Keith also described how his manager's approach to communicating with him had influenced his own approach to dealing with his own employees on how they reported to him:

> *I'm a line manager myself. So I'll make sure that my team work to the best of their ability, if you're a people person you know what people are like, as soon as they walk in the office and they're a bit off, just grab them, ask if they're alright, offer them a cup of tea. They might have failed their driving test or something like that, erm, anything, you know what it can be like* [Keith, MGY-P2].

However, unless the attitude to communication is consistent and reliable from an employee's perspective, the value and impact on building a communication channel is limited. White and Davey (2003 p. 231) describe the importance of communication as a tool that can *'inform the employees about issues that may affect them, and the employee feeling that they are listened to'* as discussed by Kevin:

> *We probably have limited success,* [to communicate goals and values]*. Tell people the plan, get in, full core values and vision, these areas,* [we] *had meetings with everyone in different groups. Probably not well followed up, but*

keeping people informed and updated, is probably the biggest challenge [Kevin, ALB-P2].

6.2.1.   Summary

The concept of communication has been identified as an important factor that influences the wider culture of an organisation. The preceding discussion summarises the importance of communication channels within an organisation and their wider reaching impact to the overall culture of an organisation. In particular, the importance of small talk, and informal discussions were identified as being important factors that assisted in constructing the overall relationship and community-building process internally. Communication channels were also found to be influential to the employee understanding of strategy.

The second sub-theme to the theme culture is mind-set and is expanded in the section that follows.

6.3.   Mind-set

The sub-category of mind-set was perhaps the most challenging to code, and the sub-theme that was most inductively generated from the insights into what the employees were saying.   The seminal work in OC discusses 'mind set' in the general sense of the employee's attitude and experience at work, but does not elaborate further as to exactly what mind set means (Meyer & Allen, 1993). Mowday Steers and Porter (1982) use the term mind set in early commitment research in line with discussion on attitudinal commitment. They use the term mind set to investigate *'which individuals consider the extent to which their own values and goals are congruent with those of the organization'*.   For the avoidance of doubt, Meyer and Allen's (1993) use of the term will be written as 'mind set' and the application here as 'mind-set.'   The researcher was aware that the overall attitude of the employees, their beliefs and expectations about what was happening would have a significant impact on their relationship with the organisation, and by extension, the culture of the organisation. This category was essentially something that was holding everything else together, and shaping the overall perceptions of the employees:

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I was saying to [my manager] yesterday, because we're in the [morning] meeting - we get it in the neck, but <u>the people that care most about the company who will stay very late,</u> sometimes you come out thinking, christ - it's 19:00 and we have been hammered, […] I am thinking, why am I in this meeting and caring about things, and awake at 04:30am worrying and other people will clear off at 16:30 and it's never mentioned, […] no-one says anything to those people [Phyllis, ALB-P4].

The researcher was unsure how this subjective experience that existed within the mind of each participant could be coded to reflect what was happening. Then he attended a conference in Sheffield where Reka (2017) presented his thesis that investigated the 'mind-set' of Kosovan nationals within the context of an emerging democratic economy during post-war transition. The research on mind-set, developed by Dweck (2012), offered two options for an individual's mind-set.   The mind-sets are said to be developed when we are children through the words that our teachers and parents use to describe our abilities. Either, *fixed* where as humans, we believe that our abilities and talents are inflexible, static and unable to be developed, or *growth* where we believe that our abilities and talents are the starting point, and can be developed through training, education and desire. In the research carried out by Reka (2017), mind-set was found to be influential to the overall development of Kosovo as an emerging democratic nation who were transitioning into an independent country in the context of post-war (see: Reka, 2017).

This finding was revelatory as it fitted the researcher's understanding of what was happening within the various organisations in this PhD study, and while the theory developed by Dweck (2012) was not intended for use in an organisational or business setting, according to the theory, the mind-set of individuals are stable and not dependent on context. The researcher returned to the data to code where he saw examples of employees demonstrating either a fixed, growth or general mind-set (where general mind-set here refers to the participants general attitude and approach to their work that does not necessarily fit within growth or fixed approaches). It was notable that participants in all three case organisations spoke of mind-set, either explicitly or implicitly:

We have got that similar mind-set that we all want to take this club somewhere and we are all on the same journey […]. You'll never get 100% perfect, but <u>we have got enough people that are the right mind set and commitment that we can carry the rest</u> [Holly, MGY-P8]

Holly spoke of working in line with the clubs goals and being on the *'same journey'* as her colleagues. However, the culture in ALB did not recognise employees in the same way, meaning that the employee's mind-sets were more fixed:

<u>I have never, been in an industry where you get rewarded,</u> […] getting people to want to do that little extra. Certain people will. It's their makeup, certain people - wont [Oscar, ALB-P6].

The quotations above demonstrate general characteristics of the mind-sets within each organisation under investigation. In the seminal work of Dweck (2012), the research into mind-set was primarily focused on students in the context of education, and this chapter, along with Reka's (2017) diversification of the construct, argues that it can be applied to employees in the context of SCR's, MSB. In investigating examples of mind-set, the researcher observed multiple examples of an employee demonstrating their outlook, whilst not referring to mind-set itself. The quotation below, from case ALB provides a powerful example of an employee with a fixed-mind set, arguing that because his organisation was not organised, the organisation should attempt to reduce the size of its business in order to 'get the business working again:'

It feels like it's badly run, from my point of view on the shop floor. It's certain process we follow with paperwork, we get told in meetings that you don't do a job until you get the paperwork and drawing. Only a few days ago, I did a job, there was no paperwork whatsoever; we are always in a rush, always in a rush to complete things. <u>If the turnover is say, £8m a year, no. Let's base it on £5m and get the business working again</u> [Sam, ALB-P8]

In contrast, employees with a growth mind-set were generally more positive and upbeat about their experiences at work. Keith spoke about his desire to meet targets and look ahead once they had been met:

There are targets, but once you get to those targets and they're achievable, <u>you're looking ahead aren't you,</u>

> *looking ahead for something else to do. Something more*
> *you can do* [Keith, MGY-P2]

In contrast to Keith, who described meeting targets and looking ahead with no suggestion that targets might not be met, Sam speaks of an organisation unable to grow through processes that he is engrained within.   The mind-set was visible at all layers of an individual's perception of work, and was found to significantly influence the way in which employees experienced their world. Gareth worked on a fixed-term contract with MGY that was due to expire within 12 months, however through a growth mind-set commented:

> *It is a little bit worrying, but, it's not always something we*
> *can control, […] what we try and do [is] make sure that*
> *we've done everything to the best of our ability so if*
> *anything else was to come up across the club we could fit*
> *in […] and no matter what role you give us, were going to*
> *set the right image for this club* [Gareth, MGY-P3].

In contrast to Gareth, Pam spoke more negatively about her environment and experiences at work, demonstrating a fixed mind-set:

> *I haven't really got anywhere else I can go; does anybody*
> *want to be at work?* [Pam, PBS-P1]

Through investigating the concept of mind-set, the researcher learned that employees with fixed and growth mind-sets experienced their environments differently. Through coding and writing, it was noticed that employees with a growth mind-set spoke about problems as though they were in control and issues were internal to them;

> *I'd love to work here full time, and I have seen how it*
> *worked with* [my colleague]*, I try to make a difference'*
> [Jim, MGY-P10]

> *I just hope that like, I can help, kind [of] bring [in] that*
> *culture'* [Gareth, MGY-P3]

However, employees who demonstrate a fixed mind-set spoke about problems as being external to them and in the control of someone else:

> *I'd say this is a job* [as opposed to a career], *I can't see*
> *how I would, progress in this company'* [Pam, PBS-P1]

> *I haven't seen any benefits from* [lean manufacturing]*, where I work, <u>nothing has changed</u> whatsoever'* [Daryl, ALB-P9]

> *It feels like <u>it's badly run</u>, from my point of view* [Sam, ALB-P8]

6.3.1.   Summary

The influence of mind-set to the overall culture of the organisation can be seen in this section, the mind-set of the individual employee was found to influence the overall experience of work. This section investigated how employees with a fixed mind-set observed organisational problems as being external to them and the responsibility of another person, whereas employees with a growth mind-set were found to internalise organisational problems and take them on as their own. This attitude at work and externalisation or internalisation of organisational problems was found to influence the overall culture of the organisation. Further, this could be influenced by the communication channels that are available to the employees, as more fixed mind-set employees were identified in ALB, however each organisation had employees with both mind-sets.

The number of employees with a growth mind-set is important, as it will influence the support that is available within the organisation. i.e. '*I don't get paid to do it. I just do what I get paid to do'* [John, ALB-P11]. This leads to the next sub-category of culture, titled 'supportiveness'.

6.4.   Supportiveness

The mind-set of the employee was found to influence the perception of work and the support that employees were willing to offer their colleagues. The communication channels and method of communication was also found to influence the overall culture of the organisation. This section, concerned with internal support is the third sub-category to culture and was found to influence the overall culture of the organisation and by extension an employee's OC. White and Davey (2003) described employee participation as their way to give something back to the organisation, and internal support is an important factor in this idea of contributing to the organisation.

The researcher found that a culture of support (or lack of) was primarily set by owners and senior staff in each case organisation. In two organisations (MGY and PBS), where a supportive environment was found to exist, the senior employees had a strong focus on being supportive and in case ALB, the management did not push a supportive culture as strongly, meaning that it did not exist in the same form:

> *There was a lot of ugly banter on the shop floor, <u>we had to start doing equality and diversity</u> [training]<u>, because operations manager at the time was ex-coal mining industry,</u> used to shout at people, swear and call them names, some of the stuff you wouldn't believe on the shop floor, we weren't having any of that. <u>It's only recently that we have got people to start having their own ideas,</u> because they thought there* [was] *no point saying owt because no one listens,* [but] *I think people do listen now*
> [Jenny, PBS-L2]

This is a positive example of management offering training and support that leads to employee engagement with the organisation and offering their own ideas. In contrast, where an organisation is not supportive, and where a Director shouted at an employee, negative consequences can be felt:

> *I was in this meeting, and they were debating this problem* [and the Technical Director shouted at an employee]. *I'll tell you now,* [because of this, [he] <u>will leave, I can feel it</u>. *I have met him, dealt with him this morning, and just seen him skipping out of the door* [saying] *I'm just off to the dentist. You're not off to the dentist mate, you have something lined up. <u>It's the culture of the business we have to change in that event</u>* [Michael, ALB-L1].

The culture set from the top of the organisation was found to be replicated downwards through the organisation and reproduced by managers and employees throughout the wider organisation:

> *I know that if I go to [Neil, MGY-L2] and say look, I am pulled out, […] <u>he will help me prioritise my priorities</u> and help me to look at different projects at different times. On the flip side, if you haven't got that relationship with your line manager, you'll probably get asked and asked and asked* [Holly, MGY-P8].

However, where there was a lack of support from the top it was found to damage the overall supportiveness of the organisation:

> *Why am I in this meeting and caring about things, and awake at 4:30am worrying and other people will clear off at 16:30 and <u>it's never mentioned [by managers],</u> [Other people are] <u>affecting my job</u> and no-one says anything to those people* [Phyllis, ALB-P4].

Supportiveness was found to be an important factor for employees who appreciated being offered support at work.   However, it was found that a supportive culture was something that was installed from the top levels of management, and reinforced by senior managers, without this buy-in, a supportive environment would ultimately not be achieved:

> *I actually ran a team that was an improvement team, to try and change the way we approach everything, and the team who I consulted, said it was a bad idea. That is because <u>the managers don't respect the core values the managers aren't treating me with respect and integrity</u>* [Dwight, ALB-P5].

In contrast to Dwight's negative experience at ALB, Holly spoke of internal support and desire to achieve the same goals:

> *Again we have got that similar mind-set that <u>we all want to take this club somewhere</u> […] and I do think there are other clubs that look at what we are doing and look at our senior management and think* [how do they do it] [Holly, MGY-P8].

6.4.1.   Summary

In summary, the internal support channels available through the organisation were found to be an important part of an employee's experience at work, and an important part of the overall culture of the business.   In places, where the culture was supportive, employees had a positive experience at work, *'It's a lot better [than old employer], […] you don't feel as though you under any pressure to get it done on your own. There's help everywhere'* [Kelly, MGY-P7].   In contrast, where supportiveness was not a natural part of the culture, employees were more negative *'when we come in on a Monday, if something hasn't gone wrong, it will be - why?'* [Phyllis, ALB-P4].

The section that follows is informed by the preceding sub-categories to culture and is concerned with the internal environment of family and community.

6.5.   Family Environment and Community

The concepts of family environment and community were originally written as two separate sections, however as the researcher began to write up the thesis and explore the sub-categories in some detail, it became clear that both sections were discussing the same experience – *'belonging*.'   This first section will consider the family environment at work, and the section that follows will explore the internal community of the organisation.

6.5.1.   Family Environment

The presence of a 'family' like environment at work, where colleagues are treated as some kind of extended family was found to have a significantly positive impact on an employee's experience at work.   The data showed that this type of connection to co-workers facilitated a sense of purpose and belonging for employees within the organisation:

> *It's like an extended family […] I have become very close with, [Michael, ALB-L1] and [Receptionist], and I think you need that. I don't feel I am a number here, I am a person. If my daughter was Ill, they would tell me to go. If you are ill, they tell you to go home, that way they are definitely good* [Val, ALB-P3]

> *I'm not going to work to work, I'm going to mix with my friends here, and it becomes a part of the family for me, I know it is for the other guys as well. […] it's a family. […] That's how I brought up my team, we are like a family.* [Keith, MGY-P2]

This experience helped employees to bond with each other and the family environment brought them closer together *'I know when something's not right, I'll have a chat with them'* [Keith, MGY-P2] these links should be important to organisations as this deep personal connection commits employees to their places of work in a way that OC researchers have not generally discussed:

*All my family's based [here], my family are all [MGY] fans
so the benefits of moving to someone a similar size, not
there' [Ricky, MGY-P1]*

The observation by Ricky demonstrates that a family connection and family support are influential to his commitment relationship and likely to reduce his intention to leave. This is relevant to OC researchers who are interested in a reduction of turnover (Mitchell et al., 2009; Porter & Steers, 1973).

The sub-category that follows is concerned with the overall community of an organisation and the impact this has on the culture of the organisation.

6.5.2. Community

In this sub-category of Culture the value associated with being a part of a community from an employee's perspective will be explored. The idea that employees were part of a community was found to be an important factor to Culture and an influencer of OC. The preceding factors to Culture, communication, family environment and supportiveness are all related to the concept of feeling a sense of belonging. In fact, the OC constructs of NC and CC are often spoken about with reference to community. For example, relationships that might be lost where an employee moved organisations in the case of CC, or the employee who feels loyal and obligated to remain with colleagues who have treated them well in NC (Meyer & Allen, 1991):

*The biggest difference here, is that I feel like I am working
for a family run business, where they will talk to you about
anything, be that a £500k machine, or whatever, it just
doesn't feel like you're a number* [Ryan, ALB-P7]

The concept of community was strongly focused on bringing people together;

*You know we all go out together every so often, birthdays,
Christmas and we still do that now. I am still in contact
with* [ex-staff] *now, and we still go out once a month. I
think it's because they are so friendly, and <u>it's just like
you're part of a family, rather than it's a job,</u> It's more,
[…], we want you to stay we don't want you to leave* [Erin,
MGY-P9]

*I love cooking and baking, so made cakes and brought
them in, […] and I said, we should have a pie day, we all*

make a pie, and all of sudden, it brings people together,
just silly things [Charles, ALB-P1]

Erin and Charles discuss community through bringing people together, either through food or social activities outside of work. This process of 'bringing people together' can have a positive impact on staff, as Val explains:

It's about getting the group together and how to make
this company better, one person can't do it, everyone
needs to buy-into it. I want to retire here [Val, ALB-P3]

Interestingly, the influence on family to employee's choice of work can be seen as an important pre-entry commitment to particular industries. In the engineering company ALB, the influence of family was clear:

'[My Dad] *He followed his father and grandfather to a*
company [and I followed him]*'* [Oscar, ALB-P6].

In the professional sports, football club, Jim spoke passionately about working for a football club that has *'been in my family since the late 1800's' [Jim, MGY-P10].* Therefore the influence of family to career choice is clear and related to community and belonging at work (Rego, Miguel, & Souto, 2007):

6.5.3.   Summary

The family connection and sense of community served to make employees feel as though they were part of something bigger than themselves. This was essentially a community providing a contribution and support to something more than they might be able to achieve alone.   Therefore, it might be surprising that the next category is concerned with breaking that community and removing employees who are not working in line with the company's goals and values.

6.6.   Exit Strategy

In the final sub-theme of culture, exit strategy, the concept of moving on the wrong employees who are not contributing to the overall goals and values of the organisation will be explored.   The researcher did not envisage including a section in this thesis that spoke positively (from an employee perspective at least) about their colleagues being released or fired.   However, it was found that employees reacted well where

colleagues were made redundant or moved on, if they were not perceived as working towards the organisations goals and values.

As one senior manager of ALB, Michael explained, '*if you can't change the people, you need to change the people*' [Michael, ALB-L1].   In the case of MGY and PBS, a number of employees had recently been 'exited' or moved on from the organisation leaving a smaller number of employees who were working in line with the organisations goals and values. In case ALB, the management were reluctant to make anyone redundant, and this caused great frustration on behalf of certain employees who remained. This is evidenced through the quantitative data, where 56% of employees in PBS and 46% of employees in MGY had been employed for less than three years, as opposed to 34% in Case ALB:

> *Where I worked before, we had a clear out when I first went there, and* [then] *no one left for 15 years. Continuity is good, and to do that you need to look after people, but it's a genuine strategy. […] If there are weak links they need to be dealt with, because other members of staff will see weak links not being dealt with. […] There is a problem with that person, not the position; [it] will be 3 out of a workforce of 350. […] That gives other people the motivation and the confidence. I've worked in places before where people will not be dealt with if they cannot be bothered, and the atmosphere goes flat, people start leaving, that sort of thing* [David, MGY-L1].

However, as identified by a senior manager in PBS, excessive use of this strategy can have the opposite effect on motivation:

> *It's a fine line you tread here, because if you hire and fire, perceived to be willy-nilly, then people think you're in a chopping culture, so it has to be a situation where everyone can see this individual is wrong, we don't just sit down and say, you're wrong, you're out - we say these are our values, this is what we expect in this job, it's behaviours you're getting rid of, not performance generally, it's behaviours* [Robert, PBS-L1]

The sequence of data collection and the approach to transcribing and analysing of the data allowed the researcher to provide one senior manager at ALB, who themselves

had not made use of an exit strategy, with the example above (Robert, PBS). Once the participant had listened to the example, he reflected:

> *When I need to be hard, I can get shut of people, I got shut*
> *of certain people that were toxic* [Michael, ALB-L1]

The researcher learned that moving on the wrong employees was important, as employees who were not working in line with the goals and values will act as resistance to organisational change and progression. The limitation of this strategy is that employees might be raising concerns around the strategic direction with good reason, leaving only a set of employees who will blindly follow, as observed in case PBS:

> *What we're trying to do is create a team that do all buy*
> *into* [the strategy]. *I honestly believe though, that cynics*
> *are useful, because you need somebody who is going to*
> *challenge, if we're all going in one direction and no-one is*
> *going to pull us off course that in itself is dangerous,*
> *because you get back to an echo chamber* [Jan, PBS-P2].

However, as referred to above, the strategy to exit the wrong employees does leave a lingering pressure over the heads of employees who might be working hard and in line with the strategy:

> *I think if you cross anyone you are out. I don't know what*
> *happened, but one of the estimators, was here one minute*
> *and then suddenly dismissed, and within five minutes, has*
> *gone. When they do decide they want you to* [go]*, it's very*
> *abrupt. I wouldn't say good, but effective. It could happen*
> *to me one day* [Steve, ALB-P10]

This approach to moving on employees can lead to stress and anxiety on the part of the employees. Steve spoke of his worry that 'exiting' could happen to him 'one day.' The learning from this category was that employees reacted positively to staff being exited from the organisation if there was a belief that the employee was not working towards the organisations goals and values *'it has to be a situation where everyone can see this individual is wrong'* [PBS-L1]. From a management perspective, it was not only important to save wages where an employee who was not working on behalf of the organisations goals, but important for those employees who were left behind and working towards the goals and values of the organisation:

> *I came back to a department where the person who had worked here longest had worked here 8 months when I joined, […] what the hell went on? Now I know what went on […] yeah <u>it was a good excuse to cut some dead wood</u>*
> [Tim, MGY-P4]

In line with Robert's argument that it has to be clear that the employee is 'wrong' for the business, Tim describes an environment where the company needed to 'cut dead wood'. Further, Andy describes that employees with good qualifications and 'good CV's' do not necessarily lead to good employees:

> *<u>We had a lot of change, some good CV's coming into the business and they didn't meet the culture and have left.</u> Now we have a young management team who have fire in their belly […] In hindsight when you look back, the hardest thing I had to do was to get rid of my ops manager who was working 12 hour days for me, but just - wasn't delivering* [Andy, PBS-P7]

Andy highlights the importance of the person-culture fit (O'Reilly et al., 1991a) and the relationship between employer and employee, citing that the *'young management'* team who were already culturally aligned to the business were a better management fit than experienced employees. In this scenario, an exit strategy was well received by the employees, as they associated it with a management team who were working hard and aware of the employees who were not contributing to their department's goals.

