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Organizational commitment among small and medium enterprise employees in Misamis Occidental

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Abstract

Aim: This study aimed to assess the level of organizational commitment among employees of Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) in Misamis Occidental and to examine how selected demographic factors—specifically gender, age, civil status, educational attainment, and length of service— affect the different dimensions of commitment.

Methodology: A descriptive-comparative quantitative research design was employed and involved 170 purposively selected SME employees as respondents. Data were collected using a modified organizational commitment questionnaire. The results were analyzed using frequency counts, mean scores, and t-tests to find out if there were significant differences in commitment among the different demographic groups.

Results: The results showed that most SME employees were male, aged 18–34 years, single, held a bachelor's degree, and had been working in their company for 5–8 years. Among the three commitment dimensions, affective commitment was the highest, indicating that employees felt emotionally attached to their organization and had a strong sense of belonging. The study also found that gender had a significant effect on organizational commitment, while age, civil status, educational attainment, and length of service did not show significant differences.

Conclusion: The study underscores that affective commitment plays an important role in keeping SMEs effective and successful. It also found that gender influences how committed employees feel to their organization. Therefore, SME owners are encouraged to use inclusive, understanding, and gender-sensitive management practices to help strengthen employee engagement and loyalty.

Keywords: *organizational commitment, Small and Medium Enterprises, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment*

INTRODUCTION

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are vital to the world's economy because they provide jobs, support economic growth, and encourage innovation. Globally, SMEs make up about 90% of all businesses and offer more than half of the world's employment (World Bank Group, 2025). In Southeast Asia, they contribute about 40% of the region's total income (GDP) and employ more than 60% of the workforce (Association of Southeast Asian Nations Secretariat, 2022). Despite their importance, many SMEs continue to face challenges in keeping employees committed, especially with the rapid changes brought by technology and the effects of the pandemic (International Labor Organization, 2022). After the pandemic, several SMEs struggled with high employee turnover, burnout, and the need to adjust to digital tools and systems (Estiana et al., 2025).

In the Philippines, SMEs make up over 99% of all registered businesses (Department of Trade and Industry Philippines, 2023). Understanding what keeps employees loyal and motivated is therefore crucial for maintaining competitiveness and supporting national development. However, many Philippine SMEs still find it difficult to retain skilled workers (Department of Science and Technology, 2021). Although they continue to drive employment and help reduce poverty, their recovery after the pandemic has been slowed by ongoing issues with employee retention and digital transformation (Shinozaki & Rao, 2021).

Moreover, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the Philippines, especially in Misamis Occidental, play an important role in the local economy. They help reduce poverty and promote community development by providing stable sources of income. As the country's economy continues to change, it is important to understand the factors

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that encourage employees to stay committed to their organizations. Na-Nan and Saribut (2019) described organizational commitment as a psychological bond that connects employees to their organization's values and goals, leading them to show loyalty and dedication. Similarly, Mihardjo et al. (2020) emphasized that when employees are engaged, they tend to develop stronger commitment, which improves their work performance. This sense of commitment also helps reduce employee turnover and supports the organization's long-term success.

This study is based on Allen and Meyer (1990) three-component model of organizational commitment, which explains that commitment has three parts: affective, continuance, and normative. Many researchers (Korkmaz, 2018; Liu et al., 2020; Mushonga & Ukpere, 2022) have shown that these three types of commitment influence how long employees stay in an organization. However, findings are not always consistent because different cultures and organizations may affect commitment in different ways. These differences show the importance of studying how the three types of commitment apply to Philippine SMEs, where social and cultural factors may influence how employees show loyalty to their organizations.

The framework served as the basis for creating the study's analytical model. The model looks at how employees' demographic characteristics—such as age, gender, civil status, educational background, and length of service—are related to the three types of commitment: affective, continuance, and normative. As shown in Figure 1, a visual conceptual framework illustrates how these factors are connected.