Further, a lack of intervention in this scenario can lead to a negative reaction from the employees:

> *What worries me, [I] sometimes feel like I am going native, I was trying this improvement project which I have let die, <u>[its] like running through treacle, and going to managers asking them to help and they are not interested</u>* [Dwight, ALB-P5]

Overall, employees were found to react well to management intervention and badly to a lack of intervention when it was clear that an employee was not performing. As Jan reflected, *'when push comes to shove, and that conversation is had, they are almost relieved*' [Jan, PBS-P2]. However this only applies when the managers and leaders in each case are reacting to their employee's needs. In the case above Dwight explains

his worry that he is *'going native,'* essentially turning into his managers who are not proactive.

6.6.1. Summary

The process of identifying and moving on the wrong staff who were not working towards the organisation's goals and values was received positively by employees internally. However, as discussed, a lack of management intervention can lead to frustration from an employee point of view; this was seen through employee reflections in Cases ALB and PBS where employees expressed anxiety about the process of implementing an exit strategy.

6.7. Summary of Culture

Over the course of this Chapter, the concept of culture as an influencer of OC has been demonstrated as an important factor that influences the commitment of employees. The topic of culture was explored through the sub-categories of communication, mind-set, family environment, community, supportiveness and exit-strategy. As has been explained, the purpose of this chapter was not to make the concept of culture fit existing models or expectations of what culture might contain, rather the purpose was to highlight which elements of culture were prevalent and relevant to OC and the MSBs under investigation in the SCR.

The overall findings in this section discussed the way in which employees communicate, and included the communication channels between the employer and employee. It was found that a lack of communication channels and encouragement to speak in line with a weak culture was damaging to the overall relationship building process and culture of the organisation. The second sub-category, mind-set demonstrated the importance of the employee perceptions to the cultural exchange of the organisation, demonstrating that different perceptions of employees with a fixed mind-set could be damaging to an organisation. The sub-category of family environment and community highlighted the employee desire and sense of belonging and well-being at work. Further, the feeling that an employee was part of something bigger and in a social group was found to be important to the overall culture in line with OC theory such as CC and NC.

The construct of supportiveness was built from White and Davey (2003), who argued that a supportive culture was important for organisations that are attempting to build culture. The empirical data demonstrated that supportiveness was influenced by the decisions and attitude of managers and senior employees within the organisation, and managers who did not encourage a supportive agenda did not benefit from working in a supportive environment.

Finally, the ultimate sub-theme of exit strategy demonstrated the importance of management intervention when employees were not working in line with the organisations goals and values. Interestingly, this was not necessarily a tool to motivate the employee who might leave, but a tool for the employees who remained. It was found that employees reacted well to seeing their under-performing colleagues being exited from the organisation, but caution was urged that excessive use of this strategy could lead to employee stress and anxiety.

In conclusion, the culture of an organisation, and employee participation in building culture was demonstrated in this chapter. The chapter that follows, Chapter 7 explores the second part of the IOC model Organisational Direction, and will explain the process of developing the organisational direction as an influencer to OC. Once the three findings chapters have been discussed, the researcher will explain the overall meaning relative to the context in a holistic discussion in Chapter 9.

Chapter 7 Organisational Direction

7.1. Introduction

Chapter 6 investigated the first theme of the IOC model, 'Culture.' The Chapter explored the process of culture building and the influence of management on the development of organisational Culture.   In Chapter 6, the second theme of the IOC, 'Organisational Direction' is explored.

Organisational Direction (OD) is concerned with the direction in which an organisation is heading. It was found that an employee's OC was influenced by their perception of the organisational direction. For instance, employees reported that they would find it easier to commit to an organisation in the long term that they perceived was heading in a direction that was agreeable to them (See: Allen & Meyer, 1990 Goals and Values). Alternatively, it was found that in instances where an employee could not see personal progression, either through a genuine lack of suitable options, or due to a lack of communication, then their level of OC was affected.   In summary, the employee perception of OD was found to be an important influencer of OC.

As explored in Chapter 4, the theme of OD contains four sub themes: 1) progression opportunities 2) goals 3) leaders and 4) strategy. All four sub-themes contributed in synergy to the overall theme of OD.   This Chapter will explain the theme and relate the findings to the concept of OC and the wider research question and objectives.

The IOD model developed in Chapter 4 has been reproduced in Figure 7-1 with a focus on Chapter 6 'Organisational Direction'; the sub-themes are shown relative to the overall theme.
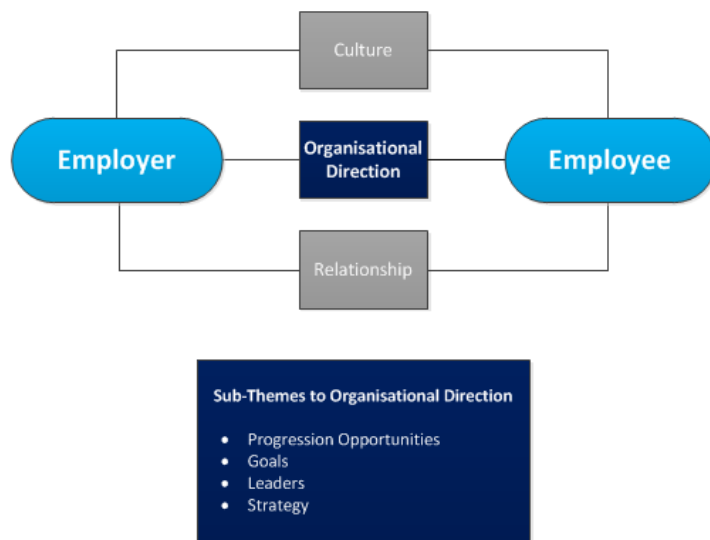
Figure 7-1 IOD Model - Organisational Direction

7.2. Progression Opportunities

The first sub-theme to Organisational Direction is progression opportunities and will be explored in this section. The progression opportunities available to the employee were found to significantly influence the overall employee experience at work and their desire to remain working for an organisation. Importantly, the employee perception of their progression opportunities were primarily experienced in two ways, either through communication (with their superiors) or through seeing another employee progress. The first issue focused on the employee, manager communication and experience at work:

> *I absolutely love it, you get treated fairly, […] when I first started working* [here]*, you got a real sense of the quality of expectation that they set, for us […] they set the right image to me. I just really enjoyed it as soon as I've been here and I'd love to keep progressing and I want to see the club go from strength to strength* [Gareth, MGY-P3].

Gareth reflects that the quality of expectation and setting the right image for the club has influenced his desire to remain and desire to progress within the organisation. Jake discusses his CEO, Robert *'seeing something in him'* and this influencing him as an employee:

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I got the Health and Safety job but [...] as soon as I got here, I got involved in the production side [...] I didn't apply for it, just got offered the job. [Robert-PBS-L1] said he saw something in me when we met, always says it's about having the right people here, and it's gone from there really [Jake, PBS-P3].

Secondly, Ryan reflects that promotions from within would probably be 'higher than average' at ALB because employee ambition is supported:

I am sure that anyone who has shown promise as a welder or anything can become production manager, or supervisor, I bet the percentage of promotions from within, here is higher than average, if you show any sort of willingness, they will jump on it [Ryan, ALB-P7].

This opportunity to progress was not accidental; rather it was a deliberate strategy applied by managers to build employee loyalty and commitment;

I can't tell you how many times we have [promoted from within], we are recruiting someone at the moment, we have seen the potential in him. [...] A lot of the managers started off as shop stewards, and have worked themselves up [Nellie, PBS-P4]

Nellie discusses the strategy of promotion from within and looking for the potential in employees. Pete has benefited from this approach and reflects;

I myself have been promoted many times [I have] been here a long, long time, so we are living proof that the opportunities are there [Pete, PBS-P6]

Interestingly, it was often the case that an employee did not need to be offered progression directly, often the experience of seeing another employees progression was enough to convince them that the culture allowed for progression;

I'd love to work here full time, and I have seen how it worked with [other MGY employee], he got his foot in the door, and if that doesn't come, fine. [Jim, MGY-P10]

Jim was a match-day only employee who wished to work for the club in a full time capacity. Jim had seen other employees in the business obtain employment in this way and was working on a match-day basis to *'get his foot in the door.'* A senior employee in the same organisation discussed this approach and benefits of having

'case example' employees who had been promoted to senior positions within the organisation:

> *People buy into the strategy, and <u>they can see progression because</u> [Neil, MGY-L2] <u>has done it, or [I] have done it</u>, I've met a lot of people who buy into that and have a lot of respect for the people who have done it* [Holly, MGY-P8]

This was not contained to PBS, and examples could also be found elsewhere, for example in PBS:

> *Pete [PBS-P6] started off as a forklift driver in the warehouse, and now he's operations manager, so [I'm following the] same path really [...] <u>the guys who he's managing, all look at him and think, that could be me, so I think it's a good thing</u>* [Jake, PBS-P3]

However, as explored in Chapter 5, in sub-theme *'exit-strategy'* the awareness and involvement of managers and leaders was influential to the overall culture and employee relationship. In this instance, management intervention and communication were found to be equally important where progression is concerned. In the case of ALB, progression opportunities were often available, but unknown to employees due to a lack of communication in line with a '*weak*' culture (Schultz & Breiger, 2010). The message was often not being communicated;

> <u>*I'd like to go further, but you know [...] there isn't anyone else in the company that can do what I do,*</u> *so it's only me that can do the training [...] I wanted to go from running the machine, to writing the programme, so getting out of the shop floor, but there isn't anyone who can do my role* [Sam, ALB-P8]

As a result of this issue, Sam was seeking alternative employment where progression would be offered *'I either leave, or grin and bear it really [...] I have been looking [...], and the money is better elsewhere.'* However, it was unknown to the employee, through lack of communication, that one of the senior managers [Michael, ALB-L1] was considering how [Sam, ALB-P8] could be promoted and his skills developed:

> *The guy who is in charge* [of Sam], *is coming off, he's had a* [health issue]; *he's had it for the last five years. They thought they had sorted it, so he sat me down and said, I need a change of career, I would love to stay at* [ALB]*, and*

> *he's the manager* […] *and* [Sam, ALB-P8] *is below him*
> [Michael, ALB-L1]

This situation where progression opportunities are available, but not being communicated to the general body of employees, as observed in the discussion of Culture in Chapter 5, caused significant damage to an employee's belief in their progression opportunities. In the example of Sam [ALB-P8] it led to the employee seeking alternative employment and the organisation potentially losing a member of staff who, by the admission of a senior manager was the only employee able to carry out that role. Alternatively, in the case of PBS and MGY, where communication channels were stronger, a more open approach to progression opportunities was observed:

> *I gave 7* [to long term plans on the questionnaire, strongly agree to remain] *because I could see myself working with* [MGY] *for many, many years* […] *I've had a chat with them that there* [are] *opportunities for me, and they've said yeah of course, we will be able to sort* [a] *role for you* [Keith, MGY-P2]

Keith's reflections that he wished to remain working for MGY in the long term are underpinned by his communication with his managers in line with the wider theme of communication. Jake discusses his commitment to remain with the organisation on the basis that the direction of the organisation is agreeable to him, management are *'brilliant'* and he has opportunities to progress internally:

> *I can see myself in a career here, and the people I am working with, my manager is absolutely cracking, they are both brilliant, that makes a big difference, you know where you stand with them, they are fairly relaxed as well, so if you need a bit of space, time, flexibility, go and pick my son up, it's not like I need to worry about asking. I can tell the company is going in the right direction, and I can tell we are trying to do the right things, I am training to do* [Andy, PBS-P7] *job to become the operations director, they have dedicated a lot of time to me. They have put a lot of faith in me, so I want to give it back* [Jake, PBS-P3].

The impact of communication on the progression opportunities as perceived the by employees was significant, and is highlighted in the quotations above. However, while it is accepted that progression opportunities are required, not all employees were

seeking progression *'I am not talking about anyone, but it is a minority that want to move forward'* [Michael, ALB-L1].   For the most part, the employees in the football club who worked solely in 'events' were the least likely to seek progression. This could be due to the seasonal nature of their work: or it might reflect the nature of employment; it was often a second job for many employees and provided a break from a more traditional, full time role. The nature of the work was perceived differently;

> *It's just really something different, […] on a Saturday afternoon […], twice a month, […] <u>it just breaks up the monotony.'</u>* [Joe, MGY-P5]

This section has demonstrated the power of internal progression to the overall employee perception of OD. However, as has been observed through the discussion, progression opportunities were not being sought by all employees. From the perspective of the managers and leaders there was acceptance of this, but also a belief that the organisation retains a responsibility to motivate and commit these employees. As a manager in PBS explained;

> *You get people in life, <u>not everyone is a high-flyer,</u> not everyone has got aspirations to do anything more than come to work, do a job and go and have a drink on a night, that's fine, as long as they are doing their job when they are here. <u>We actually have a guy on production, very quiet, committed, output is fine and quality fine just does his shift and you need that</u>.* [Andy, PBS-P7]

7.2.1.   Summary

The findings suggest that the progression opportunities that are available to the employees should be communicated downwards through managers as their options for progression will influence their perception of the overall OD, their place within the organisation, and their desire to remain with the organisation.

Where progression opportunities are available and have not been communicated in line with the culture of the organisation it was found to be damaging to the overall employee OC and employee retention. This is an issue of significant importance as Angle and Perry (1981) noted, *'there is an inverse relationship between organizational*

commitment and employee turnover' meaning that communication of progression opportunities is an important influencer of commitment.

The section that follows focuses on the second sub-category of OD, 'Organisational Goals.'

7.3. Goals

The goals and values of an organisation have featured heavily in this thesis and are a notable feature of OC research to date. Indeed, the concept of goals and values are deeply integrated into OC research, and according to the respected Mowday, Porter and Steers (1979 p. 226) definition of OC, a committed employee should have *'a strong belief in the organisations goals and values.'*   This idea was retained by Meyer and Allen (Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1993) who argued that desire based commitment (AC) was, in effect, an alignment of personal goals and values to the goals and values of the organisation. Further, the empirical data in Chapter 5 highlighted the importance of organisational goals and values to the Culture of the organisation.

Where organisational goals were found to match the goals of the employee, it was found that a strong commitment to goals could begin:

> *I just hope that I can help* […] *bring that culture. I'd like to think that I can try and help the guys understand* [the goal of the club]. *It's for the club and there's an aspect of the personal achievement as well* [Gareth, MGY-P3]

Perhaps predictably, a lack of understanding of the organisations goals caused a lack of understanding of the overall direction in which the organisation was heading. In theory, according to the OC research, it would mean that employees would be unable to align themselves to the goals, either through lack of understanding, or lack of awareness. Dessler (Dessler, 1993) points out, that according to OC theory, *'it's not just the presence of a goal that stimulates progress, [but] also the level of commitment to the goal'* itself.

This can create a challenge if an employee's personal goals are not compatible with the goals of the organisation; the example below demonstrates this from an employee perspective when the employer was not able to match the personal goals of the employee:

I have always wanted to be a fire-fighter, and have tried twice now. Tried at the local fire station, but lived too far away, you have to live within 5 minutes, I was 37 seconds outside the boundary [John, ALB-P11]

In the example of John, he had the personal goal of becoming a fire-fighter and as the mission of ALB did not lend itself to the same goal: he was unable to commit to the organisation. In another example, a part time employee of ALB, who was also in higher education declared a personal long-term goal of working in public service;

[Researcher: Will you stay [at ALB] after [your degree]?]

No, I don't think so. I have goals I want to; I know where I want to work

[Researcher: Do you know what you want to do?]

I want to work for the security services, so MI5, GCHQ […] I love [this] *job. Just want to do something else, it's just not what I want to do long term, but at the minute, I do like it* [Cathy, ALB-P12]

In significant contrast to the examples above, an employee on a part time (event only) contract with MGY and based in full-time employment elsewhere had such an alignment to the goals of MGY, that he was willing to leave his primary employment for any role with MGY:

So far here <u>*I have applied to be a marketing assistant and I have also applied to be a media assistant, which at the time, it was a job I was not qualified to do*</u>*, so it was a case of, stick my CV in and you never know […]. I didn't want them to interview me because they knew me, I wanted it doing the right way, and I came second, I didn't get the job,* [someone else] <u>*got it. He had the experience, had worked at*</u> [another club] <u>*in the past and that was fine. I'd have loved it to have been me, but it was the best for the club.*</u> [They] *phoned me personally to tell me I didn't get the job, and I think he thought it would be awkward and it wasn't. I was fine with it* [Jim, MGY-P10]

Jim's reflection is interesting, Jim was willing to undertake any role for MGY (a question asked in the TCM, under affective commitment) and was so deeply aligned to the goals of MGY that he had no objection to another, more qualified person being successful in the interview. Another employee in the same case organisation who had

been employed in a full-time capacity in the past, but had been made redundant (due to the current league position of the club) was now working in an event only capacity and displayed a similar outlook. The recognition of a shared goal between her and the organisation meant that she was seeking a return to the club and would be willing to undertake any role;

[Would you take any role at this company?]

[Yes] *As long as it didn't stop me working* [in my current match-day role]*. As I still enjoy* [it] [Erin, MGY-P9]

Interestingly, in this particular case, the commitment to the organisation's goals continued even after the employment had ended (and replaced with a reduced contract) and the employee was required to find alternative main-employment;

To be fair, in all the [external] *jobs that I have taken on, well I've only had two. I said to them all, I work for* [MGY] *and in no way, will [I] give that up. So, if you need me to work Saturday, then I won't because I would rather have worked for* [MGY] *just on a Saturday and not have another job, but as it happened, the jobs I got fell in, the other jobs that I got worked really well* [Erin, MGY-P9].

Cohen (A. Cohen, 2007) supported this style of *'before and after'* commitment, arguing that commitment to the organisation was developed in two distinct ways. The first style was *'instrumental commitment propensity'* influenced by *'one's general expectations about the quality of the exchange with the organisation, in terms of the expected benefits and rewards'* that he argued would lead to a normative commitment style.   Alternatively, the second style of commitment was acknowledged to be developed after entry to the organisation, and was based on *'ones perception of the quality of exchange [...] and the rewards one received'* that would lead to affective commitment attachment. Importantly, Cohen did <u>not</u> include a provision for commitment after exit from an organisation, as has been found here.

Further, the concept of OC in a volunteer setting has been explored for Non-Executive Directors (Dawley *et al.*, 2005), but not for junior level staff with an alignment to the organisation's goals. As far as the researcher is aware, commitment researchers have so far not investigated the concept of post-exit commitment as has been identified

here. Finally, these finding supports the notion that commitment is a stable experience from the perspective of an employee (Porter & Steers, 1973).

7.3.1. Summary

The goals of the organisation were found to be significantly important when considering employee intention to remain. At times, it was found that the personal goals of the employee were not compatible with the goals of their employer, meaning that OC could not be achieved. Alternatively, where a connection was made between personal ambition and the goals of the organisation, a powerful commitment relationship could begin.

This section also revealed that commitment can occur before full time employment has begun, and continue after employment has ended (A. Cohen, 2007). In one example, an employee who was employed in a part-time capacity on a zero hour contract had a strong commitment ground in family connection, and in the second case, commitment to return based on alignment of personal goals with the goals of the organisation was demonstrated.

The section that follows is concerned with the next sub-theme of OD 'Leaders,' this relates to employee perceptions of being lead.

7.4. Leaders

As has been discussed earlier in this Chapter and in Chapter 5, a number of cultural factors will influence the manner in which employee's experience being led, including internal communication channels and the employee mind-set. Claxton (2014) found that leadership is linked to feeling valued, supportiveness and how approachable the leaders are. The personal goals of the employee will also have an impact on the employee willingness to be led (White & Mackenzie-davey, 2003). In this PhD research study, in all cases, the leadership agenda in the organisation was directed by the senior managers and directors: *'If the board aren't aligned you have lost the battle before you start,* […] *without that you are definitely not going to get there'* [Jan, PBS-P2]. This meant that the act of leading came from the top levels of the organisation and was filtered downwards.

Therefore, the emerging sub-theme of leadership is concerned with the ongoing act of leading employees and setting a clear direction for the organisation;

> *It was more bureaucratic, do as I say, not as I do, [before] don't have your own ideas, just get on with the job, this is how you do it, <u>the directors were probably working at management level, the [managers] were probably working at team leader level and everyone else was just doing as they were told</u>* [Jenny, PBS-L2]

> *In my opinion, we want to have everyone as friends. <u>What I have always been taught is this company is a person, and therefore has a personality, so what do you want this company's personality to be?</u> So, is it* [gesture pushing people away] *or is it, 'Hi, how are you, great to see you – do you want a cup of tea?' And wherever I have worked, I have tried to make the company a person, with a personality, and we want it to be regarded as one of the team, because it's overt* [David, MGY-L1]

In line with OD, the leaders of the organisation were responsible for setting the direction in which the organisation was heading. This includes setting a clear strategy to manage employees;

> *All businesses are the same, they have got people in them, <u>you have to lead the people, show them the direction and create an environment that allows them to follow</u> the direction. If you can do that, then you will be successful in business, so if you accept that philosophy as I have to, then <u>if the team are wrong, you have to do something about it, when the team are right, you have to do something about it,</u> you have to praise them, train them, got to show them how, they can grow their career with the organisation, and then you get loyalty, then you get the team ganging up on the people who don't want to perform, and they will out them* [Robert, PBS-L1]

Robert was clear on how his company should be run, and was clear that leadership began with people and winning employees over to his way of thinking was an important stage in this process. This extends to communication and being clear on what is expected from employees, as Jan explains:

> *I have had to lose a credit controller, because she simply wasn't performing, so <u>I sat her down and explained what I needed her to do.</u> What you find is, either - you manage*

somebody 'till they get better, or you manage somebody until you both come to the decision that they're not in the right place. And actually, <u>when push comes to shove, and that conversation is had, they are almost relieved</u> [Jan, PBS-P2]

In contrast, where an organisation does not achieve this and managers do not lead in the way described by Jan and Robert, employee frustration occurs:

> <u>*The company* [leadership]*, management are too weak.* *The people who come in* [to meetings and get involved] *are the people who come in on Saturdays and they get* [in trouble] *for something and* [I] *think* [what's the point]*. It could be busy in one area and the manager of a department will not say, you need to stay another couple of hours* [Phyllis, ALB-P4]

In line with earlier discussion that focused on communication, supportiveness and progression opportunities; it was often the case that the experience of leadership was based on employee perception, as opposed to the actual leadership style;

> <u>*We've lost a few good managers, because they couldn't fit to the norm,*</u> *no-ones fault but there's, just they didn't buy into* [PBS] *and couldn't fit the remit.   But the team we've got now they're all on the same page, <u>if you were to listen in on the management meeting they [are] talking the same language</u>, so, they just show everyone, that they can do anything you want, you know, within reason* [Nellie, PBS-P4]

The comment above from Nellie [PBS-P4] implicitly speaks of goal alignment *'they're all on the same page*' and '*they* [are] *talking the same language*' when speaking about leaders and consistency from the top.   Jan [PBS-P2] explained, *'If the board aren't aligned you have lost the battle before you start, […] without that you are definitely not going to get there.'*   In line with the employee desire to align with the goals of the organisation and overall OD, where an employee could not align with their employer through lack of leadership, frustration manifested at employee level:

> <u>*They aren't 100% sure where they want to be,* [so] *how can we know where they want to be?*</u> [Kevin, ALB-P2]

> *They don't manage, simple as that* [Phyllis, ALB-P4]

However, where leaders were perceived to be setting a clear direction for the organisation, associated with the personal values of employees, then challenge was well-received:

> *The buy in that the board have given it is just phenomenal,* <u>*they really get it* […] *we have a board of directors, board of owners who totally get it, that's the critical bit.*</u> *They give you the opportunity to take risks. For me, senior management is formed of likeminded people with a very different skill set, who will challenge each other without conflict. Which is why it works really well,* <u>*[Neil, MGY-L2] always said, you know, he likes the fact that me and him don't agree about certain things and I'll stand my ground*</u>
> [Holly, MGY-P8]

7.4.1. **Summary**

It was found that where employees were agreeable to the direction in which the organisation was heading, and perceived that their leaders (line managers and directors) were working to deliver on the strategic plan: leadership had an important role to play in the process of OC.

Alternatively, where an employee was not aligned to the goals of the organisation, leaders were faced with an uphill struggle to lead their employees. As Jan [PBS-P2] pointed out when discussing moving on staff who are unwilling to be lead, *'when push comes to shove, and that conversation is had, they are almost relieved'*

The final sub-category of 'strategy' compliments this section and is concerned with the overall strategy of the organisation and how employees can relate to their organisations strategic intentions.

7.5. **Strategy**

The previous sub-category of leaders was concerned with the employee willingness to be led in line with their alignment to the OD and the organisations goals. In this section, 'Strategy' is explored with an emphasis on the process of strategic implementation.

In line with the earlier findings of this thesis, employee alignment to the strategy of the organisation was found to be closely connected to the organisations goals and

values, and the internal culture of the business. It can be taken from earlier discussion in this thesis that employees who are not aligned to the goals of an organisation will have a different relationship to strategic implementation when compared to employees who are aligned.

The process of strategic implementation, where the paper-based strategy of an organisation is actually translated into action is an important stage in the process of strategic planning (G. Johnson et al., 2008; Syrett, 2012). Day and Wensley (1983 p. 85), argue that the strategic management literature *'tend(s) to assume too simple a link between the development of strategic direction and its actual implementation.'* This view is shared by Smith (2009) who cites Jack Welch and Percy Barnevik, argument that *'implementation takes at least 90% of the effort necessary to achieve strategic change.'*

In this final sub-section to OD, the process of employee alignment to strategic implementation is explored. In fact, it was Smith's (2009) paper *'Maybe I will, maybe I won't: what the connected perspectives of motivation theory and organisational commitment may contribute to our understanding of strategy implementation'* that inspired this focus when considering the sub-category of 'Strategy.' Smith argued that researchers in the strategic implementation tradition should turn to OC as a means to achieve employee support for implementation of strategy. This is on the basis that *'commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action [...] of relevance to a particular target'* (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). However, as has been argued throughout this thesis, other internal factors such as communication channels or lack of employee alignment to the goals of the organisation can present a barrier between the employee and their overall alignment to OD.

Therefore, strategic planning and implementation can be seen as two separate phenomena, and in line with earlier discussion on leadership, it is the task of leaders and managers to engage employees with the strategy and its implementation:

> *So, everyone we recruit, we tell them the story, and look*
> *for their attitude rather than their experience, so everyone*
> *we bring on, are hopefully of that mind-set anyway* [Jenny,
> PBS-L2]

> *I think we live and breathe it* [strategy]. *So, it's the* [attitude of], <u>*this is what we are doing, this is why we are doing it, and this is what it means to you*</u> [Andy. PBS-P7].

In line with the earlier theme of Culture, the communication of strategy is an essential part in the OC process, as otherwise, from an employee perspective they do not have a strategy to align to:

> <u>*This is it*</u> [strategy is not communicated] <u>*very well,*</u> *we are all a customer at some point so we all expect the same service, so we should pass the values onto the customer* [Val, ALB-P3]

> *Well I am committed to turn up every day and do a good job,* <u>*what the strategy is going forward, I assume there is a strategy to keep the company viable and in business for the next number of years, that I don't need to worry about.*</u> *I think they are trying to diversify into other businesses, but with what success I don't know* [Steve, ALB-P10]

Steve's comment is particularly telling as he went as far as to say *'I don't need to worry about'* the strategy because he *'assumes'* it's in place. Alternatively, in cases MGY and PBS, the managers worked hard to build communication channels to 'sell' strategy to employees:

> <u>*I think, communication verbally through a meeting, face to face, informal, it kinda gives you a better understanding than say an email trail something like that.*</u> *So, any questions you might want to ask there and then, they can answer, or you may not understand the wording of it* [Ricky, MGY-P1]

In PBS, Robert had presented the strategy to every employee in the company and offered them the opportunity to ask questions in line with Ricky's argument that face-to-face communication is better than email:

> *The first company presentation [Robert, PBS-L1] stood up and spoke figures numbers margins, and people were like, what's he doing, we [now] have regular company briefs [and] updates, even at 10:00 at night for the night shift.* [Because of this] <u>*the team we've got now, they're all on the same page, if you were to listen in on the management meeting there will talking the same language.*</u> [Robert, PBS-L1] *is very vocal, in what we're*

> *doing, this is our plan. So, <u>he has everyone on board</u>*
> [Nellie, PBS-P4]

Overall, communication played an important role in the employees understanding of OD and strategy. Case PBS went as far as to link strategic objectives directly to the employee appraisal system:

> *<u>If you perform for me, I'll give you 10%</u> [pay rise]<u>, if you don't - you're getting nothing</u>. So this year some people are going to get no pay award and some people will get more, and on average it will be 2%, and when word gets around, some getting 3% and others will get 10%, It'll be - 'well I did really well on my objectives, really?' <u>Then suddenly they really will live because the staff will be bothered about the objectives they are given and recognised and when they have the appraisal interview, it'll be I have</u> [met all my objectives and got a pay-rise]*
> [Robert, PBS-L1]

However, the early success of this approach to sell strategy was not clear, as Pam observed:

> *In our department […] <u>one of us got a pay rise and the rest didn't.</u> So specifically, there is me and another girl do exactly the same as everyone else in the team and we don't get paid the same and <u>we are waiting to see if that will change or not</u> […] <u>there will be a bit of upset</u> […] it's not anything against her, <u>it's not her fault</u> that she got a pay rise, but she wasn't told that it was a secret, so she came back and said - oh I've had a pay rise* [Pam, PBS-P1]

In this case Robert, he was using the employees to self-motivate and to communicate strategic implementation, its early success was not clear, however Robert admitted it was a long term goal. However, elsewhere no system of appraisal existed in any form, meaning that employees had nothing to align to:

> [Researcher: How clear are you on targets and appraisals for staff?]

> *No, not at all* [Michael, ALB-L1]

7.5.1.   Summary

The strategy of the organisation from an employee perspective was found to be overwhelmingly influenced by the culture of the organisation, and the effectiveness of

leader's efforts to communicate. If simple communication can be considered to act as a building block for more important internal discussion around strategic plans and goals, then may it be noted that an organisation without meaningful communication channels (from managers downwards and between colleagues as discussed in the sub-theme 'Communication' as a theme to 'Culture') and 'suitable' culture (as discussed in the theme Culture) will suffer before strategic implementation begins.

7.6.   Summary of Organisational Direction

In conclusion of this Chapter, the direction in which an organisation is heading from an employee perspective was found to be an important influencer to the overall OC relationship of the employee. In places, the theme was found to be influenced by the first theme of the IOD model, Culture.

The direction in which an organisation is heading was found to be important to the employee as it enabled them to decide on a personal level if the organisation was heading in a direction that was agreeable to them. An example of this is perhaps best seen in the data relating to PBS, an organisation that had undergone a significant change in OD over the last three years, *'we're on a journey here, we started two and a half years ago, and we have got a mix of people who we have brought in* […] *you learn a lot about change management doing that'* [Robert, PBS-L1]*.* Alone, this quotation demonstrates the senior manager's desire to change, but when viewed alongside the employee turnover data, it can be see that a change in OD coincided with an increase in turnover.   The Phase One pre-study questionnaire revealed that 56% of the employees had worked for PBS for three years or less.

Of primary interest to the employee was their place in the OD of the organisation. This was found to include personal opportunities to progress as evidenced through interaction with leaders, or through seeing others progress internally. The goals of the organisation and its overall strategy were also found to be important to the overall perception of OD and were verified through interactions with managers and leaders.

Interestingly, while this Chapter was concerned with Organisational Direction, the sub-themes of Culture, communication, supportiveness and mind-set were found to be important and influential to this theme this is perhaps not surprising when it is

considered that the thesis is concerned with the employee perception of the influencers of OC, and the analysis revealed a significant amount of overlap between themes of the data.

With this in mind, the focus of the thesis now shifts to the final theme in the IOC model, 'Relationship.'

Chapter 8 Relationship

8.1. Introduction

The final theme of the IOC model is concerned with the 'Relationship' between the employee and their employer. The earlier findings Chapters have explored the 'Culture' of the organisation and the direction in which they were heading through 'Organisational Direction' (OD). These themes, and associated sub themes were found to influence the overall OC relationship between the employee and the employer, often through personal relationships. Therefore, it should not be surprising that the final theme of the IOD is concerned with the overall relationship between both groups.

The Relationship is essentially descriptive of the connection between employee and employer during their working relationship. It completes the IOC model and normally cannot be achieved unless the Culture of the organisation is agreeable to the employee and Organisational Direction is understood and accepted. In line with the Literature Review in Chapter 2, and the nature of this theme, the Relationship between employer and employee can be traced back to social exchange theory (SET).

Therefore, this Chapter is concerned with the employee's relationships with their employers and will explain the various sub-themes that were identified as influential. These include the 1) 'employee buy-in,' 2) 'feelings of respect,' 3) 'feeling valued,' 4) 'personal values' and 5) 'trust.'

The IOC model developed in Chapter 4 has been reproduced in Figure 8-1 with a focus on the overall theme and the sub-themes.
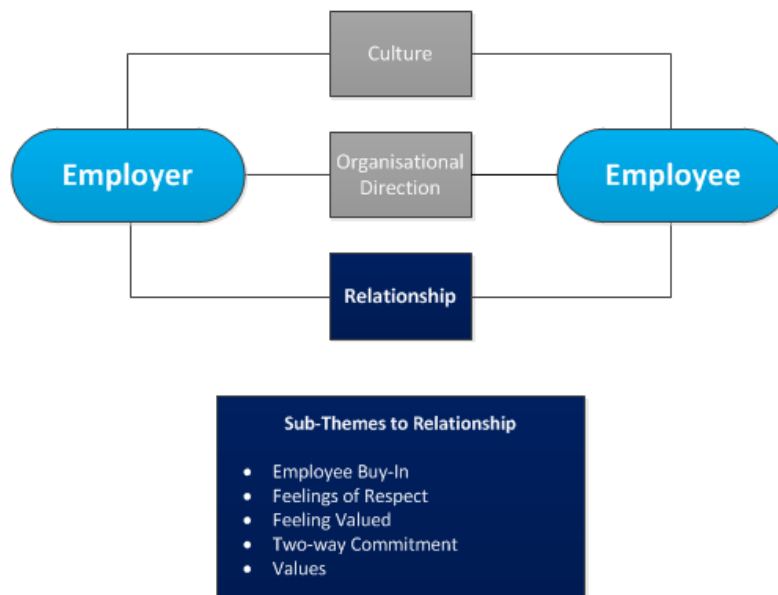
Figure 8-1 IOD Model - Relationship

8.2. Employee Buy-In

The first sub-theme to Relationship is buy-in. The concept of 'buy-in' refers to the employee alignment to the organisations goals, and a desire to be part of the overall strategy. Often, this is influenced and achieved through personal relationships.   As has been discussed throughout this thesis, 'Relationship' and employee buy-in do not exist in isolation, and rely on other factors of the IOC model being met, for example in this case, an alignment to the strategy, goals and leaders;

> *They [managers] all know your name, stop and speak to*
> *you they'll say hello and pretty much every single member*
> *of staff will give you the time of day to, talk to you, ask*
> *how you are, that kinda thing* [Ricky, MGY-P1]

As discussed in earlier sections of this thesis, employee buy-in and commitment to organisational goals and values were often developed during familiarisation with the organisation (Culture and Organisational Direction). This formed part of an employee's pre-entry commitment to their employer (Sturges & Guest, 2001).   This section builds upon this claim, arguing that relationship is an important influencer to the concept of employee alignment to goals and OC:

[Researcher: What made you want to work here?]

Answer: When you walked in from reception, you go past the toilets and it opens up into an office, I think there was probably five or six people sat in there when I walked through and <u>*every one of them stood up and said, [Hello] Morning! The people were a lot friendlier than I were used to. And they just made you feel like home*</u> [Pam, PBS-P1]

In other places, it was the output of the employee's efforts that served to support employee buy-in, as Michael, [ALB-L1] pointed out *'people like to see themselves in* [internal] *news.'* The idea of recognition emerged as a key factor in the relationship between employer and employees:

<u>*It's also the jobs we do, like*</u> [prestigious contract at a sports stadium], <u>*we can say, I did that,*</u> *can show the kids and grandkids, you can say, I was part of that* [John, ALB-P11]

Jake discusses being offered responsibility and the opportunity to undertake new projects and oversea budgets:

It was challenging last year, but really, really enjoyed it, because <u>*we did so much, basically project managed a new £600,000 project, we got a new, machine in, new extraction units*</u> [Jake, PBS-P3]

These employee reflections are representative of an employee buying-in to the organisations goals, values and direction. However, the alternative scenario would be where an employee does not buy into the same. In line with earlier thematic discussions including culture and communication, the ability to align employees to their organisations direction was found to be limited by the relationship between groups of employees:

We probably have [had] limited success, […] [winning people over to strategy], <u>*keeping people informed and updated, is probably the biggest challenge*</u> [Kevin, ALB-P2]

However, as Phyllis pointed out, some employees were not interested in building a relationship with their employer:

'I think <u>*some people are just not interested, they want to work, do the job and come home.*</u> *It's the mix, you need people who want to move it forward,* [and] *it's very hard.'* [Phyllis, ALB-P4]

In other organisations, such as MGY and in line with their efforts to build communication channels, the environment was supportive of relationship building and achieving employee buy-in;

> *The hardest thing ever with that* [relationship] *is the open-door policy, <u>the work levels here can be ridiculous, and you'll get someone come to you, and want to sit down for half an hour, a whinge a moan, the shrubs out there, and actively make time, and if that means you have to go home late</u>* [then so be it]*. You have to actively deal with that in a sense, but I think, when we talk about the approach and culture or whatever, this hasn't happened over night, <u>this has been earning us stripes in a sense.</u> I think I have earned the right, and we have earned the right to have a tantrum at the staff at times, because, if we say the grass hasn't been cut, it's because two years ago we were out there cutting the grass. I'd like to think that, at any point we could phone up any of the employees and say, please can you help, because, and that would be offered in return* [Neil, MGY-L2]

Neil describes his approach to achieving employee buy-in and his own approach to *'earning his stripes'* arguing that this gives him the right to ask employees to buy-into the same goals as him. The success of this strategy to build relationships is evidenced through Keith [MGY-P2], who reported directly to Neil, [MGY-L2] and reflected;

> *I'll make sure that my team work to the best of their ability, <u>if you're a people person you know what people are like, as soon as they walk in the office and they're a bit off, just grab them, ask if they're alright,</u> offer them a cup of tea. They might have failed their driving test or something like that, erm, anything, you know what it can be like* [Keith, MGY-P2]

8.2.1. Summary

Employee buy-in was found to influence the overall relationship between employee and employer. Other factors such as the earlier discussed theme of culture, communication and belief in leaders were also found to be influencers to the overall relationship.

The section that follows focuses on 'feelings of respect.' It is concerned with the employee perception of being respected at work, and is an important part of the overall relationship between the employer and employee, shaping experience at work.

8.3. Feelings of Respect

Dessler (Dessler, 1993) argues that *'treating employees as important and respected contributes to their commitment'* and the findings in this section support this statement. Despite this, Rogers and Ashforth (2017 p. 1579) argue that *'most employees desire far more respect at work than they receive.'* In this section, the manner in which employees are treated, and how they are respected, is shown to be an important factor in an employee's relationship with their organisation.

Sturges and Guest's (2001) research into the influencers of OC and the turnover intentions of graduates in an early career setting also found that respect was an important factor of employee OC. They found that the requirement to feel *'liked and respected* [by] *their peers and colleagues'* was of significant interest to graduates in an early career setting (Sturges & Guest, 2001, p. 451). Other researchers argue that respect can be closely linked to leadership, and the ways in which employees are treated by their managers (van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010)

Sturges and Guest's (2001) finding that respect was important to graduates was also replicated for employees in the SCR MSB sector where it emerged as an important sub-theme to relationship:

> *I know that [Neil, MGY-L2] and [David, MGY-L1] respects my decision-making process and gives me enough autonomy to get on with my job, and I know that I'm trusted.* [Holly, MGY-P8]

The respect offered by the employer to an employee was of significant importance to the overall relationship. The example provided by Holly [MGY-P8] demonstrates the employee reflections on the respect offered by leaders. The respect that the organisation offered to employees was also an important factor in trust building and loyalty;

> [Do you feel respected?]

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I certainly do, certainly do, and it's been reciprocated you know, it's all give and take, they have been brilliant, looked after me, invested in me, so I feel a sense of loyalty [Pete, PBS-P6]

Further, where an employee perceived there to be a lack of respect, or a lack of consistent treatment between colleagues, then the relationship could quickly change;

[An employee reflecting on the pay-gap within the department]

I was sat at home thinking, well I haven't been here all that long, I could do the same work that she was doing. I am at home [maternity leave]*, but* [she] *is doing exactly the same job. Why hasn't she got a pay rise, has she deserved one? It did cause quite a rift, and I am glad I weren't here for it* [Pam, PBS-P1]

The idea that an employee feels respected was tested most strongly when experiencing injury at work. In this case an event only employee of MGY who was significantly injured during a Rugby League match reflected;

[Researcher: So, when you were injured, what support did they offer you?]

No, absolutely nothing, I had to do it all myself [...] *I got punched and fell over* [...] *there wasn't a bit of my body that wasn't black and blue, so I got a real kicking* [...] *I thought, I'm not getting up here. I went up, back upstairs to the restaurant area and one of the girls said, your head's bleeding, I thought heck, this is really hurting, and* [I] *went along to the first aid room and they said, you need to get an ambulance.* [no-one] *from the stadium phoned me, contacted me, and I was in the hospital until 10'oclock at night* [Joe, MGY-P5]

Further, when a new employee began working at ALB, their pre-entry commitment and expectations were tested during a late induction, meaning that the employee did not show the company respect in return:

When I first came, there was supposed to be an induction, you can't go to the toilet more than once a day, cups of tea, 10:00 for tea and you can have a break at lunch. I didn't get the induction for a couple of weeks, by which time, I had done what I always done, if I want a cup of tea, I want a cup of tea, brought me away from the screen,

> *rested my eyes, detach and develop my thoughts and make a decision. So, to my mind it works, and when we got the induction, I was told you're not allowed to do this and that.*

> [Researcher: So, what did you do?]

> *Carried on* [Steve, ALB-P10]

Steve reflected that his relationship with his employer was tested when his induction (and hence introduction to company rules and culture) did not happen until he had already spent some time within the company. This caused him to willingly work against company policy after induction because he felt disrespected. The concept of earning respect and building a culture that offered respect was important to the managers within each organisation, leading each leader to reflect on the respect on offer:

> *When I was most proud, was our owners, one of them, was talking to one of their friends, and basically said the thing they were most proud of was how we operate and how we conduct ourselves. And they have picked that up remotely from how we operate and how other people talk about us. Now, that's the best thing in the world* [David, MGY-L1]

David spoke of his pride that his own personal approach and values had travelled to the owners friends and been returned to him. Michael's approach was more personal and he understood the process of *'giving employees some slack:'*

> [As managers we need to understand] *if he's having a bad day, he needs leaving alone, or a shoulder to cry on and you have to go out of your way to find out that situation, [...] on one day with 80 people, you might have 12 that are having a hard time, you have to give people slack* [Michael, ALB-L1]

8.3.1.   Summary

The respect offered to employees was significantly important to their relationship with the organisation. In the examples provided, the respect shown to employees [Michael, ALB-L1] or lack of respect during induction [Steve, ALB-P10] caused the employee to evaluate their relationship with the organisation. The managers in each organisation

were supportive of offering respect to their employees, even if the intended respect did not reach them in all cases (i.e. through a lack of communication).