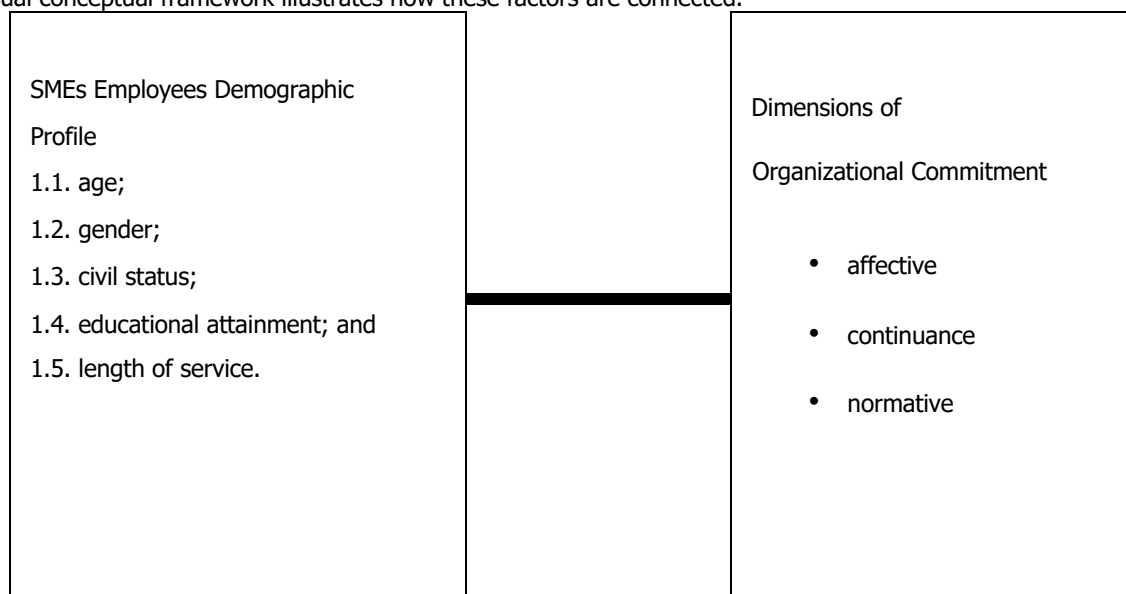


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Affective commitment refers to an employee's emotional connection to the organization, which makes them stay because they truly want to (Korkmaz, 2018). Research showed that this is the most desirable type of commitment since it leads to greater engagement, job satisfaction, and positive work behaviors (Bashir & Venkatakrishnan, 2022; Faeq, 2022; Ouakouak & Ouedraogo, 2018). In particular, it is often strengthened when employees feel autonomous, competent, and find meaning in their work (Shin et al., 2020). Furthermore, recent studies also revealed that affective commitment encourages employees to help others, share knowledge, and contribute to innovation and resilience within their organizations (Ouakouak & Ouedraogo, 2018). However, many scholars point out that it can be harder to build affective commitment in SMEs because of fewer career growth opportunities and limited resources. This shows the need to better understand how small businesses can create strong emotional connections with their employees, like what large companies achieve.

In contrast, Continuance commitment pertains to an employee's feeling that they need to stay in the organization because leaving would be costly or disadvantageous (Mushonga & Ukpere, 2022). It is based on a cost-benefit mindset, where employees remain not because they want to, but because they must (Pasumarti et al., 2022). This type of commitment is often influenced by factors such as years of service, benefits, and work relationships



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(Agogbua & Obi, 2022; Mayowa-Adebara, 2018). Although continuance commitment can help reduce employee turnover in the short term, research suggested that it may also lead to lower job satisfaction, less motivation, and emotional fatigue, since employees may stay even if they no longer feel engaged (Karyono & Hakim, 2022). This raises an ongoing discussion among scholars about whether continuance commitment truly helps improve performance or simply keeps employees from leaving without necessarily increasing productivity.

Meanwhile, Normative commitment refers to an employee's feeling of moral obligation or duty to stay with the organization (Korkmaz, 2018; Liu et al., 2020). It reflects a "should stay" attitude, which often develops through the organization's culture, social interactions, and values such as loyalty and reciprocity (Karyono & Hakim, 2022; Ogunbanjo et al., 2022). Traditionally, normative commitment has been common in cultures that value collectivism and strong relationships. However, recent studies show mixed results. In some cases, it helps build trust and ethical behavior, but in others, it may lead to complacency or dependence, especially when employees stay only because they feel obligated rather than genuinely motivated or engaged.

Recent studies showed that the three types of organizational commitment are interconnected and should not be viewed separately. Affective and normative commitment often strengthen each other because they are both built on shared values and trust. However, continuance commitment may sometimes weaken motivation since employees stay mainly out of necessity rather than desire (Faeq, 2022; Pasumarti et al., 2022). While affective commitment is found to have the strongest impact on performance and innovation, many SMEs still depend more on continuance and normative commitment because of limited resources and support systems. These findings suggested that for SMEs to achieve long-term success and promote employee well-being, they need to develop all three types of commitment in balance—supported by ethical leadership and employee empowerment.

Beyond the three-component model, researchers have also examined how demographic and personal factors affect organizational commitment. Avci and Erdem (2022) noted that gender, age, education, marital status, and tenure can influence how employees stay committed, although results have not always been consistent. For instance, some studies found that men are more committed than women (Peterson et al., 2019), while others reported the opposite (Ogunbanjo et al., 2022). The effect of age also varies—some research suggests that older employees show higher commitment (Hsu, 2018), whereas others argued that both younger and older workers can be equally committed if they feel valued and supported (Kim et al., 2018). Education can also shape commitment, as opportunities for continuous learning and growth strengthen employees' emotional attachment to their organization (Bakotić, 2022). Moreover, married employees tend to show greater commitment because of stability and social support (Liu et al., 2020). Finally, longer tenure and stable job conditions are linked to stronger commitment, while job dissatisfaction and poor work-life balance can weaken it (Cao et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2019).

Although many studies have examined organizational commitment, most of them focused on large companies in developed countries. In contrast, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing nations like the Philippines have received much less attention, even though they continue to face challenges in keeping their employees. While research has explored commitment in different industries, few studies have investigated how demographic and socio-cultural factors affect the commitment of employees working in Philippine SMEs. Most existing studies center on big corporations or Western settings, creating a gap in understanding how local SMEs build and sustain employee commitment despite limited resources. To address this gap, this study examines the relationship between demographic factors and the three types of organizational commitment among SME employees in the Philippines.

This study adds to the literature on organizational behavior by offering context-specific insights into employee commitment within Philippine SMEs, a sector that plays a vital role in the country's economic stability. The findings may help improve SME management practices, guide workforce development policies, and support future strategies to strengthen employee retention and organizational performance. In addition, the study highlights how having a committed workforce is essential for the success and long-term sustainability of SMEs.

Statement of the Problem

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in the Philippine economy by generating employment, stimulating local innovation, and promoting inclusive growth. However, sustaining employee loyalty and minimizing turnover remain persistent challenges, particularly among SMEs that face resource limitations, competitive pressures, and evolving work expectations. While organizational commitment has been widely examined in large corporations, relatively few studies have focused on how demographic characteristics influence the different dimensions of commitment— affective, continuance, and normative—within the context of Philippine SMEs. This lack of contextualized understanding limits the ability of SME owners and managers to develop effective retention



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strategies. Given these concerns, it becomes necessary to determine the level of organizational commitment among SME employees in Misamis Occidental and to explore whether significant differences exist across demographic groups such as age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, and length of service. By addressing this gap, the study aims to provide insights that will guide SME leaders in formulating evidence-based strategies to enhance workforce stability and organizational effectiveness.

Research Objectives

This study aimed to determine the level of organizational commitment among SME employees in Misamis Occidental and to examine whether significant differences exist among the dimensions of commitment when grouped according to demographic factors. Specifically, it sought to:

1. Describe the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. age;
 - 1.2. gender;
 - 1.3. civil status;
 - 1.4. educational attainment; and
 - 1.5. length of service;
2. Assess the level of organizational commitment of the respondents in terms of:
 - 2.1. affective commitment;
 - 2.2. continuance commitment; and
 - 2.3. normative commitment;
3. Identify which dimension of organizational commitment is most prevalent among SME employees; and
4. Determine whether there is a significant difference in the dimensions of organizational commitment when grouped according to the respondents' demographic profiles.

Research Questions

To achieve the above objectives, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. age;
 - 1.2. gender;
 - 1.3. civil status;
 - 1.4. educational attainment; and
 - 1.5. length of service?
2. What is the level of organizational commitment of the respondents in terms of:
 - 2.1. affective commitment;
 - 2.2. continuance commitment; and
 - 2.3. normative commitment?
3. Which among the dimensions of organizational commitment is most prevalent among SME employees?
4. Is there a significant difference in the dimensions of organizational commitment when grouped according to the demographic profile of the respondents?