The section that follows is concerned with the employee feeling that they are valued by their organisation and forms an important part of the overall employee relationship with their organisation as an employer.

8.4. Feeling Valued

In the previous section, *feelings of respect*, an employee's need to feel respected by their employer was highlighted. The consequences of withdrawing respect, or having a culture that did not offer respect was found to be of high importance to the employee. Where respect was not found, the employee disengaged, or disconnected from the organisation. Thus, commitment levels were affected. In this section the employee perception of feeling valued by their employer is considered. This was found to be equally important and relevant to the overall relationship. White and Davey (2003) argued that an employee's experience of feeling valued at work is influenced by three factors, *'fairness;' 'environment;'* and *'inclusion.'* They argue that feeling valued is influenced by the perception of being treated fairly, and consistently.

In the example that follows, Clark [PBS-P5] had declined the option to retire the previous year because the culture of the organisation was agreeable to him, and he was excited by the new direction of the organisation (OD). The newly adopted strategy of the organisation was acceptable to the employee who said '*you knew exactly where you stood, it was you either, wanted to change and adapt* [to] *fit in,* [...] *help to drive the company forward* [...], *or not.'* This cultural alignment between the employee and his employer, along with an agreeable direction made the employee feel valued;

> *I get the impression that I am quite valued, and at the moment, five days a week suits me. I have mentioned that I might want to go part time, and they have said, that's fine, so that may come as an interim step* [Clark, PBS-P5]

In ALB, Charles [ALB-P1] was confident that making people feel valued began with listening and working with others to make them feel involved with whatever task was being undertaken:

My old boss told me that I had two ears and one mouth [for a reason], *and [to] listen to people.* <u>*Listen to people, the guy on the shop floor will come out with ideas, involve them. If a guy see's his idea, and someone starts messing with it, it's his idea [he will feel ownership].*</u> *Gives him a sense of being* [Charles, ALB-P1]

The benefits of feeling valued and part of the organisation had far reaching benefits for the employees who were aligned to the organisations goals and values. This was evident in the case of Holly [MGY-P8] who discussed her desire to remain with the company due to an agreeable OD and cultural fit:

<u>*This is the only place where I thought I could stay for a long time.*</u> *[…] It's probably a strange thing to say at my sort of age, cos that's not typical of what you do. But <u>the company seems to be moving with me. Rather than you outgrowing the company,</u> there seems to be progressive people here and <u>I'd rather work on this and get it up to somewhere, rather than walk into somewhere, premier league</u>* [for example] [Holly, MGY-P8].

Holly's description of feeling valued had further reaching implications for other sub-themes to relationship, including employee buy-in and desire to remain. In contrast to feeling valued, where company policy appeared bureaucratic and unnecessary from the perspective of the employee, it caused damage to the employee relationship and the feeling that they were valued:

<u>*The only way to get around wearing a tie is to buy a shirt from the company - £5 each*</u> [it disheartens you]. *It was hot the other week and I can't take my tie off, I am dying in here – I am not asking for Air Con, <u>I'm asking to take my tie off</u>* [and I couldn't] *[Charles, ALB-P1]*

In this example, the company policy was to wear a tie whilst at work, or visiting a customer. This could be avoided by purchasing a company shirt for £5 and caused significant frustration and loss of value for the employee. This is an example of an employee not feeling respected, buying-into company policy or respecting leaders.

8.4.1.   Summary

Feeling valued by the employer was found to be significantly important to the employee. If the employee perceived that they were valued then they were more

likely to remain with the organisation, or in the example of Clark [PBS-P5], delay retirement in line with an acceptable culture and OD.

The section that follows is concerned with two-way commitment and the perception that the organisation is committed to them.

8.5. Two-way Commitment

In OC research, employee commitment has been treated as a one-way relationship where the employee commits to an organisation. This is evidenced through the various definitions of OC that speak of employee alignment to organisational goals and values (Argandoña, 2003; Hultman & Gellermann, 2002; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Mowday et al., 1982). Further, as most measures of OC are deductive and designed to test the various styles of OC from an employee point of view, the tools to measure OC such as questionnaires (e.g. the TCM) are unable to test employer commitment to their employees (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday et al., 1979; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). This means that commitment from the organisation back to the employee is not investigated, which is understandable considering that most OC focus is on the employee relationship with their employer, as opposed to the opposite. However the findings in this section demonstrate that employer commitment to the employee is influential on employee OC.

This lack of flexibility in purely positivistic and deductive research design, and the opportunity for unexpected data to emerge from the participant's experiences was a significant part of the justification for a mixed methods research study and the inclusion of a qualitative approach as was discussed in Chapter 2. The researcher adopted a methodology and approach that included speaking to the employers as well as the employees in each case organisation, an approach that is not typically included in OC research and forms part of the overall contribution of this thesis. This approach was adopted on the basis that the OC experience naturally includes the employee and their employers, meaning that both groups would have an experience of the phenomena that were likely to influence the overall OC. The researcher found that two-way commitment, where a committed employee perceives that their employer is also committed to them was significantly important to an employee's overall OC

relationship with their organisation. This was in line with the earlier findings relating to employees feeling valued and respected.

In an organisational context, two-way commitment can be described as a situation where the employer consciously commits to the employee, through training, education or offering alternative employment where the primary means of employment becomes redundant or unavailable.   In the example below, Jan speaks of another employee who was about to return to work after maternity leave.   The employee in question, (pseudonym, Amy) who was not interviewed explained to managers that she did not wish to return to the organisation in a full-time capacity due to her new parental responsibilities:

> *One of the girls Amy, she's been off on maternity, she's due to come back in April, brilliant girl, worked with the company for quite a long time, <u>she's committed to us, but she's had a baby and doesn't want to come back full time</u>*

> [Researcher: So, still committed, just in a new way?]

> *Yeah, they can't manage that in the internal sales department. However, <u>I have availability in my credit control team, we know Amy's strengths and weaknesses, and Amy knows all our customers.</u> Amy has built a good working relationship with them and she has a backbone, she can be feisty, perfect for a credit controller* [Jan, PBS-P2]

In an environment where employment is shifting from manufacturing to service sectors (McOrmond, 2004), and employers are experiencing new styles of employment such as zero-hour contracts and the gig economy (Skidelsky, 2017), the reader would be forgiven for making the assumption that employers were not committed to their employees.   However, where employees were perceived to be committed to their organisation through aligned goals and values, the organisation (via its managers) demonstrate two-way commitment to the employee:

> *<u>Commitment to people, that works two ways, if you got commitment to the organisation, and to the people, it will be reciprocated, if you don't, it won't</u>* [Holly, MGY-P8]

> *<u>I do feel committed,</u> I want to give something back, and I know the <u>clubs giving back to me now</u>* [Keith, MGY-P2]

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This desire to retain employees and reduce turnover is of central interest to OC researchers. In the example below, where employees were perceived to fit the culture, were agreeable to the organisational direction and had a suitable relationship internally, the employer was much more likely to demonstrate two-way commitment:

> *If you show commitment, and your staff can see you're committed* [to them]*, they are more likely to have the same attitude, they think he's not bothered. People are very quick to know when someone isn't doing their job right, and you'll not get as much out of your lads, that's how I see it* [Jake, PBS-P3]

Jake argued that if *'you show commitment'* and staff can clearly see this commitment, then they are more likely to have the same attitude and the organisation will benefit from reduced turnover as a result. Kevin highlights the problems associated with turnover and the lack of replacement for certain employees:

> *The biggest factor, skills shortage; we need sales people, core competence. What's going to attract them and keep them? If we don't* [keep these people]*, then we can't do the job* [Kevin, ALB-P2]

Kevin discusses his worry that ALB will be unable to retain and attract employees to the business and worries about *'keeping them.'* Jake argued that committing to employees would help to achieve this and that once two-way commitment had been achieved, employees would be committed in a powerful way:

> [Researcher: Do you feel that [PBS] are committed to you?]
>
> *I certainly do, certainly do, and it's been reciprocated you know, it's all give and take, they have been brilliant, looked after me, invested in me, so I feel a sense of loyalty* [Pete, PBS-P6]

Further, Holly experienced two-way commitment through promotion opportunities and relationships with her managers:

> *I mean you don't go from* [junior role] *to* [head of department] *in 6 years without, those people having a commitment to you.* [They have seen] *things in me that perhaps I didn't know where there myself, and* [I] *can see that in others* [now] [Holly, MGY-P8]

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The feeling that one's organisation is committed back to them served as a powerful means to achieve even stronger OC from employees. As Jan, [PBS-P2] described, where an employee *'cares deeply about the business'* this should be rewarded through increased organisational loyalty. Holly's example of two-way commitment went even further; as she felt committed to others meaning that the commitment was now three-way.

8.5.1. Summary

The employee perception that their employer was committed back to them served as a powerful means to achieve a positive relationship between employer and employee. However, as has already been discussed earlier in this thesis, it relies on other factors already being met, including a suitable culture and agreeable OD. Additionally, an employee who is not aligned to the goals and values of the organisation would be unlikely to commit to the organisation, and the organisation unlikely to commit back.

As Holly, [MGY-P8] pointed out*, 'if you got commitment to the organisation, and to the people within it, it will be reciprocated, if you don't, it won't.'* As earlier sections in this thesis have already explored, if the OD is not clear, or the goals and values are confused, then further distortion can occur.

The section that follows is concerned with the employee's personal values and their connection to the values of the organisation.

8.6. Values

The concept of values is significantly important to researchers in the OC tradition and has received significant indirect attention in this thesis so far, therefore it should be unsurprising that values emerged as a sub-theme to relationship as an influencer of OC.

As was the case with 'goals' (the second sub-theme to OD), the values of the employee were found to be of significant importance to the overall relationship with their employer. The literature in OC is unanimous in the acceptance of goals and values for achieving OC, and the same result was replicated here (B. Singh et al., 2008). According to early researchers in OC (See: Mowday *et al.,* 1979 p. 226), commitment is

'a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values.' The concept of values formed an important part of the Meyer and Allen (Meyer & Allen, 1993) TCM, and was strongly connected to the construct of positive commitment, AC.

In all three case organisations, the values of the organisation were important to the management, but only case PBS had achieved widespread penetration and acceptance for the values from employees. This was in part because they had worked hard to build the values with the employees and had listened to their position and interpretations of the organisation's values:

> *We spent nearly all year writing our values, and we did it from the bottom up, we could have just said what they were and probably knew what they were and they have come out like that, but I spent ages doing workshops, with probably 75% of the staff. They came up with all these words and values, and sentences about what it looked like, so we had to analyse it and stick it all into blocks and the management team came up with a sort of final list*
> [Jenny, PBS-L2]

This 'staff involvement' to create and build the values of the organisation lead to employee buy-in and acceptance for the values of the organisation, as they had often been involved in their creation, as is evidenced through another employees detailed knowledge of them:

> *They [values] are relatively new, […], it's all about integrity, honesty, passionate and enthusiastic. I like to think that I'm that kind of person, do things right, be honest about things The company got us involved in that, it wasn't the company setting the values, they got every person in the company involved* [in them] [Jake, PBS-P3]
>
> *I was heavily involved* [in creating the values], *well a lot of us were. My big one was integrity, it is a feeling I have a lot and put a lot of trust and meaning into it* [Andy, PBS-P7]

Interestingly, this approach, where the employees were involved with the creation of the values was successful to the extent that employees felt guilty for forgetting any part of them:

I mean the first value is that we're a principled company. Enthusiastic about [PBS] and the product, and we lead and innovate. I might have missed one, I can't remember what it is, which is bad on me [Jake, PBS-P3]

The remaining Case organisations, MGY and ALB had developed organisational values internally within the management team and exported them to employees to lesser impact;

I have read them, couldn't tell you what they were [Toby, ALB-P11]

The third person to be interviewed in Case MGY had spoken to Keith [MGY-P2] ahead of the interview. Keith [MGY-P2] was the line manager of Gareth [MGY-P3] and had been interviewed by the researcher a week earlier. As a result of this, Gareth [MGY-P3] arrived to the interview with the organisations values written down on paper.

Gareth [MGY-P3] reflected after questioning that he did not know the values of the organisation, and would not normally have known where to find them. The researcher asked Gareth how the company could achieve his buy-in and understanding for the values:

I think maybe, having [values] on, simple things like, headed paper […] in the, meeting rooms, I'm not saying plastered all over the stadium because if the staff take on these values and operate in this manner then hopefully It won't need to be printed everywhere, […] bit of a, difficult one how you would actually communicate to actually get people to buy into the vision [Gareth, MGY-P3]

Employee involvement in value creation was found to be an important factor in gaining employee support for the values of the organisation;

We have a mission statement, which include some of the values, but then again, they are in the toilet, and you stand there looking at it, thinking we don't do a lot of that [Daryl, ALB-P9]

This applies at all levels, and importantly at management level:

The managers don't respect the core values, and respect and integrity, the managers aren't treating me with

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respect and integrity [Dwight, ALB-P5]

The approach seen by PBS where the values were created with the employees led to an increased understanding of their purpose and increased employee buy-in for the values themselves. In the remaining case organisations, where the values had simply been 'exported' to the employees, the level of employee buy-in and understanding of the values was significantly reduced.

8.6.1.   Summary

Employees were more willing to align to the values of the organisation if they had been consulted during their development. Only case PBS had undertaken such an activity, and the employees were more receptive to the values of the organisation when compared to their counterparts in MGY and ALB. In these cases, the employee alignment was significantly reduced; in fact, the only employee in ALB (Kevin) who described himself as aligned to the values, explained to the researcher post-interview that he was more aligned than most because Michael [ALB-L1] had consulted him and one other person when creating the values of the organisation, supporting the approach of PBS on a smaller scale.

The final section to this chapter on 'Relationship' is concerned with Trust, notably the trust that the employee has of their employer.

8.7.   Trust

From an employee perspective, feeling trusted by management was found to be of significant importance to the employee. Jones and George (1998 p. 531) described trust as an interaction of '*values, attitudes, emotions or moods.*'

The researcher also found that employees separated the trust into two types: internal trust; and external stakeholder trust - with customers, suppliers or fans as applicable:

> *Michael,* [ALB-L1] *doesn't have the time* [to chase customers] *and already he trusts me to have a commercial conversation with the customer and put the notes on the system and give him some feedback on it, it could be they are ready to place an order, we could have lost it, or it could be on hold* [Ryan, ALB-P7]

The thing is, <u>I can safely say, we have got the trust and the</u>
<u>backing from the top right the way down to the bottom</u>
[Roy, MGY-P12]

However, where a lack of trust was evident, the relationship between employer and employee was noticeably different. In the example below, and in line with the theme of Organisational Direction and sub-theme leadership, Daryl was disappointed with his employer as he had not received a pay-review for '7 years.' The employee in question, Daryl [ALB-P9] was frustrated with his leaders and suffered broken trust commenting:

It's disgusting, and because there are people who won't
say anything, or find another job, it's taken advantage of
[Daryl, ALB-P9]

This lack of pay-review from the management had further reaching impact on the employee experience at work. Daryl [ALB-P9] described the organisations attempt to communicate through information as '*propaganda*' saying; *'as someone who has worked here a long time, you can see through a lot of the items. Bullshit, bullshit and bullshit.'* He further indicated a lack of trust in the consistency of the organisation's behaviour:

<u>We did have some information boards,</u> so that was going
to be the key thing, someone thought that we would put
things up there about the company, but <u>there is very little</u>
<u>goes on there, I think they are very 'selective'</u> [Daryl, ALB-P9]

This example is comparable to the experiences of Sam [ALB-P8] who had experienced a lack of progression opportunities, as discussed within the theme, OD due to a lack of replacement. In this case, the trust of the employee had also been broken leading him to seek employment elsewhere. In contrast, and in line with the idea that employees made a distinction between internal trust and external stakeholder trust, Gabe [MGY-P6] (who often dealt with supporter complaints) did not trust the supporters' account of an incident:

[We had a complaint, and] *Neil* [MGY-L2] *had taken him*
at his word because he'd said, [I'd experienced problems],
<u>I got back to that guy, very politely, in a long email,</u>
<u>explaining how the</u> [scheme] *<u>works, sorry</u>* [for any]
<u>inconvenience</u> [turns out he was lying] [Gabe, MGY-P6]

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This lack of trust with an external stakeholder was frustrating for the employee who had received the complaint via his line manager Neil [MGY-L2] and was responsible for investigating the problem in line with his role. Finally, an employee who had been heavily trusted by his employer reflected on the levels of trust placed in him, and the wider-reaching consequences if he had misplaced this trust;

> [On being the only person with knowledge of the company's procurement system]
>
> *I dread to think what an unscrupulous person would have done in my position, what they could have got up to* [Pete, PBS-P6]

8.7.1. Summary

Trust was found to be an important influencer of the overall relationship between employer and employee. The trusting relationship was influenced by earlier interactions between managers and staff, and secondary factors as explored in this thesis such as Culture and OD. The employees often felt a sense of responsibility when being offered trust as was found in the examples of Pete [PBS-P6] and Cathy [MGY-P12]. Otherwise, where the trust had been broken, the employee had little interest in developing a relationship with their employer, as was seen in the examples of Daryl, [ALB-P9] and Sam [ALB-P8].

8.8. Summary of Relationship

In this Chapter, the researcher focused on the final theme of the IOC model, 'Relationship.' The relationship and associated sub-themes were found to be important influencers of overall OC. The findings from all three sections tied together, and it was found that relationship did not exist in isolation. The findings in this section were strongly underpinned and influenced by the preceding chapters such as Culture and OD.

The sub-theme '*feeling valued*' in particular demonstrated this connection between themes. For example; Clark [PBS-P5] felt valued by his employer and desired to remain, including declining the option to retire because the culture of the organisation and OD was agreeable to him. This led to the employee feeling valued, supporting the overall relationship between employer and employee and his overall OC.

The chapter explored the importance of the employee relationship with their employer, including the importance of employee buy-in, feeling valued, respected and feeling as though the organisation was committed to them. This leads to a relationship of trust between employer and employee and the idea of achieving a suitable or agreeable relationship in line with the IOC model.   In another example provided in this chapter and the preceding chapter, two employees working for ALB, Sam [P8] and Daryl [P9] had lost trust in the organisation, through lack of promotion opportunities, and through lack of a suitable pay review. This lack of trust led each employee to lose trust in the organisation as described by Daryl [ALB-P9] as issuing *'propaganda'* or seeking alternate employment '*I have been looking'* [Sam, ALB-P8].   In reality this might have been a cultural and communication problem.

The most interesting revelation for the researcher in this section was that each theme and sub-theme did not exist in isolation. When reflecting on the findings it is logical that an employee working for an organisation does not treat their 'trust' relationship in isolation and it will naturally be influenced by a number of other factors that are internal to the organisation, such as culture, communication, leadership, strategy, organisational direction etc. The researcher considers that it is unsurprising to find that an employee would view their employment relationship as a holistic phenomenon, subject to the nature of their entire experience at work, and relative to their own personal goals and values.

The next chapter is tasked with explaining the overall interpretation of the findings across the four findings chapters and relating the qualitative findings more strongly to the TCM and the wider quantitative data on OC. Chapter 9 is concerned with answering the question *'so what?'* and explaining the overall contribution to knowledge and contribution to practice in line with the overall aim of the research.

Chapter 9 Implications and Contribution to Knowledge

9.1.   Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the overall findings of this thesis and explain the theoretical and practical contribution to knowledge.   In the three preceding Chapters (6, 7 and 8), the findings of the project were explained and the earlier analysis (Chapter 4) outlined the influencers of organisational commitment model, the IOC.   The IOC was designed to quickly demonstrate to the reader exactly which factors influenced the OC relationship between employer and employee, and the preceding chapters explained the depth associated with each of these themes.   The overall findings were that ***culture, organisation direction*** *and* ***relationshi***p were important influencers to employee commitment in SCRs MSBs.   As each chapter explained, each segment of the IOC was influenced by a number of sub-themes that made up the entire findings.

Further, as part of the overall discussion of the influencers of commitment, the consequences emerged from the data that explained the importance of OC and how the employer might benefit from having committed employees. The literature review in Chapter 2 explored the potential consequences that might be associated with OC, and the discussion in this chapter will begin to relate the findings to the literature.

Chapter 9 is tasked with explaining the overall importance of these findings relative to the context and place in the literature. This chapter could have easily been titled, *so what?*

Chapter 9 is split into four sections; sections 9.2 and 9.3 are concerned with the influencers and outcomes of OC respectively, section 9.4 is concerned with the overall process of OC in line with the existing literature, influencers and outcomes; and finally, section 9.5 is concerned with the overall contribution to knowledge, both practically and theoretically. Therefore, the researcher will begin this Chapter with an overview of the Influencers of Organisational Commitment.