Hypothesis

Given the stated research problems, the following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho: There is no significant difference of the dimensions of organizational commitment when group according to the demographic profiles of the respondents.

Ha: There is a significant difference of the dimensions of organizational commitment when group according to the demographic profiles of the respondents.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-comparative quantitative research design, which was the most suitable for its goals. This design helped the researchers describe the current level of organizational commitment among SME employees and compare differences based on age, gender, educational attainment, marital status, and length of service. The descriptive part presents data on the three types of commitment— affective, continuance, and



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normative—while the comparative part identifies significant differences among the groups. Using this approach, the study provides useful insights into how organizational commitment appears and varies among SME employees in Misamis Occidental.

Population and Sampling

The study involved 170 employees from selected Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Misamis Occidental, particularly from the retail, manufacturing, services, and food industries. A purposive sampling method was used to include participants who had enough work experience and familiarity with their organization's operations and culture. The respondents were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) They are currently employed in an SME within Misamis Occidental; (2) They have worked in the organization for at least five (5) years; and (3) They are willing to participate voluntarily in the study. The five-year requirement was adapted from Aumayr-Pintar and Bechter (2019), who found that employees with 5–9 years of service usually show higher levels of commitment and stability. This helped ensure that the participants could give reliable and meaningful answers about their experiences at work, improving the accuracy and quality of the study's findings.

Instrument

Data were gathered using a modified and validated questionnaire based on the Organizational Commitment Scale (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The tool measured three main types of commitment: affective, continuance, and normative. To make sure the questionnaire fits the local business setting, it was reviewed and validated by three experts—two with strong academic and research backgrounds, and one with more than ten years of experience in SME operations and management. They checked the content validity, clarity of statements, and relevance to the study's goals. Minor changes were made to adjust some terms to the local context. A pilot test was also conducted with 20 SME employees who had similar characteristics to the study participants but were not part of the actual survey. The reliability test (Cronbach's alpha) showed strong results: $\alpha = 0.85$ for affective, $\alpha = 0.98$ for continuance, and $\alpha = 0.99$ for normative commitment. These scores indicated that the questionnaire was highly reliable and suitable for use in the main study.

Data Collection

The study was carried out over three months, from January to March 2023, in selected SMEs located in Tangub City, Oroquieta City, Ozamiz City, and nearby municipalities in Misamis Occidental. The researchers first sent formal letters to SME owners and managers to ask for permission to conduct the study. Once approval was granted, they personally visited each SME to explain the study's purpose, confidentiality procedures, and the voluntary nature of participation. Each respondent was asked to sign a written consent form before answering the questionnaire. The self-administered questionnaires were distributed during work breaks to avoid interrupting regular operations. The researchers stayed on-site to assist and answer questions when needed. After completion, all questionnaires were collected immediately and safely stored for data processing, analysis, and interpretation.

Treatment of Data

The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data. Frequency counts and mean scores were used to describe the respondents' demographic profiles and to show their overall level of organizational commitment in the three dimensions. To find out whether there were significant differences in commitment based on demographic factors, the researchers used independent samples t-tests. These statistical methods helped ensure that the data were analyzed systematically and that the results provided clear and reliable evidence to support the study's objectives.

Ethical Considerations

The privacy and confidentiality of the respondents were strictly safeguarded throughout the research process by adhering to established ethical guidelines. Specifically, it was explicitly stated that all information collected would be used solely for academic purposes. The researchers assured the respondents that the data obtained through the research instrument would be treated with the utmost confidentiality and that their identities would always remain anonymous at all times.



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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following section shows the respondents' demographic profile, including their gender, age, civil status, educational attainment, and length of service, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Respondent's demographic profile in terms of gender, age, civil status, educational attainment, and length of service

| Profile | | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender | Male | 86 | 50.60 |
| | Female | 84 | 49.40 |
| Age | 18-34 | 86 | 50.59 |
| | 35 and more | 84 | 49.41 |
| Civil Status | Married | 63 | 37.06 |
| | Single | 107 | 62.94 |
| Educational Attainment | Bachelor's Degree | 120 | 70.59 |
| | Non-Bachelor's Degree | 50 | 21.41 |
| Length of Service | 5-8 years | 125 | 73.53 |
| | 9 and more | 45 | 26.47 |

The data revealed that male employees (50.60%) slightly outnumbered females, suggesting near gender balance among SME employees (Yuan & Ma, 2022). Yet, Nguyen et al. (2020) observed a narrowing gender gap as more women assume professional and managerial positions in developing countries. In terms of age, half of the respondents (50.59%) were aged 18–34, indicating that SMEs rely heavily on a young workforce. Alenazi (2023) highlighted that such demographic composition compels firms to adapt recruitment and retention strategies to meet the expectations of younger employees. Furthermore, 62.94% of employees were single, supporting Atif and Zubairi (2018) finding that single individuals are more likely to engage in wage employment due to fewer family constraints. The majority (70.59%) held a bachelor's degree, reflecting SMEs' growing preference for educated and adaptable workers (Efendi et al., 2023). Notably, 73.53% had a tenure of 5–8 years, showing workforce stability. Basnet et al. (2023) emphasized that employees with mid-level tenure often exhibit greater organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and performance. Overall, the demographic profile suggests that SMEs in Misamis Occidental maintain a young, well-educated, and relatively stable workforce—an essential foundation for long-term organizational growth and competitiveness.

Employees are the core strength of SMEs, as their commitment directly influences productivity, innovation, and overall business success. After describing the employees' demographic profiles, the study then examined their levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment, as shown in Tables 2–5.

Table 2

Respondents' level of organizational commitment in terms of affective commitment

| Indicators | Mean | Interpretation |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| 1. I would be very happy to work with this organization. | 2.59 | Agree |
| 2. I enjoy discussing the organization with people outside it. | 2.83 | Agree |
| 3. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own. | 3.61 | Strongly Agree |
| 4. I feel emotionally attached to this organization. | 2.87 | Agree |
| 5. I do not feel like "part of the family" in this organization. | 2.85 | Agree |
| 6. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me. | 3.10 | Agree |
| 7. I would find it difficult to leave this organization because these are few available alternatives. | 2.90 | Agree |
| 8. I do not feel a 'strong' sense of belonging to my organization. | 2.95 | Agree |
| Grand Mean | 2.98 | Agree |



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The grand mean of 2.98 indicated a high level of affective commitment among SME employees. This finding aligned with Ida Sinaga et al. (2021), who emphasized that employees with strong emotional attachment to their organization tend to display proactive and innovative behaviors. Similarly, Dilmaghani and Tabvuma (2019) found that high affective commitment enhances both job and life satisfaction. These results implied that SMEs in Misamis Occidental are strengthened by a workforce that genuinely enjoys and values their work, fostering motivation, creativity, and long-term organizational stability.

Table 3

Respondents' level of organizational commitment in terms of continuance commitment

| Indicators | Mean | Interpretation |
|--|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up. | 2.56 | Agree |
| 2. It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to. | 2.74 | Agree |
| 3. Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave this organization now. | 2.36 | Disagree |
| 4. It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave this organization now. | 2.05 | Disagree |
| 5. At present, staying with this organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire. | 2.31 | Disagree |
| 6. I feel that I have very few options to consider leaving this organization. | 2.61 | Agree |
| 7. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me. | 2.72 | Agree |
| 8. One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifices i.e., another organization may not match the overall benefits I have here. | 2.52 | Agree |
| Grand Mean | 2.48 | Disagree |

The grand mean of 2.48 in Table 3 indicated that SME employees in Misamis Occidental have a low level of continuance commitment. This means they do not feel strongly tied to their jobs by the possible costs of leaving. Recent studies on SMEs (Antonio & Theresia, 2023; Lee et al., 2023) explained that when employees do not see much investment from their organization or do not feel bound by job conditions, their sense of obligation to stay weakens, increasing the chance of turnover. Albalawi et al. (2019) asserted that employees with low organizational commitment are more likely to accept other job offers, even if leaving involves some costs. Similarly, Mushonga and Ukpere (2022) noted that employees stay longer when they find purpose and meaning in their work, not just because of benefits or tenure. This result suggested that although employees may currently remain in their jobs, they do not feel deeply connected for financial or practical reasons. They might leave if better opportunities appear. For SMEs, this highlighted the importance of strengthening emotional (affective) and moral (normative) commitment rather than relying only on cost-based strategies to keep employees.