9.2. Overview of the Influencers of Organisational Commitment

In the most part, research in OC has attempted to answer the question *to what extent are employees committed?* While this remains a valid question worthy of an answer, what is missing from research in this area is an investigation into what leads to this commitment and its associated outcomes. In fact, Ghosh and Swamy (2014) highlighted this issue in their review of OC, observing a lack of research that focuses on the factors leading to commitment and its consequences. The seminal literature in OC presupposes various antecedents of OC and several of its outcomes, while never dedicating to the topic wholeheartedly. Other more recent research has investigated the influencers on a smaller scale, including Sturges and Guest's (2001) work with British University graduates, arguing *'pre-entry expectations'* and *'culture'* as being relevant to their context.

In this study the researcher has attempted to address this gap by investigating OC from a mixed methods perspective, notably one that respects the preceding literature and positions the actors within it. This was achieved through issuing the Meyer and Allen (1993) TCM questionnaire to employees in three case organisations in a pre-study followed by interviews with employees in the same locations. This allowed the researcher to investigate the influencers and outcomes of an employee's commitment in the knowledge of the organisations commitment levels and some contextual meaning. In the later stages of data collection, interviews with managers and owners in the same case organisations also allowed the researcher to understand the consequences or outcomes of OC.

The primary influencers of OC were identified as culture, relationship and organisational direction as explained in chapters 6, 7 and 8, through these chapters and through writing up the findings, the process of OC was more thoroughly understood. It is clear at this stage, and building from research by Sturges and Guest (2001) that employees enter the organisation with expectations (often referred to as pre-entry expectations), and through familiarisation with the organisation and working with others, begin to examine the culture of the organisation.   If these factors are found to be agreeable, then the employee will remain with the organisation and develop their understanding of organisational direction and relationship with the

business further. The culture of the organisation was found to be influential to a number of sub-factors or sub-themes that make up the entire theme as discussed in Chapter 6. The section that follows aims to review each findings chapter in the knowledge of the overall findings relative to influencers and outcomes of OC. The first theme to consider is culture.

9.2.1.   The Culture of the Organisation (Culture)

This thesis is not the first to investigate the culture of an organisation and associated outcomes relative to organisational behaviour; in fact the topic of organisational culture is a mature and well developed area (Cave, 2017; Kilmann, Saxton, & Serpa, 1986; O'Reilly, 1989; Tsai, 2011). However, the researcher's contribution is the relationship between organisational culture, OC and the factors that influence the culture from the perspective of the employee.

The researcher found that the culture of the organisation was influenced by five sub-themes as can be seen in Figure 4-9 - Development of Themes, Culture. The sub themes were discussed in Chapter 6 and their relevance to the overall thesis was explored. The sub-themes explain the overall relationship between an employee and their employer relative to the organisation and its culture. For a new entrant to an organisation, the culture forms part of the employee's pre-entry expectation and early relationship with the organisation. If the pre-entry expectations are not met, and the culture is not acceptable to the employee, then the employee will evaluate their employment options. This factor is not commitment dependent, and is closer to a *'hygiene factor'* than a committer. Employees at this early stage are essentially assessing whether their *'face-fits'* within the organisation as opposed to seeking a long term relationship. The employee is also assessing their pre-employment promises and expectations against the reality of life inside the organisation.

In reference to the use of the term 'hygiene factor', the process of building OC through the themes and sub-themes of the IOC is procedurally similar to Hertzberg's (1968) two-factor theory. Within the two-factor theory proposed by Hertzberg, an employee could not be motivated until such a time basic hygiene factors had already been met. In this case employees could not build a relationship, or align to the organisational

direction of the organisation until such a time the culture was found to be agreeable to them. This process was originally explained in Figure 4-16 - Influencers of Organisational Commitment Model (IOC), where the IOC was explained and the discussion in this chapter begins to explore the holistic relationship between themes.

The process of building OC was observed in the case of Kelly [MGY-P7] who scored poorly on the TCM scale (66% AC and 64% NC against an average for MGY of 75% AC and 78% NC). Kelly arrived late to her interview, appeared disinterested in the company, its mission and had a fixed-mind set. Kelly spoke of having left another Football Club for employment at MGY, she described a negative and unhelpful culture at her previous employer and that *'support'* was available *'everywhere'* at MGY. This was agreeable to Kelly who aligned with the culture of MGY, but she had no interest in the strategy of the organisation (organisational direction), and when asked if she was aware of the clubs strategy, she said that she had no understanding, nor had she worked for MGY for long enough to answer such a question. Kelly had no interest in developing a relationship with the organisation, despite her enthusiasm for the helpfulness of others and when asked about her connection to the club, she replied *'I haven't got a personal connection, maybe if I were* [a supporter of the club], *or interested.'* Kelly openly admitted that she was not a supporter of the club (which itself is not a requirement), however Kelly's second comment is much more telling. Kelly claims to be dis-interested in the club and by association its goals and values meaning that Kelly did not care about the organisation or its mission.

In this case, Kelly had achieved the hygiene factors of pre-entry expectations and found an agreeable culture (through supportiveness) but had no interest in developing this commitment further (to understand the organisational direction or develop a relationship). Sturges and Guest (2001) investigated the topic of the influencers of OC within the context of graduates in an early career setting and found that pre-entry expectations and culture were important factors to commitment within their context. Sturges and Guest (2001) admitted that their work only applied to graduates, and that more work was required in order to investigate the factors that influence OC as more experience is gained. In the case of the SCR and MSBs, the researcher is able to

demonstrate a similar relationship, whilst noting that these factors do not commit employees in themselves.

Further, additional sub-themes to culture demonstrate this primary stage of commitment building. The communication within the organisation was found to be an important factor to the overall relationship. Further, the sub-theme of communication was found to influence a number of other themes such as organisational direction and relationship in line with both concepts as hygiene factors. Within communication, the researcher spoke of a style of culture where small talk, often on un-important topics such as sport and music laid a foundation for more meaningful communication between employees (Schultz & Breiger, 2010). In the case of ALB, this style of communication was not being allowed to take place due to a lingering *'autocratic'* culture [Michael, ALB-L1] set by the previous owners. It became clear that despite Michael's best efforts to remove physical barriers between employees, mental barriers still remained and employees were un-willing to change. As the thematic discussion progressed it became clear how strongly this lack of communication was impacting the organisation as a whole despite the owner's efforts to change the culture.

It is accepted by now that communication has an important role to play in organisations, and in line with culture as a hygiene factor, impacts committing factors. Rapert, *et al.,* (2002) argued that communication is an essential tool for operational managers to achieve support for strategic implementation and how it is no longer the sole task of the CEO to sell strategic direction. They argue that it is the role of managers to build understanding for strategy through communication to achieve employee buy-in (relationship) and that this is achieved through communication. In the case of ALB this was not happening, and this impacted the culture of the business and the overall employee experience. Elsewhere, the culture of the organisation was improved through communication, Keith [MGY-P2] discussed his manager's approach to communication, including meetings off-site and *'getting a coffee together.'* Keith reflected that this made him feel valued and had influenced his own management style. This absence of communication as a hygiene factor caused problems throughout the organisation and commitment building process as will be discussed later in this Chapter.

Another far reaching influencer of culture came from the employee's internal mind-set. The researcher drew upon Dweck's (2012) research where an employee's fixed or growth mind-set influenced their overall perception of their environment and employment. In line with the earlier discussion of culture as a basis for overall commitment, the mind-set of the employee was found to have equal impact across themes. This is not to be confused with Meyer and Allen's (1990) earlier use of the word mind set that was presented without explanation or definition. Mowday Steers and Porter (Mowday et al., 1982) used the same term when discussing attitudinal commitment; the use of the word 'mind set' is not connected to the interpretation here: Dweck's (2012) mind-set theory. In the examples provided, Sam [ALB-P8] had a fixed mind-set and spoke about how he perceived ALB was badly run, and as a result should attempt to reduce the turnover of the company by £3m a year (from £8m to £5m). Alternatively, Keith [MGY-P2], had a growth mind-set and spoke openly about meeting targets and always looking ahead. This mind-set did not exist in isolation to culture, and would naturally have further reaching impact upon other themes, including attitude towards organisational direction and relationship. This includes the employee desire to work in line with the company direction (see: Gareth, MGY-P3). Ryan [ALB-P7] spoke of the option to progress within the company and the advantages that came with internal progression opportunities. This is important, as the literature on mind-set discusses the limitations of having a fixed mind-set and the benefits of having a growth mind-set; the example of Clark [PBS-P5] who had declined the option to retire is relevant here as an employee supporting a growth mind-set and the advantages that arrive with this (Dweck, 2012).

The final theme of culture spoke of the position of the organisation, leadership and willingness to act when an employee was not perceived to be working in line with the organisations goals and values (or towards their strategic mission). The researcher noted the unusual nature of including a finding that spoke positively from the perspective of the employee about 'exiting employees' from the organisation. However, it was found that employees reacted well to their employer exiting employees who were not perceived to be working in line with the company direction.

This was demonstrated most effectively in the case of PBS and MGY who had recently undergone an exercise where a number of employees had been moved on (exited) (56% of employees in PBS and 46% in MGY had been employed for less than three years) and had scored most highly for having committed employees (when compared to ALB where employees had a longer tenure).

The results of the framework analysis (FA) demonstrate the relationship between stages of commitment and the wider literature surrounding OC. The literature in OC primarily tests if employees are committed, as opposed to investigating why employees might be committed, or what the implications of commitment are. The findings in this section begin to explore the relationship between influencers of OC and the overall commitment relationship. In this case, culture can be viewed primarily as a hygiene factor of OC as opposed to a factor that commits in itself. In many areas, the sub-themes to culture such as communication and mind-set are more notable by their absence. Further, the emergence of pre-entry expectations adds further context to an under explored area. The pre-entry expectations of the employee and the overall experience of culture explain the employee's early experiences with their employer and willingness to commit. The section that follows, organisational direction explains the second stage in the commitment building process.

9.2.2. The Direction of the Organisation (Organisational Direction)

In line with the discussion in the preceding section, organisational direction (OD) can be considered the second stage to developing a commitment relationship between employer and employee. If culture is the first step in the commitment relationship and serves as a hygiene factor, then OD is the next stage in the commitment building process. In this stage the employee seeks to understand the overall direction of the organisation and their position within it.

The concept of employee alignment to the direction of their organisations strategy is not new to OC research. The literature review explored the concept of organisational goals and the importance of employee alignment to the goals of the organisation. In fact, goals have remained centrally important to most OC research (Mowday et al., 1979) and was carried through to Meyer and Allen's TCM as centrally important factors

to AC. This process of employee alignment to goals is often spoken about in the literature alongside values, and theorists in OC generally speak of aligned goals and values together (Mowday et al., 1982).   However, in line with Ghosh and Swamy's (Ghosh & Swamy, 2014) argument, the influencers of OC are significantly under researched and more work is required in order to understand exactly what is influential to the concept of 'goals.'

Chen, *et al.,* (Chen et al., 2015) demonstrated that job rotation and internal marketing can positively affect organisational commitment through empowering employees to learn more about the overall structure and mission of their organisation, but this research did not seek to investigate the influencers of OC in the same way that this project has, and the sample was Nurses in Taiwan as opposed to mid-sized businesses in the Sheffield City Region, UK.

From the perspective of the employee, once they are satisfied that pre-entry expectations have been met and the culture is agreeable to them, they will begin to consider their longer term future with the organisation, and their place within it. In Chapter 7, this was described as progression opportunities and relates to the employees understanding of the internal progression that is available to them. However, in line with the preceding hygiene factors, culture and communication channels within the organisation remain important and can cause issue if they are not met. In the case of progression opportunities, where communication channels do not exist in a suitable form, the opportunities to progress could be unknown to the employee and perceived to be unavailable, as was found in the case of Sam [ALB-P8].

Sam [ALB-P8] explained that he wished to progress within the organisation but could not see any progression opportunities, meaning that he was seeking employment elsewhere to advance his career.   However, during an interview with senior manager Michael [ALB-L1], it became clear that Sam's progression was very much on Michael's mind. This was because, unbeknown to Sam, his line manager was leaving the company and Michael was considering Sam as replacement. In essence, this meant that progression *was* available to Sam and Michael was considering his options, unfortunately due to a *'weak'* culture that did not communicate, it was unknown to

Sam who was seeking alternative employment (Schultz & Breiger, 2010). This lack of communication as a sub-theme to culture erroneously influenced the perception of progression opportunities and the employee's perception of the organisational direction and his place within it. This demonstrates the importance of communication channels to progression opportunities and that the two themes are connected. This example also demonstrates the importance of hygiene factors being met, and that without an agreeable culture; the employee is unable to progress and develop their commitment beyond basic hygiene factors (culture).

Secondly, the hygiene factor *mind-set* as part of culture is equally relevant to the progression opportunities of the employee. In MGY in particular, Neil [MGY-L2], had progressed from ball boy (a young person who sits pitch-side during a football match to recover the football) to senior management. This progression gave a number of other employees hope and enthusiasm that progression was available to them as employees. Neil's line manager, David [MGY-L1] referred to Neil's mind-set during his interview as justification for his success in the organisation *'[Neil] is successful in this company, because he reflects everything the owners* [are looking for]*, working hard is a given, you have to work hard. But how you work hard is what matters to them, and you know how many friends have you got in the community.'* Other employees such as Jake [PBS-P3] discussed that he thought of himself as being in a *'career'* at PBS as opposed to earlier employment, and that this was due to his manager, perception of the progression opportunities available to him and overall culture of the business.

Additionally, in line with building OC and OD alignment, the concept of goals emerged as centrally important from the data and literature. In one example, Cathy [ALB-P12] could not commit to ALB because her personal goals were not compatible with the goals of her employer. Cathy was a University student whose employment was time-bound to completion of her studies, and despite Cathy's gratitude that ALB had employed her on a part time basis and self-professed 'love' for her job. Cathy could not commit in the long term due to a misalignment of goals. Cathy spoke of wishing to *'work for the security services'* and in public service, and because ALB could not offer this style of employment, there was a lack of compatibility in goals and Cathy was unwilling to commit beyond hygiene factors.

In contrast to Cathy, Clark [PBS-P5] was an employee who had declined the option to retire the previous year because he was aligned with the organisations goals and values and heavily bought into the new direction of the organisation. Clark claimed that he wished to remain with the organisation, because the senior manager Robert [PBS-L2] and the new management team at PBS had outlined a strategy for the organisation that was agreeable to him. Clark explained that Robert had sold the new direction of the business to him on the basis that his employees would buy-into the direction, adapt or leave. The direction was found to be agreeable to Clark's personal goals meaning that he was aligned to the organisational direction. Smith (2009) argues that the area of SI relative to an employee's OC has received far less attention than it deserves. In this case Clark was aligned to the organisations goals and values through a strong underlying agreement of culture and more recent agreeable OD. Smith (2009) argues that strategic implementation occurs when resource allocation and activity decisions are fully enacted in accordance with those decisions, strategic non-implementation is considered to be the opposite, when the intended strategy is not implemented.

Finally, Clark [PBS-P6] described how the culture of the organisation was changing and becoming more agreeable to him on the basis that the new senior manager, Robert [PBS-L1] was leading the organisation in the right direction. This might not be surprising as O'Reilly and Chatman and Caldwell (1991a p. 492) argued that organisations *'attempt to select recruits who are likely to share their values.'* In this case the employee had already been recruited, and in line with exit strategy (culture) the employee had remained with the organisation in line with an agreed set of goals (organisational direction) and values (relationship). This is also in line with the subjective cost-benefit analysis as spoken about in social exchange theory (SET), where one party relies on another for personal benefit (Blau, 1964).

For improved context from the Phase One (Pre-Study and Context); Clark scored 100% for positive commitment AC, 85% for loyalty based commitment, NC and a low 42% for trapped based commitment CC (where a lower score is better). In addition, Clark had a strong understanding of the organisations strategy, scoring 85% on the strategic understanding scale. These results can be compared to the overall results from the

questionnaire, AC 72%, CC, 51%, NC, 69% and SI, 76%.   Smith (2009, 2010) called for research in this area and for an investigation as to whether OC could aid employee support for organisations implementation efforts. This relationship has been found in this thesis in support of Smith's hypothesis.

The examples provided demonstrate the importance of the direction of the organisation and the employees understanding of strategy. Elsewhere this has been discussed as organisational goals, and the researcher is able to add more context and meaning to the term 'goals' in this section. In some cases the employee was unaware of the OD through lack of communication, further highlighting the importance of first stage cultural hygiene factors such as communication or mind-set. The researcher will demonstrate the importance of the 'hierarchy' in the IOD model in the second part of this chapter.

9.2.3.   The Relationship between employer and employee (Relationship)

In the case of the final influencer to OC, the relationship between the employer and employee emerges as an important finding. In line with earlier discussion surrounding hygiene factors and the first committing factor 'organisational direction,' relationship completes the IOD model and influencers of OC. The relationship between employee and employer is the logical final step after the employee has satisfied themselves that their pre-entry expectations have been met, culture is agreeable and direction of the organisation is acceptable to them. In this scenario, and in line with social exchange theory, the employee would have decided that they fit within the organisation, wish to remain through shared goals and as a result start to build a relationship with their employer (Blau, 1964). Chapter 7 discussed the influence of this theme and the powerful commitment that can occur after the relationship is established between employer and employee.

The theme of relationship introduces a number of important influencers of OC including employee buy-in for the mission of the organisation. In line with the preceding discussion, for an employee to buy-in they must firstly have accepted the culture, direction and have confidence that their pre-entry expectations have been met. Once this has been achieved the employee will be in a position to fully buy-in.

Through Framework Analysis (FA), the journey of commitment leading to buy-in, and reasons for wishing to work for an employer emerged, and this often began with pre-entry expectations. Pam [PBS-P1] spoke of her initial interview with PBS and how the friendly culture was enough to convince her that she was interviewing with a good employer. In Pam's case, this pre-entry expectation became the first stage of buy-in. Other employees spoke of buying-into the organisation through their leaders buying into them, Neil [MGY-L2] spoke of operating an open door policy where any employee could visit his office, even if this meant him going home later than usual. Keith [MGY-P2] spoke of the benefits of this approach and how he had carried it through to his own management style.

Further, in line with relationship building, the feeling that the employee was respected and valued by their employer emerged as important to the overall relationship. Dessler (1993) argued that treating employees with respect contributed to their commitment, and this is supported here. Holly [MGY-P8] spoke of her manager respecting her decision-making process, and the autonomy she was given in the normal course of her work. Holly described that this made her feel valued by her employer in line with Dessler's (1993) arguments. Pete [PBS-P6] explained that he had reciprocated the respect offered to him by PBS and this made him feel loyal to the organisation. This further enforces the argument that treating employees with respect and as though they are valued can increase loyalty and commitment. Charles [ALB-P1] spoke of *'listening'* as a means to make employees feel valued and how through active listening, and acting on feedback, employees on the shop floor would feel valued and part of the team. This argument connects culture and communication to feeling valued and relationship to the overall employee experience at work.

In the event that an employee feels valued, respected and has achieved buy-in for the organisation, strong commitment has the opportunity to emerge. The theme of relationship speaks of two-way commitment where the employer and employee begin to commit to each other in a manner that is supportive of a strong commitment relationship. In Chapter 7, the researcher highlighted a weakness of the TCM, notably that it did not test for different styles of commitment beyond affective, continuance and normative styles. The TCM is primarily designed to test if employees are

committed and in which tradition. The TCM, through design, lacks the flexibility of inductive and qualitative research approaches that allow themes to emerge from the data. In this case two-way commitment emerged as an important influencer of an employee's commitment, that their employer was committed to them.

Holly [MGY-P8] and Jake [PBS-P3] discussed how the management at MGY and PBS made a conscious effort to commit to their employees. Kevin [ALB-P2] discussed the nature of the employment market and the difficulty of finding talented employees, and that organisations demonstrating that they were committed to their staff was an essential part of this process. In many ways, two-way commitment is the opposite of exit-strategy, as it allows managers to demonstrate commitment to staff, as opposed to moving-on employees who are perceived to be working against the company goals. If two-way commitment is achieved, then the employee is in a powerfully committed relationship with their employer and trust begins to emerge in line with the overall theme of relationship.

Finally, in line with the process of commitment building, the values of the organisation emerged as an important theme to relationship. The relevant literature in OC often speaks of 'values,' describing them alongside the 'goals and values of the organisation' (Mowday et al., 1982). The discussion undertaken so far in this thesis (Chapter 6) has already spoken of the importance of values and within the theme of relationship; values emerged as an important sub-theme. The literature surrounding OC places equal importance on values, with seminal authors defining OC as the alignment of personal values to the values of the organisation (Mowday et al., 1979). O'Reilly and Chatman (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986) argue that organisation alignment is important for employees to achieve overall cultural fit. They claimed that the *'individual's values and those of an organization may be at the crux of person-culture fit'* (Mowday et al., 1979, p. 492).

Rousseau (1990) argues that this includes an alignment to the organisations values and assumptions. Claxton (2014, p. 196) argues that feeling valued can be related to three directions *'activity, culture and direction'* which offers another perspective on the overlap and relationship between themes. Interestingly, and as was identified in the

literature review, the concept of shared values runs through OC research meaning that employees would find it hard to commit without shared values (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Hultman & Gellermann, 2002; Smith, 2009). This was identified as a problem in the case of ALB where the values of the organisation were not clear, limiting the potential commitment of the employees by default. Toby [ALB-P11] provided an example of this, saying that he had seen the values, but could not tell the researcher what they were. Daryl [ALB-P5] was equally apathetic explaining that they were written on the walls in the toilet and deserved such respect.