Table 4

Respondents' level of organizational commitment in terms of normative commitment

| Indicators | Mean | Interpretation |
|---|------|----------------|
| 1. It would be wrong to leave this organization right now because of my obligation to the people in it. | 2.40 | Disagree |
| 2. I would feel guilty if I left this organization now. | 2.32 | Disagree |
| 3. I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization. | 2.45 | Disagree |
| 4. I owe a great deal to this organization. | 2.44 | Disagree |



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|--|-------------|-----------------|
| 5. One of the major reasons I continue to work in this organization is that I believe loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain. | 2.48 | Disagree |
| 6. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel like it would be right to leave this organization now. | 2.68 | Agree |
| 7. If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere, I would not feel it was right to leave the organization. | 2.45 | Disagree |
| 8. Things were better in the days when people stayed in one organization for most of their careers. | 2.81 | Agree |
| Grand Mean | 2.50 | Disagree |

Table 4 shows a grand mean of 2.50, which meant that SME employees in Misamis Occidental have a low level of normative commitment. This suggested that most employees do not strongly feel a moral duty to stay in their company. Instead of loyalty or obligation, their decision to stay seems to depend more on personal goals or better job offers elsewhere. Similar results were found by Ayub et al. (2021) who noted that employees often show weaker loyalty when a company's values and ethics are not clearly defined. Likewise, Mokhtar et al. (2021) observed that normative commitment decreases when employees feel disconnected from the organization's goals. On the other hand, Karyono and Hakim (2022) explained that strong normative commitment can lead to job satisfaction because it builds a sense of obligation and loyalty. Overall, the findings suggested that SME managers in Misamis Occidental should build a values-driven workplace—one that encourages shared culture, open communication, and strong ethical practices. This approach can help employees feel more connected to the organization and develop a deeper sense of loyalty and commitment.

Table 5

Summary of responses on the level of organizational commitment of small and medium enterprise employees

| Organizational Commitment | Grand Mean | Interpretation |
|---------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Affective | 2.96 | Agree |
| Continuance | 2.48 | Disagree |
| Normative | 2.50 | Disagree |

The results showed that affective commitment was the most dominant type of commitment among SME employees in Misamis Occidental. This means that employees feel a strong emotional connection to their organizations. When workers are emotionally attached to their workplace, they tend to experience greater job satisfaction because their work reflects their personal values and goals. They also genuinely care about their organization, identify with its mission, and feel a sense of belonging. This emotional bond helps reduce employee turnover since workers who feel connected to their organization are less likely to look for other job opportunities. Overall, the high level of affective commitment among SME employees highlights the importance of building a positive work culture, keeping employees engaged, and maintaining good relationships between employers and employees to ensure business success. Faq (2022) supported this idea, noting that organizations can strengthen affective commitment by providing a supportive work environment, meaningful tasks, opportunities for growth and development, and fair treatment for all employees.

The following data present the significant differences in the dimensions of organizational commitment when grouped according to the respondents' demographic characteristics. Table 6 displays the results of the tests conducted to determine whether significant differences exist in the levels of organizational commitment based on age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, and length of service.

Table 6

Results in testing the significant difference in the level of organizational commitment as grouped according to demographic profile

| Profile | Group | n | Mean | SD | t-value | p value | Interpretation |
|---------|--------|----|------|------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Age | 18 -34 | 86 | 2.66 | 0.30 | -0.61 | 0.54 | Not |

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----|------|------|-------|------|-----------------|
| | 35 and more | 84 | 2.69 | 0.32 | | | Significant |
| Gender | Female | 84 | 2.62 | 0.31 | -2.42 | 0.02 | Significant |
| | Male | 86 | 2.73 | 0.30 | | | |
| Civil Status | Married | 63 | 2.69 | 0.29 | 0.66 | 0.51 | Not Significant |
| | Single | 107 | 2.66 | 0.34 | | | |
| Educational Attainment | Bachelor's Degree | 120 | 2.67 | 0.34 | 0.64 | 0.52 | Not Significant |
| | Non-bachelor's degree | 50 | 2.70 | 0.21 | | | |
| Length of Service | 5 – 8 years | 125 | 2.65 | 0.31 | -1.91 | 0.06 | Not Significant |
| | 9 and more | 45 | 2.75 | 0.29 | | | |