In contrast, the employees in PBS had been consulted during value creation, meaning that they were more aligned to the same. Jake [PBS-P3] explained the values in detail to the researcher, spoke passionately and in a guilty manner for having forgotten one value, reflecting that it was *'bad'* on him.' Case MGY were in the middle; they, had introduced values, but had not yet fully communicated them to their employees.

The alignment of values between employer and employee has seemingly been unanimously agreed as important in the literature (Becker, 1960; Meyer & Allen, 1993; Mowday et al., 1979), the concept of how an organisation might align their employees to the values has been little discussed (B. Singh et al., 2008). White and Davey (2003, p. 228) pointed out that the question of what makes an employee feel valued has *'seldom, if ever, been asked by researchers.'* White and Davey (2003, p. 228) attempted to contribute to this gap in the literature by defining the concept as *'a positive affective response arising from confirmation, within a congruent set of criteria, from an individual's possession of the qualities on which worth or desirability depends.'* Interestingly, like this project, White and Davey's (2003) research was qualitative, set in the UK and case based. While the authors only investigated the phenomena in a single case in the third sector it may be noted that the approach is comparable to the methodology here. They explain their results in a thematic manner, claiming that fairness, environment and inclusion were important themes for an employee feeling valued. Fairness relates to the employee perception of *'justice in relation to processes,'* environment relates to a *'satisfactory'* and *'one way'* relationship between employer and employee, and inclusion relates to the *'relationship' between organisation and employee'* (p.229).

In all three cases, the factors relate to the IOC. In the case of fairness it can be linked to feeling respected, when environment is described as a satisfactory relationship and 'one-way' nature, it can be linked to employee buy-in or two-way commitment. Further, inclusion is described as a relationship between internal stakeholders and clearly links to the theme relationship. Claxton (2014) argued that being valued could be linked to direction and leadership of the organisation; she describes leaders as needing to be supportive and highly approachable, something that has been spoken about in this thesis under leaders as part of organisational direction. Perhaps most interesting is White and Davey's (2003, p. 230) finding that the *'employee will feel valued* […] *only if the values expressed by the organisation are shared by the employee,'* the reader will recall the importance of value alignment in the literature in OC (see: Meyer and Allen, Mowday, Becker) and the IOC (sub-theme relationship).

In the example of PBS, the senior employees as part of the senior management team had worked with the employees to create the values of the organisation, the respect that was offered (relationship: feelings of respect, feeling valued) to the employees and consultation at value development stage lead to an increased employee buy-in and acceptance for the values. In contrast, organisations ALB and MGY created the values internally within management teams and 'exported' them to the employees to lesser impact.   In the case of Gareth [MGY-P3], the values were unknown to him and his manager (who had been interviewed a week earlier and was aware that Gareth would be interviewed by the same researcher) had found the values for Gareth on their internal intranet system and made them available to him. Dwight [ALB-P5] had seen the values and was frustrated that management actions did not match the written statements. In fact, the only employee in ALB who described himself as partly aligned to the values was Kevin [ALB-P2] who, admitted during a post-interview conversation with the researcher that he was more aligned than most because the senior manager Michael [ALB-L1] had consulted him when creating the values, supporting the approach of PBS.

Hultman and Gellermann (2002 p. 5) claimed that *'organisations on their own do not have values'* and *'organisations are composed of human beings whose personal values shape the values of the organisation'.* Malbašić and Potočan (2014 p, 438) argued that

it *'was necessary to distinguish between organisational and personal values.'* This issue has already been seen in this thesis, and OC research to date, where an employee's personal values do not align with the values of an organisation, causing the employee to seek alternative employment (see: John ALB-P11 and Cathy ALB-P12). Argandoña (2003 p. 21) argued that values can only be understood as *'accepted and shared within the organisation.'* These arguments are supported by the approach of PBS who socially created shared values within their organisation.

The concept of achieving buy-in (relationship) for values is an important finding for this thesis. As Malbašić and Potočan (2014) argue, *'organisations radically committed to the business based on values are more successful than organisations that do not pay attention to the importance of organisational values.'* As was found in PBS, only when the employees are engaged with and consulted when creating values, can they begin to buy-in and support them. This directly links to the remaining themes in relationship, making the employees feel valued and respected through sharing ideas and creating shared values, and building a relationship of trust. Where they are imported onto staff, without explanation or consultation, then they are experienced to lesser effect.

Interestingly, White and Davey (2003, p. 233) concluded in their research that feeling valued through a *'relationship' between employer and employee was unique to their population,'* as their sample had *'shared values.'* In the case of MGY and PBS, the employees had a shared set of values, and this mission, along with the relationship with their employer made them feel valued. This means that the experience was not unique in the third sector and transferable to the administration of organisations: fenestration, manufacturing and sports. The application to ALB (heavy industry) was less clearly made, but potentially still relevant; however more specialised research would be required to prove this.

This argument is supported with the qualitative data from Phase One (Pre-Study and Context), the data demonstrates that PBS had the most committed employees who were the most aligned to strategy. PBS scored 76% for positive AC, 47% for trapped CC and 72% for loyalty based NC. This can be contrasted against the average OC scores

(MGY and ALB) of 58% AC, 52% for CC (where a lower score is better) and 71% for NC. Perhaps more importantly, PBS scored the highest for SI at 79%, against an average (MGY and ALB) of 75%. When employees are shown respect, they feel respected (relationship), are more likely to buy-in to values (relationship) through understanding them if nothing else, can connect them better to goals and strategy (organisational direction) of the organisation, and communication channels are improved (culture). Therefore, employee involvement during value creation is an important finding.

9.3. Outcomes of Organisational Commitment

In line with the argument presented by Ghosh and Swamy's (2014), this thesis has primarily attempted to answer the question of *'what influences commitment?'* alongside a body of existing research that answers the question, *to what extent are employees committed?* Finally, in line with the discussion presented in the three findings chapters, this section will explore the consequences of organisational commitment.

In the most part, commitment research has made the assumption that OC serves as a means to reduce turnover of employees (Angle & Perry, 1981; Ben-Bakr *et al.,* 1994; Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999). Jaros (1997b) went as far as to claim that turnover reduction was a *'conceptual linchpin'* of OC research, highlighting its importance. However, the researcher considers that OC is a deeper concept than something solely dedicated to turnover reduction. Positive forms of OC serve to align employees to organisational goals (Reichers, 1985), build loyalty (Wiener, 1982) or achieve institutionalisation (O'Reilly et al., 2010). Alternatively, in line with Becker's (1956) side bet theory and Meyer and Allen's (1990) continuance style of commitment (CC), interest in commitment by many organisations can be seen as a negative and serving only to reduce turnover of employees, even if the employee is disinterested in the mission, goals and values of the organisation.

In this thesis, the researcher has investigated the influencers of OC and now the consequences can be considered in line with Ghosh and Swamy's (2014) argument that there is a lack of research that considers the outcomes of OC.

In line with the benefits of conducting a qualitative research project, as part of the investigation into the influencers of OC, the employees also spoke of the outcomes of commitment and the researcher was able to observe the associated consequences from their general demeanour and attitude about their employment (and in some cases cross checking events or experiences between employees). In line with Framework Analysis and the argument that themes in the OC tradition are overlapping (or influential to each other), the researcher observed the connection between influencers and outcome of OC, though it is accepted that not all outcomes or consequences of commitment are positive. The researcher will split this argument into positive and negative commitment styles in line with Meyer and Allen's (1993) TCM framework.

9.3.1. Consequences of Positive Organisational Commitment

In line with the arguments presented from the Framework Analysis (FA), the influencers of OC contained clues to the consequences of the commitment. The consequences are split into positive and negative outcomes as both AC and NC styles of commitment have different associated outcomes. In line with Meyer and Allen's (1991) TCM, positive organisational commitment styles (POC) are usually related with affective and normative commitment styles (AC, NC). AC is concerned with the employee's alignment of personal goals and values between employee and organisation, willingness to exert considerable effort and desire to remain (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Mowday et al., 1982). NC is concerned with employee loyalty and feelings of obligation and desire to remain (Meyer & Allen, 1993; Wiener, 1982). AC and NC are both considered to be positive styles of commitment (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001) and are often found to correlate positively to each other leading theorists to question their continued separate usage (Jaros, 1997b). In the case of this thesis, the researcher has retained this separation between AC and NC, and maintained that both are positive forms of OC.

Consistent with the results of earlier empirical work, positive commitment was found to relate to reduced turnover of employees through an employee's desire to remain. For example Clark desired to remain with the organisation through shared goals and

values between employee and employer. Further, in line with an agreeable culture, employee buy-in, feeling respected and valued (relationship), the second outcome of positive commitment is employee attachment to their organisation. Therefore, reduced turnover, employee attachment, value and goal alignment can be taken as outcomes of positive commitment in MSBs in the SCR.

In keeping with influencer OD (strategy, progression opportunities and goals), it was found that positive commitment could lead to an enhanced employee awareness and understanding for the strategic mission of the organisation and increased interest and awareness for the employee position within the implementation of strategy. The data from the TCM and SI scale (Phase One, Pre-Study and Context) demonstrated a positive correlation between employee interest in strategy and commitment styles AC and NC. Interestingly, in line with general OC theory, these results are in support of the argument that AC and NC scales often correlate similarly with SI. The TCM and SI scale correlation between commitment styles and SI are in support of Smith's (2009) hypothesis that OC might serve as a means to align employees to the strategy of an organisation.

In summary, the outcomes of positive OC are: reduced turnover: employee attachment: strategic awareness and understanding: interest in strategic implementation and alignment to goals and values.

9.3.2.   Consequences of Negative Commitment

The outcomes of negative organisational commitment (NOC) are less varied, but in line with Meyer, *et al.,* (2010) argument that all forms of OC will serve to reduce turnover of employees. In line with Becker's (1956) side bet theory and Meyer and Allen's (1993) continuance commitment (CC) theory, continuance commitment serves to trap employees in their organisations, through side-bets in the organisation (i.e. contribution to pension schemes that are not transferable). The outcome of NOC in the context of MSBs in the SCR is reduced turnover and *a <u>need to remain</u>* with the organisation. This is notably different to reduced turnover and *desire to remain* in the case of positive commitment; however both styles produce the same end result - reduced turnover.

Kelly [MGY-P7] was a notable example of an employee who was negatively committed and only remaining because she had a lack of alternatives. Pam [PBS-P1] found herself in a similar position when commenting *'does anyone really want to be at work?'* These employees provide an example of staff who have a 'need to remain' in place of a 'desire to remain.'

In summary, the sole outcome of NOC is reduced turnover and the researcher has not found any other outcomes.

9.4. The Process of Organisational Commitment

The researcher has spoken of the relationship between the influencers of OC and the relationship between employee and employer. In the case of pre-entry expectations, they were found to influence the commitment relationship throughout the employment experience. The culture of the organisation was found to influence the employee perception of the organisations direction and overall relationship between both groups. Importantly, this thesis has discussed the emergence of hygiene factors that are to be met before commitment can develop. Further, they have the potential to break the commitment relationship between employer and employee if they are no longer satisfied.

Additionally, in a limited number of cases, employees who had left their employers on positive terms often sought a way back to employment with the organisation (see: Erin [MGY-P9] or Tim [MGY-P4]). This was observed strongly in the case of MGY, where the club had reduced in size after relegation from a higher league.

The researcher has also explored several outcomes of OC and noted their place relative to the various TCM commitment styles (see: section 2.5). Perhaps the most interesting observation from this PhD research study is the limited context in which most research in OC has been carried out. In the most part, OC research has only asked the question, *to what extent are employees committed?* Other academics have observed this limitation and long called for research that investigates influencers and outcomes of OC (Ghosh & Swamy, 2014; B. Singh *et al.,* 2008), and while efforts have been made to investigate the influencers of OC (Sturges & Guest, 2001), the topic has not been investigated as deeply. Others have hypothesised about the outcomes of

OC, notably Smith (2009) who argued that there might be a relationship between OC and an employee's relationship with the organisations strategy.

The researcher's efforts in this thesis have been dedicated to developing context to this under explored area and to exploring the influencers and outcomes of commitment from the perspective of the employee. In order to provide an overview of the overall process of OC, the three themes of culture, organisation direction and relationship were identified as important factors to employee OC. The IOC model presented in Chapter 4 is supportive of this.

9.4.1.   Summary

In summary of the influencers and outcomes of OC, three primary influencers of OC were identified. These influencers were presented in Chapter's 6, 7 and 8 where each theme and set of sub-themes was explored. The influencers were identified with support from the pre-study and context quantitative data gathered in the pre-study in Phase One.

The primary influencers of OC were identified as being culture, organisational direction and relationship. The three themes did not exist in isolation and the researcher found that all three themes were dependent on each other. For example, the sub-theme of culture as a part of communication was found to influence the employee perception of the progression opportunities that were available to them. Further, if the employee was not being communicated with, then they would be un-aware of the organisations goals, values and strategy, meaning that they would be un-aware of the direction in which the organisation was heading. The internal environment in all three case organisations was different, meaning that the culture of each business was unique. This was interesting for the purposes of the research project because it meant that the culture in each organisation influenced the employees differently.

Secondly, within the theme of organisational direction, the strategy and direction in which the organisation was heading was found to influence the overall employee OC. However, as has been noted, unless certain factors of culture had been met, then the direction would be less important to the employee (i.e. the employee feeling that their

face-fits). However, once the various factors to culture had been met from the perspective of the employee, they would develop an interest and awareness for the direction of the organisation, assure themselves that it was agreeable to them and begin working towards the strategy. In several cases, employees were found to be unwilling to commit to their employer because the goals and strategy were not agreeable to them, hence limiting their OC.

In the final theme to OC, the Relationship between employer and employee was found to influence the overall commitment relationship. Once again, this theme did not exist in isolation and the employee would primarily need to be satisfied that the culture and organisation direction were agreeable before they attempted to build a relationship with their employer. The relationship aligns with SET and the norm of reciprocity, potentially leading to two-way commitment and a powerful relationship of trust and shared values. This is the final stage of OC and one identified as a stage that not all employees would reach, employees at this stage would have strong alignment with the organisations goals and values and a strong desire to remain in line with OC theory (Mowday et al., 1979).

Secondly, and in line with the research aims and objectives, the outcomes of OC were considered. For employees who were positively committed the outcomes of OC were found to be reduced turnover, employee attachment, value and goal alignment. In contrast, where employees were negatively committed in line with CC or Becker's side-bet theory, only a reduction in turnover and need to remain was identified as an outcome of OC.

The final section in this Chapter considers the overall contribution to knowledge arising from this thesis, and includes practical and scientific impact.

9.5. Contribution to Knowledge

As is often the case in the social sciences, exactly what constitutes a contribution to knowledge, and how a contribution should be classified has not always been clearly defined. Corley and Gioia (2011) point out that top-tier management journals will only entertain manuscripts that satisfy the criteria of a theoretical contribution, but are equally quick to point out that even these top journals, including the Academy of

Management Review (AMR) are not clear on exactly what constitutes a theoretical contribution. Bartunek and Rynes (2010) share this frustration over a lack of communal understanding of exactly what constitutes a contribution, and begin to investigate what a contribution looks like in published work.   They argue that often implications for practice are predictable and follow similar, un-enlightening themes. They cite Kieser and Leiner (2009, pp. 522–523) who said 'authors are only supposed to point out what implications practitioners, as they socially construct them, can possibly draw from their results.' In fact, Kieser and Leiner (2009, p. 1) went as far as to claim that the gap between relevance in management research is 'unbridgeable'.

In a less pessimistic attempt to address this problem, Corley and Gioia (2011) argue that a contribution can be classified in two ways, in terms of 'utility' and 'originality'. The utility of a contribution can be either practical or scientifically useful, meaning that it can provide a contribution to science or practice and the originality can be either incremental or revelatory in line with the limitations of knowledge as discussed.   In the case of incremental contributions, the contribution would only improve or modify existing theory incrementally, and in the case of a revelatory contribution, it could disturb, disrupt or even replace existing theory.

Those wishing to make a practical contribution should be wary of Kieser and Leiner's (2009) work who identified that most attempts to offer a practical contribution for 'organisations' or 'managers' can be grouped into several predictable themes, *'increasing awareness, training, learning, design and structure and recruit, select, hire.'*

They argue that these contributions to practice are predictable and un-original in the most part and do not serve to help organisations, or managers in a practical way. The researcher hopes to have avoided this issue through working closely with his case organisations to make the results of the project practically useful to them.   With respect to the findings and contents of the IOC model in particular, the researcher wrote a report for each case organisation with the original findings within them, seeking feedback and their opinions as to their usefulness.   This happened in two ways, in each case organisation; the researcher interviewed the managers and owners of each organisation (Phase Three), with a view to seeking their feedback on the

original findings and presented them with a final report at the end of the entire data collection phase.

This approach, where the researcher received feedback from the owners during data collection assisted his subsequent analysis greatly, in places the researcher thought that he had identified themes that seemed important, but during conversation with the owners and managers, the reasons why they had not been implemented were explained.   For example, during an interview with Mark [MGY-P15] he explained that he would like to wear a body camera as he worked on the public gate to the main stadium, but Neil [MGY-L2] explained to the researcher that the approach had been ruled out as wearing a body camera would set a tone and expectation that was incompatible with the organisations core values, upon reflection this was actually a communication issue and part of the theme culture.   The second stage of feedback to the organisation was to present the original findings back to them after transcription and analysis of Phase Two data. In the case of PBS and MGY this was carried out in private meetings with Senior Managers and Owners in the organisation, and in the case of ALB, this was carried out in a special board meeting focusing on employee commitment, engagement and strategy. This depth of feedback led the researcher to question his own findings throughout analysis and final write up, and with further guidance from his supervisors during coding, helped him to arrive at the final results and the IOC model.   The final stage of this feedback loop will be presenting each organisation with a copy of this thesis for their perusal and feedback.

The researcher hopes that this final stage will open the door for future longitudinal work facilitating analysis into the impact that this project, the IOC has had on the organisations.   If nothing else, this approach of accepting feedback from case organisations means that the results of the project are unlikely to repeat the traditions and predictable recommendations for practice as identified in earlier analysis (Kieser & Leiner, 2009).

The researcher is comfortable with the approach to objectifying a contribution using Corley and Gioia's (2011) theoretical contribution framework and the logical split between practical and scientific contributions that are either incremental or revelatory

in nature. This Thesis has made **two types of contribution** to knowledge, one **practically useful** and one **scientifically useful**, both incremental in nature. The model in Figure 9-1 demonstrates the contributions made in line with the same framework.

Figure 9-1 Adapted Corley and Gioia Framework

The two sections that follow explain the practical and scientific contributions in detail and outline exactly how each contribution has been made.

9.5.1.   Practical Contribution

The researcher accepts that small-scale research in the qualitative tradition cannot be generalised in the way that traditional quantitative research has (See: Meyer and Allen, 1993), but agrees with Myers (2000) that research of this type can have 'redeeming qualities' that are interesting and useful for practitioners, particularly in a similar context, to SCR and/or MSBs.

In the literature review, the concept of OC was introduced and the limitations of existing OC theory explained. The methodology explored the limitations that arise when conducting purely positivistic research, or research that was primarily questionnaire driven. The researcher built a case for developing a piece of inductive research in the mixed-methods tradition that could build theory in OC. This became an investigation into the influencers and outcomes of OC within SCR, MSBs. The methodology respected preceding research in OC by questionnaire testing using Meyer and Allen's (1991) TCM to establish the commitment levels in a pre-study before investigating the influencers in qualitative interviews. This came with a number

of benefits, including being able to establish **if** the employees were committed before asking **how** they were committed whilst seeking feedback from the organisations to avoid falling into the trap of unhelpful, and un-original *'practical contributions'* Kieser and Leiner (2009). There would have been little point in investigating the influencers of OC if the researcher could not be sure that the employee was firstly committed to their organisation. In places this approach revealed useful results that could not have been found using a single method. An example of this was where PBS scored more strongly on the TCM (questionnaire) when compared to ALB, and the researcher was able to follow up with qualitative research to investigate *'why?'*

Further, the data was collected within the context of a purposive sample that was chosen on the basis that it could answer the research question (Creswell, 2009). Existing OC research has traditionally been developed and tested on large organisations and has not been tested on smaller counterparts, meaning that the researcher was seeking a sample of smaller businesses and MSBs were deemed to be most suitable. As discussed in Chapter 3, SMEs would have been an unsuitable sample focus for the project because as Rhodes (2014) pointed out, 98% of SMEs are micro-sized, meaning they do not have employees. Thus the researcher would have been unable to test commitment levels amongst employees. However, the researcher accepts that for a future study, and one that was not focusing on the commitment of employees, the number of employees in a business would not be relevant, but this was not the case here.

The context of MSBs in the SCR also served to test the TCM questionnaire that had been developed and tested within North America in the context of University employees and students, libraries and nursing staff in hospitals (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; O'Reilly et al., 2010). In the case of Herscovitch and Meyer (2002), OC testing had taken place using a sample of students where only 39% of them were employed. This North American, questionnaire driven approach, where statistics and numbers can be used to test commitment has limitations, and when it is tested on non-employees the overall validity and relevance should be questioned. The results of the data collected in this thesis demonstrate that the TCM questionnaire is a suitable tool to measure commitment within the context of SCR, MSBs and on full time employees.

The reliability of the AC, CC and NC scales were a respectable .85, .73 and .85 respectively against the scores in the seminal work of .74, .69 and .69 (J. Cohen, 1977a) where it was tested on employees in a *department store, hospital and university*' in North America (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Further, the qualitative data collected in Phases Two and Three of the study also served to confirm the accuracy of the scales.

The literature on OC within the context of the UK is limited, several studies have been conducted, including research by Snape and Redman (2003), but these studies maintain a commitment to quantitative, statistical analysis and causation testing. Smith's (2009) calls for research in OC relative to strategic implementation further demonstrates a requirement to test OC theory, but even this research was theoretical and calling on other researchers to empirically investigate the phenomena. OC research in the qualitative tradition is rare, and research in the UK is rarer still. This is essentially a gap in the literature that this thesis was able to contribute to and the results serve to generalise to theory (Bryman, 2016).

The results of the IOC model serve to help MSBs in the SCR who are seeking to assess and improve OC with their employees by understanding what is influential to their commitment. Previously organisations could only test to what extent their employees were committed to their organisations, but the literature could not offer guidance as to what influenced this commitment or how it could be improved. This became apparent in Phase Three of the study, when the Directors and Owners in each case organisation asked how OC might be improved. In the case of PBS, Robert [PBS-L1] immediately asked how the results compared to other organisations, and in the case of ALB, Michael [ALB-L1] asked how he could improve the figures that were lower than PBS. The researcher did not have an answer and realised at this point that the focus of most OC research was to diagnose commitment levels, as opposed to improving commitment and achieving employee buy-in. It had taken one of the senior managers of ALB to point this out to him due to his position, expected focus on improving his current position, and natural dis-interest in the academic side of the project. Once it had been pointed out, it seemed obvious that diagnosing the problem was only the first step, as opposed to the end goal. As most research in OC is conducted using questionnaires that are often 'mailed' to participants with self-addressed, return

envelopes, without an opportunity for two-way feedback, then perhaps this issue has not arisen in earlier OC research (Meyer et al., 2002).

Therefore, the IOC model offers insight into the influencers of OC within the context of MSBs in the SCR. The contribution in this section is therefore two-fold; firstly, practically useful for the employer who is able to use the TCM to diagnose the current environment, in the knowledge that the TCM has been tested in the UK, SCR and MSBs. Secondly, the IOC model and findings from this thesis explains exactly which factors are important to employees, and how employers can begin to give employees what they need to be committed. From an employee perspective, it allows employers to understand if staff are committed or not, and which factors might be causing issue.

9.5.2.   Summary

In summary of this section, the practical contribution to knowledge was explained, and the IOC revisited. The IOC model explains the primary influencers of OC from the perspective of the employee.

The researcher presents the IOC model in the hope that practitioners in MSB in the SCR will find it practically useful for achieving OC or for improving OC, whilst accepting the position that small scale studies in the qualitative tradition are not designed to be generalisable in the traditional manner (Myers, 2000).

The next section in this chapter explains the overall contribution to knowledge of this thesis from a theoretical perspective and is followed by the Chapter summary.

9.5.3.   Scientific contribution

In order to meet the requirements for a PhD, the author of a Thesis must demonstrate an original contribution to knowledge.   Thus far, the researcher has spoken of a contribution to practice, as described by Corley and Gioia (2011) as being 'practically useful' and this section is tasked with presenting the scientific contribution described as 'scientifically useful.'

The researcher remains aware of the confusion surrounding a theoretical contribution to knowledge as was discussed in the preceding sections, but remains confident that the thesis has made an incremental contribution to theory in the area of OC.

This project was designed with a number of goals in mind; firstly to investigate if existing research in the OC tradition that has been developed in North America was relevant and suitable in the context of the UK, this is a contextual contribution.

Secondly, to investigate OC from a qualitative and holistic perspective (managers and employees) to understand if OC is more complicated than the questionnaires revealed, this is a theoretical contribution.   Thirdly, the IOC model revealed the influencers of OC within the context of MSBs in the SCR.   Fourthly, the researcher investigated an area of business that is significantly under-represented in management literature, mid-sized businesses (MSBs), this is a contribution to developing knowledge of a specific type of business argued to be an important driver of economic growth in the UK, the MSB.

Finally, the IOC model serves to contribute to current understanding of OC, influencers of OC and the natural hierarchy of the OC building process. The findings in this Thesis serve to answer these questions and to demonstrate a theoretical contribution to knowledge.

9.5.3.1.   Contribution to Strategy

Smith (2009, 2010, 2011) called for research in OC to investigate if an outcome of committed employees could translate to an increased interest, awareness and willingness for employees to engage in the process of strategic implementation (SI). This essentially means an increased interest in the organisations goals. Smith (2009) argued that strategy and OC shared similar emphasis, and as a result should be considered together, despite having traditionally been developed in different areas of academia (namely strategic planning and organisational behaviour).   In the case of OC research, Smith argued that Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) definition commitment is *'a force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target'* held great promise for those interested in achieving employee alignment for strategic planning.   Furthermore Day and Wensley (1983, p. 85) argued that literature

in strategic management *'tend(s) to assume too simple a link between the development of strategic direction and its actual implementation.'* Smith (2009) proposed that OC was the gap that was bridged with 'goals.'

The researcher introduced a strategic implementation (SI) scale to the Phase One (pre-study) of the questionnaire instrument in the pre-study, in practice this was several questions to investigate and understand the employee perception and awareness of the organisations strategy and direction. The analysis in Chapter 4 revealed that the employees in all three case organisations were committed, with average scores of 72%, 51% and 70% for AC, CC and NC scales respectively. Additionally, the results from the SI scale, were found to be reliable (Alpha>) at .91 found that employees were aware of the strategy, with an average score of 77%.

Perhaps more importantly, when the researcher searched for correlations within the data he found that a 'large' correlation existed between OC scales AC, NC and the strategic implementation scale, SI: AC and SI where r=.57 (p=0.01) and for NC and SI r=.58 (p=0.01). These findings serve to support the theoretical argument offered by Smith (2009) who hypothesised that the two constructs might be connected despite having been developed in 'separate specialised literature' in each field. The findings from this Thesis serve to contribute to the argument made by Smith, that OC and SI are connected.

From a qualitative perspective, it was also found that those employees with TCM scores that suggested they were more committed were more aware of the strategy of the organisation. However, the researcher considers it unlikely that one thing is directly caused by the other. For example, despite the statistics quoted above, in the case of Gareth [MGY-P2] who was a highly committed employee scoring 98% AC, 62% CC and 93% NC, he explained when interviewed that he did not know the organisation's strategy very well *'I am interested* [in the strategy] *but I just need to, and want to, know more […], not only progress myself but to be able to […] help other people.'* In contrast, Dwight [ALB-P5] had a lower OC score on the TCM, (66% AC, 38% CC and 59% NC), but understood the strategy very well due to his position in the organisation.

This provides an example of the strength and depth that can arrive through employing multiple methods: findings that might not have been revealed in a study adopting a single methods approach. The researcher hopes to conduct further research from this foundation to directly focus on SI and its relationship to OC.

In summary, the researcher has found that a relationship exists between positive OC and SI, but not negative OC and SI in line with the OC I&C model and Smith's (2009) hypothesis.

9.5.3.2. IOC Model

Finally, the researcher offers the IOC model that provides an overview of the overall findings to answer the question, which factors influence OC from the perspective of the employee. Further, and as has been explained, the researcher is not seeking to generalise to practice, as the strength of small scale work in the qualitative tradition does not readily lend itself to such generalisations , but the researcher hopes that the findings of this thesis, and particularly the IOC models will be transferable in the sense that they have redeeming qualities that are of interest to other organisations within the same context and beyond (Myers, 2000).

The IOC model, as presented in Figure 4-16 highlights the overall themes as developed from the Framework Analysis (FA) conducted in this thesis. The three primary influencers of OC are *Culture, Organisational Direction, and Relationship*. The researcher explained the significance and relevance of all three themes in the findings Chapters 6, 7 and 8, and the first section of this Chapter explained the overall meaning of the IOC relative to the literature.

The three themes were found to relate to the existing literature in OC and beyond, in places literature was integrated from other areas to explain the overall findings relative to the context. This exploratory approach, where the data can reveal new insights into the phenomena under investigation is in line with an interpretivist study in the mixed methods tradition.

The IOC, themes and associated sub-themes revealed a number of important influencers to OC and in line with the discussion, explain the process of building commitment from the perspective of the employer and associated outcomes. As

discussed in Chapter 2, there is only limited research that outlines the influencers and outcomes of OC, and even less research still that considers OC from a qualitative and case approach. Further, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is no published research that explores the influencers and outcomes of OC from the perspective of SCR, MSBs. Secondly, the researcher is not aware of any research that outlines influencers of OC from the perspective of the employees in a similar way to the two-factor model proposed by Hertzberg (Herzberg, 1968). This hierarchical relationship between themes of the influencers of OC was described by Meyer and Allen (1991, p. 71) as something that will *require greater attention.'* This thesis has made a direct contribution here.

The researcher is also able to identify several further contributions to theory as a result of the analysis and discussion undertaken in this thesis. Once again, and as has been often highlighted in management research, the empirical data that was derived from this thesis demonstrated the importance of employee alignment to the goals and values of the organisation. In this project, in the case of ALB the goals and values were not clear and this coincided with ALB scoring the lowest (of all three case organisations) for OC. Case PBS had engaged with their employees to create the organisations values and had spoken to all employees in a strategic and targeted way for the purposes of communicating the organisations goals and values scored the highest in the sample. The researcher is not inferring causation here, but presents the results for the reader to interpret.

Further and in line with values, the thesis proposes that engaging with and consulting employees during *'value creation'* can lead to improved employee buy-in for the organisations values.   As Charles [ALB-P1] pointed out, employees will feel more ownership for an idea or concept if they feel as though they have been actively involved in its adoption, as opposed to having it imposed on them as in the case of MGY.

9.5.4. Summary

In summary of this section, the researcher has explained the theoretical contribution to knowledge, including the contextual and strategic inputs. The practical contribution to knowledge was also explained and linked to the theoretical contribution.

The final section in this Chapter provides a summary of the entire section.

9.6. Summary

In summary of Chapter 8, the overall contribution of this thesis was explained. The researcher has worked to explain the influencers and outcomes of OC and connect these findings to the preceding literature in OC. The findings have been linked to other literature, for example in the case of outcome 'strategic interest' and the work by Smith (2009).

The researcher was aware that the overall meaning and contribution of the thesis could easily be lost or not explicitly explained. For these reasons the researcher realised the importance of including a chapter that explained the overall findings of this thesis relative to the empirical data and wider body of literature, and the overall findings have been summarised.

Chapter 9 is tasked with concluding the overall thesis, returning to the research question and objectives to demonstrate exactly how these have been answered in line with the empirical data and analysis. The researcher also uses part of this space to reflect upon the PhD journey, how he has grown personally and as a researcher and how he might differently approach future research projects. With the latter point in mind, recommendations for future research are also provided.

Chapter 10   Conclusion

10.1. Introduction

The purpose of Chapter 10 is to summarise the entire thesis, to remind the reader of the key findings and models produced as a result of this work, and to summarise how the research question and objectives were answered.   The researcher was asking the question of *'what are the influencers and outcomes of organisational-commitment within Sheffield City Regions, mid-sized business?'* The SCR and MSBs were chosen on the basis that they were under represented in management and OC research, and had undergone significant change relative to the context in which employment exists. Influencers of OC were investigated on the basis that most research in OC chooses to test if employees are committed as opposed to investigating why they are committed. The researcher only found a small number of studies that investigated the influencers of OC, and these typically had a narrow focus, such as graduates, and were not located in the SCR or MSBs.

This chapter is split into four sections. The first section is designed to summarise the overall process of data collection, key findings and its place relative to the literature, research question and objectives.   The second section discusses the practical implications of the IOC model.   In the third section, the overall contribution to knowledge arising from this thesis is presented.   In the final section the researcher reflects on his own journey the strengths and limitations of his work and options for potential future research.

10.1.1.   Summary of Data Collection and Key Findings

In order to answer the research question and objectives, the researcher carried out a multi-phased investigation within three MSBs in the SCR. The first phase of the data collection was a pre-study designed to understand the context of each organisation. This involved asking the employees in all three organisations to answer an adapted version of the Meyer and Allen (1993), TCM questionnaire. In total, 147 employees answered the questionnaire, of which 80 were from MGY, 37 from PBS and 50 from ALB.   The purpose of this phase was to establish a baseline for the employee's

commitment, and for the researcher to understand the reality in each organisation before the secondary, qualitative phases. The researcher notes that there would have been little point in investigating the influencers of OC, if the researcher did not know, to what extent the employees were committed. The researcher interviewed several employees who were 'uncommitted' and these results serve as equally interesting and valuable to the analysis and overall contribution of this project. These results were particularly interesting to inform negative commitment styles and their associated outcomes. This phase served to answer the first research objective.

In the second phase of data collection, 33 employees were interviewed across the three organisations, of which 16 were from MGY, 9 from PBS and 13 from ALB. These interviews provided some of the richest data collected in this project and provided an important contribution to the IOC models. The interviews conducted in Phase Two provided real insights into the employee's experiences at work, and importantly answered the question of 'what influences an employee's commitment?' and *'what are the outcomes of the various commitment styles?*

Finally, in Phase Three, senior managers were interviewed in each of the three case organisations (bringing the total number of interviews to 38). In MGY, the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Executive Officer were interviewed, in PBS the Human Resources Director and Chief Executive Officer were interviewed and in ALB the Chief Executive Officer was interviewed. These interviews served alongside the employee interviews to answer the research question and objectives. The data from the employers also added depth to the employee data, as in places the employee interpretation did not match that of the employer, sometimes this was down to communication channels, as was found in the case of ALB and values, and in other places down to leadership style or willingness to offer two-way commitment.

The researcher analysed the data from the Phase One (Pre-Study and Context) phase using Microsoft Excel and SPSS software and the data was able to be fed into the results from the interviews in Phase Two and Three, managed using N-vivo software. The data from Phases Two and three was analysed at the same time, though they were transcribed as the researcher collected the data in the code, collect, code tradition

(Bryman, 2005). Framework Analysis (FA) was adopted as a means to analyse the qualitative data, and the researcher made use of other qualitative tools such as N-Vivo for data management, storage and retrieval.

Once the analysis had been completed and the data understood, the findings suggested that three primary themes that described the influencers of OC: *Culture, Organisational Direction and Relationship* had been identified. The three primary themes were influenced by a number of sub-themes that made up the overall theme. The 'Relationship' provides a good example of this, where 'feeling respected,' 'feeling valued' or feeling as though the organisation were committed to them through 'two-way commitment' contributed to the overall theme. This process served to answer the second and third research objectives.

In line with the second research objectives interest in strategy, the researcher provided a contribution in line with Smith's work. Smith (2009) argued that a relationship might exist between OC and SI on the basis that both constructs shared common definitions and focus. That is, both factors have an interest in the organisations goals and values, and if OC is an alignment to the same, then could it translate to an increased understanding, awareness and willing to engage with strategy. The correlation between AC, NC and SI as seen in Chapter 4 serves as a theoretical and practical contribution to knowledge and the researcher hopes that the results of this project will open the door for further research in this area. Smith (2009) described this area as, *'hold*[ing] *promise'* for researchers investigating the phenomena empirically. Within the context of the SCR and MSBs, Smith's (2009) ideas that OC and SI might be connected was found to be accurate, and more research to test this within a wider context would be useful.

The three themes of Culture, Organisational Direction and Relationship were developed into the influencers of organisational commitment model, the IOC. The IOC serves to explain to a reader or practitioner in a straightforward way which factors are influential to an employee's OC. In order to answer the research question, the researcher presented these findings in three separate chapters that explained the detail behind each theme present in the IOC. Once this had been completed and the

data presented, it was more clearly understood that the influencers had a natural hierarchy to them; this is a relevant example of final stages of the analysis being completed during write up. The researcher realised that Culture was the baseline for an employee's commitment, and that if employees were not being communicated with, and did not have the correct mind-set for the business, then they would be unlikely to commit to the organisation. The employee relationship with culture was compared to Hertzberg's (1968) two factor theory as a hygiene factor and something that was required in order for an employee to develop his or her commitment to the organisation.

The discussion in Chapter 9 explained this process and how the culture and pre-entry expectations served as a base-line for commitment, once these were satisfied the employee would have an increased interest in committing factors such as the organisational direction, and develop a relationship with the employer. Further, positive commitment was found to lead to a number of desirable outcomes of OC, notably a reduction in turnover through <u>desire</u> to remain, employee attachment, strategic awareness and understanding and interest in implementation, goal and value alignment. In contrast, the outcomes of negative commitment are less varied, and only influence an employee's desire to leave the organisation through reduced turnover and <u>need</u> to remain with the organisation. These observations, as explained in the IOC model serve to answer the fourth and final research objective.

10.1.2. Summary of Contribution to Knowledge and Practice

In line with Corley and Gioia's (2011) definition of a contribution to knowledge, the researcher has made a contribution in a practical and scientific manner. Section 9.5 was written to provide an overview of the entire contribution and is summarised further in this section.

The contributions offered in this thesis stem from the researcher's background and desire to conduct research that is based in organisations and practically useful to practitioners. The example of working with case PBS was provided. In Case PBS, and once the owner had seen the Phase One pre-study results, he asked the researcher how commitment could be improved. This was an unexpected question at the time as

the literature does not generally speak of improving commitment, if anything OC is spoken of as a static experience for the employee. However, it became obvious upon reflection that diagnosis of OC levels was merely the first step in the commitment process. As most research in OC does not include feedback to an organisation through interviews (a limitation of purely quantitative work), this issue might have normally not arisen. This is naturally a limitation of earlier quantitative and deductive work of this style.

Therefore, this thesis was practitioner focused and the researcher was enthusiastic for any contribution to be practically useful and understood. The researcher has identified three influencers and outcomes of OC in the manner that Meyer and Allen (1991) said would require '*greater attention*' and Ghosh and Swamy (2014) claimed was missing from OC research.

The final section of this thesis considers the researchers own reflections from the PhD journey, limitations of the project as a whole and considers the avenues available for future research efforts. As this final section is personal in nature, it is written in the perspective of the first person.

10.1.3.   Reflections, Strengths, Limitations and Potential Future Research

I began this PhD journey in October 2015 leaving a career in heavy industry behind. As a former Account Manager in the Sheffield City Region, who worked for a multi-national Steel Mills designer, I could see how quickly the landscape for employment in the Sheffield City Region had changed. We had moved from an economy that produced Steel and Coal, reflected in Sheffield being often spoken about as *The Steel City,* to a city (and its surrounding region) in change and rapidly moving towards the service sector. This was noticeable to an employee working for an organisation who built Steel Mills; we only had a single customer remaining in Sheffield, and only a handful remaining in the UK. Because of this, the organisation was required to change their mission, and goals to meet the external environment. I now understand this change caused a decline in my commitment because the organisational direction was no longer agreeable to me. This led to a strained relationship between me and the organisation, through a broken set of goals and values. I question how many time this

has happened in the past, and how many times it will continue to happen with employees in the region and wider context.

As a result, I am very much exposed to the importance of practical impact in the Sheffield City Region. The regions employees can no longer rely on a job for life, and are becoming less likely to seek it. I needed to understand what commitment looked like in this environment, how employees committed to their places of work, or if anyone was still committing at all. I now understand more, and know that commitment remains a genuine possibility if the employer can meet the needs of their employees and build an organisation in line with the IOC model.

I always knew that I could only achieve practical outcomes through working with real organisations in the region. I wrote to 23 organisations from different economic sectors in the region, often hearing nothing back and often receiving *'thanks but no thanks'* letters in return. Interestingly, I learned as much from these rejection letters as I did from those who agreed to participate. Upon reflection, and long after the event, I learned that the style of organisation that would welcome a researcher through the door was often different to a *'typical'* organisation. In the case of the PhD sample, two organisations had recently invested a great deal of time and money in their 'employee's engagement' as they called it, and were ultimately interested to understand if this effort had been successful. In the case of the remaining organisation, the small management team were working hard, but had arguably run out of fresh ideas, and were seeking external (and free!) assistance.

I can now reflect on this further, perhaps it was the organisation who wrote back to me saying that *'due to the current business climate, we do not wish to participate in your project at this time'* could benefit from understanding their employees commitment and alignment to their goals and values the most. It is not clear what this organisation meant by *'current business climate'* but it does not appear to be written in a positive way. I hope that this project that has been designed with a practical contribution in mind will help organisations in the region, and can still help these organisations, particularly those who are not willing to open their doors to external researchers.

Further, other areas for reflection include the process of securing a sample for the PhD. Overall, the data collection phase lasted for nine months after confirmation of PhD (RF2), meaning that it lasted for most of the researchers second year. Unfortunately much of this time was spent waiting for the various organisations to agree to be part of the research project, decline participation or allow me access to their organisation.   In the case of two organisations, they agreed to participate, signed the organisation consent form, but failed to issue the questionnaire to employees.

If I were to do this again, I would do a number of things differently. Firstly I would have made it much clearer to the organisations how much effort was required on their behalf, more than one person in each case organisation commented after the data collection process had ended that their participation (as managers and owners) was much less than they were expecting. One owner commented that I did all the work, and they didn't have to do much beyond giving me an office space for the duration. Had I known that the organisations were concerned about finding time to help me with the project, I could have explained that their effort was simply letting me through the door. In Chapter 3, I spoke about the delays in beginning the data collection and how this was due to the organisations postponing my visit, perhaps if I had been clearer on exactly what I was expecting them to do (very little), then perhaps I could have gained access much more quickly. This said, I accept that in the early stages, I did not always know what I needed from each organisation! This became much clearer after the first case had been fully completed.