The results showed a p-value of 0.02, which is lower than the 0.05 significance level. This means there is a significant difference in the level of organizational commitment between male and female employees. The data indicated that male employees have higher organizational commitment than female employees. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This difference may be due to factors such as workplace culture, gender experiences, work-life balance, or varying career expectations (Khalili & Asmawi, 2023).

However, the p-values of 0.54, 0.51, 0.52, and 0.06 are all higher than the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. This means there is no significant difference in organizational commitment when employees are grouped according to age, civil status, educational attainment, and length of service. In other words, employees of different ages show similar levels of commitment. Likewise, being single or married does not affect commitment levels, and employees with varying educational backgrounds or years of service are equally committed. Since no significant differences were found, this implied that organizational commitment remains consistent across these demographic factors. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

The findings on age and tenure showed mixed relationships with organizational commitment. Some studies (Elkhdr & Kanbur, 2018; Hsu, 2018) found that older employees and those with longer tenures often have stronger emotional bonds with their organization because of their experience and investment in the company. However, other studies (Avcı & Erdem, 2022) found no significant connection. In line with Lee et al. (2019), the present results suggest that longer tenure can help employees feel more attached through job stability and career growth. Still, overall commitment seems to depend more on the quality of work experience rather than on age or length of service alone.

Also, educational attainment influences how employees relate to their organizations, especially in today's learning-focused workplaces. According to Bakotić (2022), providing opportunities for continuous learning and professional growth can strengthen affective commitment by making employees feel more skilled, competent, and valued. Marital status, however, shows mixed effects. Liu et al. (2020) found that married employees often show stronger commitment, possibly because of social support and a need for stability. On the other hand, Cao et al. (2020) reported no significant difference between married and single employees, suggesting that factors like a fair workload, supportive culture, and meaningful work may be more important than personal circumstances.

Conclusions

The findings showed that SME employees in Misamis Occidental have high affective commitment, meaning they feel a strong emotional connection and satisfaction with their organizations. However, their normative and continuance commitment levels were low, indicating that they feel less moral obligation or practical need to stay with their current employer. Gender differences were found, with male employees showing higher commitment than females, while age, civil status, education, and tenure did not significantly affect commitment. These results highlight



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the importance for SME owners and managers to create well-rounded employee engagement strategies that address emotional, moral, and practical aspects of commitment. In other words, keeping employees requires more than just retention policies—it calls for a workplace culture where employees feel purpose, belonging, and opportunities for growth. Ultimately, fostering such commitment in SMEs not only benefits individual organizations but also contributes to broader economic stability and workforce development in the region.

Recommendations

SMEs in Misamis Occidental may focus on strengthening affective commitment while also addressing the lower levels of normative and continuance commitment to improve overall employee loyalty and retention.

Since demographic factors such as age, civil status, education, and length of service did not significantly affect commitment, SMEs may prioritize enhancing workplace culture, leadership effectiveness, and employee engagement initiatives. Offering competitive salaries, job security, and clear career advancement opportunities may also strengthen continuance commitment, giving employees practical reasons to remain with the organization beyond emotional attachment.

Given the observed gender differences in commitment, SMEs may implement inclusive workplace policies, such as mentorship programs and tailored career development opportunities for both male and female employees. Fostering a culture of recognition, support, and professional development may enhance normative commitment, encouraging employees to feel a moral obligation to stay.

Additionally, SMEs may conduct regular assessments of employee satisfaction and commitment to identify areas for improvement and implement evidence-based strategies that promote a more engaged and committed workforce.

Future research may explore qualitative aspects of organizational commitment to better understand employees' experiences and motivations within SMEs. Studies may also examine the role of leadership styles, organizational culture, and engagement practices as mediating factors influencing commitment and retention. Expanding research across different regions, industries, or cultural contexts in the Philippines may provide broader insights into how SMEs can effectively foster a loyal and motivated workforce.

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