In the end all participating organisations allowed unlimited access to their organisation, letting me walk around freely and experience the culture and environment of the organisation.   This gave me a fantastic insight into the organisations and was an important stage in the data collection and my own thinking. This access undoubtedly enabled many of the reflections and insights made about the various organisations. In the Professional Sports club (MGY), it also led the researcher to a realisation that unless he attended an event that the club offered, he was missing out on a significant part of the organisations business and culture; in the same way that he spoke to and visited the workshop in organisation ALB.   I attended a Football

match at MGY and spoke to a number of match day and event only staff to investigate their experiences working for the organisation as reported in Chapter 3.

The decision to ask employees to leave their names on the questionnaire if they were willing to be interviewed in Phase Two was successful, many of the interviews that took place were as a result of this approach, and the method enabled interviews with staff in the knowledge of their OC and SI scores. This approach greatly helped my own understanding of the practicality of the TCM scale and towards the end of the project enabled me to anticipate what kind of interview I might be conducting (i.e. that the participant might arrive late or postpone if their commitment score was low). Further, the employees took great interest in their commitment score and where it was not available to them individually; I presented them with the organisation's score and asked for comments. In nearly all cases the employees agreed with their OC score and the organisation's overall OC profile.

The final stage of data collection with owners and managers pulled everything together neatly; I collated the results from the interviews in the organisation and asked the owners for their opinions on the results. Often the owners would agree with many of the comments, and appeared grateful to hear them from a third party, sometimes they would get frustrated with hearing the same issues that they thought had been fixed. In the later stages of the project, I also shared the results from the other anonymised organisations and asked the owners if they preferred the approach taken by others. This greatly contributed to the quality and depth of the overall project.

I have no doubt that the qualitative phase provided significant depth and quality to the research project and answered questions that could not have been answered through a questionnaire. I realised the power of such an approach when reading Burrell and Morgan's (1979) investigation into the fire services, demonstrating the results of different research methods and the style of questions that they are able to answer. If I were to conduct this project again, there would be no doubt that I would attempt to work with real organisations once more, but perhaps work harder to make their responsibility and the overall timeline clearer for prompter data collection.

I am aware that this research project is limited by various factors. Firstly the data has only been collected from three case organisations, and this greatly limits the generalisability of the claims made. However, this was a deliberate decision as I read a significant amount of research in my first year that investigated OC on a very high level at the expense of depth and understanding of employees lived experiences. Secondly, the data has only been collected from a single geographical location, the Sheffield City Region. This may limit the transferability of the results, including the IOC and OC I&C models and I cannot be certain that the Sheffield City Region is representative of all regions in the UK, or the wider context. Additionally, I cannot be sure that the context of mid-sized business is representative of all businesses. However, the Sheffield City Region and mid-sized business were purposively chosen because they had been under-represented in management research as outlined throughout this thesis. I am aware that small scale research in the qualitative tradition is not strengthened by its ability to generalise, but on balance it offers an opportunity to paint a richer picture of the phenomena under investigation (Myers, 2000).

The final consideration for this section is the potential for future research resulting from this thesis. I consider that a hidden benefit of working with case organisations is the continued relationship and access available. In the traditional approach taken by researchers in OC, questionnaires are mailed out to public sector employees or students and the relationship would not be established, limiting the possibility of repeated and longitudinal research. I have avoided this issue, and intend to return to each organisation after completion of the PhD and after a suitable gap, investigate the impact that their involvement in this study has had on each case. I also plan to present each participating organisation with a copy of this thesis to investigate longitudinally how each organisation has changed as a result of the study.

I am aware that it remains possible that the organisations will not have changed at all, and longitudinal research can investigate this. In fact, no organisation change at all might be as interesting from an academic perspective as significant change, in the case of no change I would be able to speak to the same employees and owners to investigate once again, exactly **why** something has happened.

Finally, in future work, I hope to test the IOC and OC I&C models to investigate their generalisability in a wider context than the SCR.

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Word Count (excluding figures, tables and references): 75,328

Appendix

10.2. Sample of Blank Questionnaire

Organisational Code:	XXX
Dates Received:	XXX

ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. We are investigating the topic of employee organisational commitment and its relationship to a company's strategy - We hope that you will complete this questionnaire and help this project.

The questionnaire will take less than 10 minutes to complete and we guarantee that your feedback will be anonymous. Your organisation has given the researcher permission to send this questionnaire to all employees and that you can complete it during office hours.

It is important to stress, there are no right or wrong answers. The researcher is trying to understand how people really feel about the places in which they work, and compare these experiences to existing theory. In case of issues, the researcher can be contacted as follows; marc.duffy@shu.ac.uk / 07XXX XXXX.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
PLEASE CIRCLE OR TICK ONE OPTION PER LINE

WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?

MALE   FEMALE   OTHER

WHAT IS YOUR AGE

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	74+

HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU WORKED AT XXX?

< 1	1-3	3-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20+

WHAT IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION YOU HAVE COMPLETED?

☐ No formal qualifications
☐ GCSE or equivalent (GCE)
☐ A Level or equivalent
☐ Some College or Professional Qualification (i.e. HNC, City & Guilds)
☐ University Bachelor degree (BA)
☐ Post-Graduate degree or above

MD_PHD_OCQ_TCM_SME-1

WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR EMPLOYMENT?

Director	Manager	Office based	Operations	Other

YOUR FUTURE PLANS

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I plan to work in this industry until I retire							

ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

PLEASE TICK ONE OPTION PER LINE

Listed below is a series of statements that represent feelings that individuals might have about the company or organisation for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about the particular organisation for which you are now working, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by choosing an answer from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, using the scale below.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not feel it would be right to move away from XXX now							
I feel that I have too few options to consider moving away from XXX							
XXX deserves my loyalty							
XXX has a great deal of personal meaning for me							
I would not move away from XXX right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it							
I really feel as if XXX's problems are my own							

MD_PHD_OCQ_TCM_SME-1

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would be happy to spend the rest of my career with XXX							
Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to move away from XXX now							
I do not feel emotionally attached to XXX							
I do not feel like part of the family at XXX							
I would feel guilty if I moved away from XXX now							
Right now, staying with XXX is a matter of necessity as much as desire							
I owe a great deal to XXX							
It would be very hard for me to move away from XXX right now, even if I wanted to							
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to XXX							
If I had not already put so much of myself into XXX, I might consider working elsewhere							
I do not feel any obligation to remain with XXX							
One of the few negative consequences of moving on from XXX would be the scarcity of available alternatives							

ON THE TOPIC OF COMMITMENT - DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ELSE TO SAY?

……
……
……
……

MD_PHD_OCQ_TCM_SME-1

ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY QUESTIONS

PLEASE TICK ONE OPTION PER LINE

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I know what the strategy of XXX is							
I am interested in the strategy of XXX							
I understand what the management of XXX are trying to achieve							
I understand my role in implementing XXX's strategy							
I feel as though I am working towards the strategy of XXX							
I believe the strategy of XXX is achievable							

ON THE TOPIC OF STRATEGY - DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ELSE TO SAY?

………

………

………

………

FINALLY…

We are hoping that a number of employees will be willing to participate in informal follow up interviews to discuss your opinions further. As with the questionnaire, your anonymity is guaranteed and your organisation has agreed that all employees can participate within office hours. In return for your participation, you will have the opportunity to discuss your work with a researcher and to understand your commitment profile further.

Again, we stress, there are no right or wrong answers. We are simply trying to understand how employees in the Sheffield City Region feel about the places in which they work.

If you are willing to discuss this further, and learn exactly what the interview involves, then please leave your personal details below (name, email address/phone number). If you would prefer to contact the researcher separately, then please contact, marc.duffy@shu.ac.uk ***/ 07XXX XXXXXX***

……….

……….

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

MD_PHD_OCQ_TCM_SME-1

10.3. Sample of Online Questionnaire

The following link provides an anonymised version of the TCM questionnaires that was distributed to case PBS.

https://goo.gl/forms/3Qx9Xc7kbtklSlYJ3

10.4. Overview of Questionnaire Coding system

Q		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13	I would be happy to spend the rest of my career with ▆ AC 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	
14	Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to move away from ▆ now CC 9	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	
15 ⓡ	I do not feel emotionally attached to ▆ AC 4	7	6	5	4	**3**	2	1	
16 ⓡ	I do not feel like part of the family at ▆ AC 5	7	6	5	4	**3**	2	1	
17	I would feel guilty if I moved away from ▆ now NC 15	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	
18	Right now, staying with ▆ is a matter of necessity as much as desire CC 7	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	
19	I owe a great deal to ▆ NC 18	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	
20	It would be very hard for me to move away from ▆ right now, even if I wanted to CC 8	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	
21 ⓡ	I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to ▆ AC 3	7	6	5	4	**3**	2	1	
22	If I had not already put so much of myself into ▆ I might consider working elsewhere CC 11	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	
23 ⓡ	I do not feel any obligation to remain with ▆ NC 13	7	6	5	4	**3**	2	1	
24	One of the few negative consequences of moving on from ▆ would be the scarcity of available alternatives CC 12	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	

ON THE TOPIC OF COMMITMENT - DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ELSE TO ADD?

Q25   Quals

....
....
....
....

MD_PHD_OCQ_TCM_SME-1

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10.5. Participant Information Sheet

Sheffield Hallam University | Sheffield Business School

Participant Information Sheet

This document contains all the information you need to know before taking part in this study.

Please read through it carefully, the researchers contact details have been provided below in case you have any further questions.

This project has received full ethical clearance (approval) from the Sheffield Hallam University ethics committee.

Contact	Position	Phone	Email
Marc Duffy	PhD Researcher	███████████	a9035564@my.shu.ac.uk

Summary

Research into organisational commitment (that is an individual employee's relationship with their employer), has been mainly carried out in North-America and tested using questionnaires and surveys. The literature surrounding organisational commitment, has described it as the alignment of personal goals to those of their employer (presumably on the basis that employees who share the same values and goals as their employer will be more committed to their place of work), yet there is little evidence from research to support this, particularly in the UK.

This study is attempting to move past simple questionnaire testing by speaking to employees in Small Businesses to assess their feelings about where they work. For these reasons, the researcher is keen to speak to employed, consenting adults within the Sheffield City Region, to assess their commitment levels and feelings around their organisations goals.

In return, the study offers you, the willing participant, the opportunity to understand your commitment profile (using a short questionnaire). The opportunity to discuss your work, your feelings around employment and relationship to the organisational goals. Finally, and in order to be sure your words are being properly represented, the researcher will provide you with a full transcript and summary of the interview, so you are happy with his interpretation. Where your data is used in thesis or academic publications, it will be anonymised to maintain your confidentiality.

If you agree to participate in this research, you will be part of a study designed to help the Sheffield City Region and the Local Enterprise Partnership's goal of creating 6,000 new businesses and 70,000 new private sector jobs within our region over the next decade.

What will my participation involve?

The study will require a maximum 2 hours of your time over two parts. If you are an employee part one will follow part two, and if you are a manager, you will be interviewed in part two before completing the questionnaire in part one.

Part One

A short questionnaire designed to learn your commitment profile and test your interest for part two. At the end of part one, you will be asked to leave your name if you wish to participate in part two.

Part Two

One-on-one interviews lasting approximately 1 hour. Informal conversations designed to enable the researcher to understand how you feel about the place in which you work and how much you are interested (or aware) of the company's strategy.

After the interview, the researcher will send you a copy of the interview transcript and summary (essentially a typed out, word document, containing everything we discussed). This will give you the opportunity to check what was spoken about, and that your words are being properly represented. You will be free to amend the transcript, and send it back to the researcher.

It is important to stress at this point, there are no right or wrong answers. The researcher is trying to understand how people really feel about the places in which they work, and compare these experiences to academic literature to assess how 'accurate' the literature is within our context.

What are the benefits?

If you complete the questionnaire and are chosen for interviews in part two, you will have the opportunity to learn your commitment score, find out what it means and discuss your feelings about the place you work with the researcher.

Furthermore, you will be part of a study designed to help the Sheffield City Region and the Local Enterprise Partnership's goal of creating 7,000 new businesses and 70,000 new private sector jobs within our region.

Are there any costs?

There are no costs associated with taking part in this research.

Can I change my mind and withdraw from the study?

Yes. You may withdraw from the study at any time, without reason, penalty or prejudice.

In addition, during the course of the study, you will be notified of any new findings or changes that may affect your willingness to continue.

Will my confidentiality be protected?

Yes. The researcher hopes to publish data collected from this study as part of a thesis, future journal articles and scientific conferences. No personal information will be used or referred to in the study and your place of work will be referred to as SME-A, or similar.

All data will be stored securely (and anonymously as far as the participant is concerned) and not released (or used outside academia) without written permission from yourself (unless required by law).
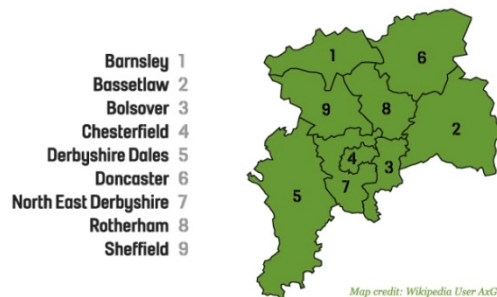
When will the study begin?

November 2016

What is the Sheffield City Region?

The Sheffield City Region is a political partnership between 9 local authorities surrounding Sheffield City, further details can be found here:
http://sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/about/overview/

Barnsley 1	
Bassetlaw 2	
Bolsover 3	
Chesterfield 4	
Derbyshire Dales 5	
Doncaster 6	
North East Derbyshire 7	
Rotherham 8	
Sheffield 9	

Map credit: Wikipedia User AxG

Who is the researcher?

The researcher is a PhD Candidate at Sheffield Hallam University. Originally from Sheffield, with an interest in our success and future place in the world.

You can view my LinkedIn profile here: https://uk.linkedin.com/in/marc-duffy-bb896023

Further Questions?

Please contact the researcher on the email address or phone number listed above.

10.6. Participant Consent Form

Sheffield Hallam University

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY:

Investigating strategic implementation relative to Organisational Commitment, within Sheffield City Region's SMEs.

Please answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies

	YES	NO
1. I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had details of the study explained to me.	☐	☐
2. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any point.	☐	☐
3. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study during the interview, or up to 14 days after the interview, without giving a reason for my withdrawal. I understand that I can decline to answer any particular questions in the study without any consequences to my future treatment by the researcher.	☐	☐
4. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out in the Information Sheet.	☐	☐
5. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.	☐	☐
6. I consent to the information collected for the purposes of this research study, once anonymised (so that I cannot be identified), to be used for any other research purposes.	☐	☐

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's Name (Printed): _____

Contact details: _____

_____

Researcher's Name (Printed): Marc Duffy

Researcher's Signature: _____
Researcher's contact details: Marc Duffy, Sheffield Hallam University, Science Park, Unit 5. Sheffield,S11WB.T: 07872906676. Business Card to be provided.

Please keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together.

10.7. One Pager Summary

Sheffield Hallam University, PhD Research Project in the Sheffield City Region

In association with Sheffield Hallam University, we are conducting a PhD research project with Small Businesses within the Sheffield City Region.

The research investigates the link between employee commitment and the organisations strategy, with the focus being on how employees feel about the organisations in which they work, and what effects (if any) this has on their actions.

We are seeking case study organisations within the Sheffield City Region for this research. We understand that time is of a premium, however, the information we receive is invaluable and we require only the time it takes to complete a short questionnaire. In addition to completing the questionnaire, we hope that those taking part will supply their details for follow up discussions at a convenient time.

The project is two phased, and those who complete the questionnaire and choose to leave their details for follow up, will be contacted by the researcher for an interview where the topic can be explored further (approx. 1 hour, informal conversation).

Benefits

The benefits for your **organisation** include:

- A better understanding of your 'employee commitment level'
- Copy of the final analysed data which could help your organisation in improving employee commitment and its place relative to strategy.

The benefits for the **employee** include:

- Individual commitment score;
- The opportunity to discuss your work and feed-back your feelings in a confidential manner to a neutral researcher.

All information gathered will be kept strictly anonymous and where used in publications, the organization's details will be given an ambiguous name such as SME-A or similar. As a participant, you will be free to withdraw at any point and where your words are used, they will be anonymised.

Impact

We are hoping that this project is interesting to SMEs in the region and If you agree to participate, you will be part of a study designed to help the Sheffield City Region and the Local Enterprise Partnership's goal of creating 6,000 new businesses and 70,000 new private sector jobs within our region over the next decade.

If you are willing to get involved, or would like more information, then please contact us using the details listed below.
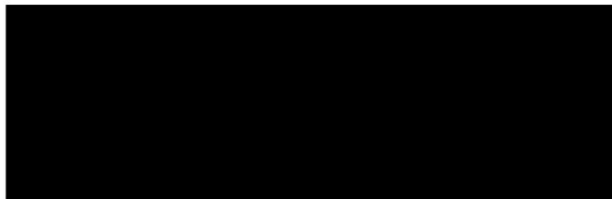
Marc Duffy
Doctoral Researcher

Sheffield Hallam University
City Campus
Unit 5 – Science Park
S1 1WB

e: a9035564@my.shu.ac.uk
         marc.duffy@shu.ac.uk

T:
tw:

LinkedIn:
w:

10.8. Sample Email Template for Interview Participants

Sheffield Hallam University - Interview Request

Duffy, Marc

Sent: 13 March 2017 09:55
To: ███████████████████
Attachments: 03 Participant Information~1.pdf (372 KB) ; 04 One Pager.pdf (337 KB)

Dear ██████

Thank you for completing the recent Organisational Commitment Questionnaire and leaving your name to learn more about the next phase (one-on-one, interview / informal discussion process).

As mentioned in the questionnaire, we are looking to speak to a number of employees to understand on a deeper level, how they feel about the places in which they work. I have several questions to ask, but ideally, we will have an open conversation, where you can discuss your work, generally.   In addition, you will have the opportunity to learn about your commitment profile (from the questionnaire) and to understand what the theory suggests that it means to you

As with the questionnaire, we can guarantee your anonymity, and you will be able to withdraw from the discussion at any point - I am attaching a couple of information sheets that explain in more detail about the aims and objectives of this project.

We have permission from the Directors of ██████████████ to interview anyone who volunteers in works time and have permission to conduct the interviews either privately on site, at the University, or locally.   If you agree to participate, then we could carry out the interview in the following locations, at your preference;

████████████ - Private Meeting Room
Local Coffee Shop - Open Setting
Sheffield Hallam University - Private Room

If you are agreeable, then I will be at ████████████ on **Tuesday 21st March** and **Thursday 23 March** (all day), conducting interviews. Please just let me know the best time for you, and I will confirm the appointment.

I anticipate that the discussion will take around an hour, and with your permission, I will audio record the discussion, so that I can focus on listening, rather than having to take long notes.   Rest assured, this is only for my use, not shared, and deleted after the project is complete.

Anyway, looking forward to hearing from you, and hoping we can meet.   If these dates do not work, please feel free to let me know your availability.

Regards
Marc

Marc Duffy
Doctoral Researcher & Associate Lecturer

Sheffield Hallam University
Sheffield Business School

10.9. Overview of Interview Questions

Interview Pack

Checklist

- ☐ Recording Permission

- ☐ Participant Information Sheet

- ☐ Participant Consent form

- ☐ Questionnaire Data (Participants / or blank)

Pre-Data

Organisation:	
Employee:	
Tenure:	
Position:	

Background Questions

1. Could you describe your role at this company?

   a. *How long have you worked here?*

2. Have you worked for other companies in the same industry?

   a. *What were the main differences?*

3. Why did you choose this industry to work for?

   a. *Why did you choose this company?*

4. Could you describe what this company is like to work for?

Objective Two – Questions

Understanding how Sheffield City Region employees feel about their employers

Simosi (2012) What does OC mean to SCR employees

---

1. Do you feel a personal connection with this organisation?

   a. *Do you feel a sense of attachment or involvement with this organisation?*

   b. *Do you feel a sense of belonging to this organisation?*

2. What does a committed employee look like?

3. Should employees be committed to their employer?

   a. *Who is responsible for nurturing this relationship?*

4. Do you intend to remain with this organisation?

5. Are you committed to this organisation?

   a. *Why? Why Not?*

   b. *Does your commitment to this organisation make any difference to your work?*

   c. *What factors have an impact on your commitment to this organisation?*

   d. *What could this company do to improve your commitment?*

Objective Three – Questions

Investigating how employees understand their organisations strategic plans, relative to their TCM profile, and feelings about where they work

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1. What is the company's current strategy? / (Plan) (Where do they want to be?)

2. Where do you see this organisation in say 5 or 10 years' time?

3. Are you clear on what this organisation is attempting to achieve?

4. How does this company communicate its strategy to you?

   a. *How do you hear about things?*

   b. *What is the best way to communicate with you?*

5. Do you believe in this organisations goals and values?

Recap – Member Checking

Objective Four – Questions

Investigating the relationship between, Strategic Implementation, relative to Organisational Commitment, Commitment profiles and development and connection of theory within the area

1. What is your role in implementing this organisations strategy?

For AC Profile

Based on your commitment score from the questionnaire, you choose to work for this company because you feel an alignment with your personal goals and the goals of the organisation.

For CC Profile

Based on your commitment score from the questionnaire, you choose to work for this company because you feel you **need to** (sometimes defined as trapped), this could be because of a (perceived) lack of alternatives, or the worry that you could not find similar employment with the same benefits elsewhere.

For NC Profile

Based on your comment score from the questionnaire, you work for this company because you feel **loyal** (or obligation) to them. This could be because they have treated you well in the past.

Followed by

Does this sound correct to you?

How does this make you feel?

Are most people here like this?

Finally

2. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?