

Commitment profiles of intercollegiate athletic administrators

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While many recent studies in sport management have used Meyer and Allen's (1997) multidimensional conceptualization of commitment (e.g., Turner & Chelladurai, 2005), a research gap still remains in how it has been investigated. According to Wasti (2005), "One issue that has been neglected is the coexistence of the commitment components or forms and its implications. Previous research has been largely variable-centered, looking at the antecedents and outcomes of each commitment form separately through correlational or regression analysis. This type of analysis fails to recognize the fact that employees endorse varying levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment concurrently" (p. 292). To date, no research study in sport management has examined all three bases of an individual's commitment simultaneously. For example, what outcomes should be expected from an individual high in affective commitment (AC) and normative commitment (NC) and low in continuance commitment (CC)? Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) argued for the need to look at combinations of the three commitment components. Specifically, they proposed a model of eight "commitment profiles", with each having different implications for job outcomes. They hypothesized that individuals could be high or low in AC, NC, and CC, thus creating the eight profiles (2 to the 3rd power). This model was tested and did receive some support in a study conducted by Gellatly, Meyer, and Luchak (2006).

Wasti (2005) used a cluster-analytic approach to provide an empirical assessment of Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) proposed commitment profiles. Based on theoretical interpretability and the need for cell sizes adequate enough for generalizability, Wasti found 6 commitment profiles. Examining five work outcomes (turnover intentions, work withdrawal, loyal boosterism, altruism towards colleagues, and job stress), she found significant differences across the commitment profile groups.

Two athletic administrators at each of the 327 NCAA Division I institutions (N = 654) were asked to participate in the current study. Data were collected from one female (senior woman administrator; SWA) and one male (senior associate, associate, or assistant director of athletics) athletic administrator. A total of 222 athletic administrators (female administrators = 103, male administrators = 119) completed and returned usable questionnaires for a response rate of 33.9%.

Using the k means cluster function of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), cluster solutions for AC, NC, and CC were investigated. Initially, eight clusters were proposed (similar to Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001); however, two of the clusters had a small number of subjects (10 and 14). Similarly, when the statistical package was asked to produce seven clusters, two clusters were again rather low in number of subjects (11 and 19). Finally, and congruent with the findings of Wasti (2005), the six cluster solution met the initial criteria (i.e., theoretical interpretability and adequate cell sizes) and was used for further analyses.

Following the categorization scheme given by Wasti (2005), one group showed a below average level on each base of commitment (at least one standard deviation below the sample average) and was labeled the "Non-committed" (n = 24). On the opposite side were the "Highly committed"; these individuals were at least a .7 standard deviation above the average level on each base of commitment (n = 43). Between these two extreme cluster groups, there were four additional profile clusters. The largest of these groups, labeled the "Neutrals" (n = 59), fell between a \pm .3 standard deviation from the mean on AC, NC, and CC. Another group emerged that was high in AC and NC, but low in CC. This group was designated "AC-NC dominant" (n = 41). An "AC dominant" group also emerged (n = 39) and consisted of individuals above average in AC, but below average in NC and CC. Finally, there was a group that was almost one standard deviation above the mean for CC, but more than one standard deviation below the mean for both AC and NC. This "CC dominant" group comprised the smallest cluster (n = 22).

As can be seen above, using cluster analysis to classify athletic administrators by their commitment levels produced unequal group sizes (i.e., there were only 22 "CC dominant" athletic administrators, while 59 were labeled "Neutral"). Typically, univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) would be used to determine whether commitment profile groups differed in terms of turnover intentions and job satisfaction. However, the discrepancy in group sizes raises the risk of violating the assumption of homogeneity of variance (Field, 2005). To counteract this issue, the Brown-Forsythe F was used. Turnover intention and commitment were measured using a scale developed by Meyer, Allen, & Smith (1993) while job satisfaction was measured using a scale originally developed by Quinn and Shepard (1974). The results indicate that both turnover intentions, $F(5, 151) = 15.36$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .25$, and job satisfaction, $F(5, 228) = 18.22$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .27$, differed significantly across the commitment profile groups.

Also because of the unequal group sizes, Games-Howell post hoc procedures were used to compare means between each of the

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six commitment profiles (Field, 2005). With the exception of the Non-committed group ($M = 4.54$; $SD = 1.69$), the CC dominant group ($M = 4.80$; $SD = 1.62$) was significantly higher in their turnover intentions than all of the other groups. Similarly, the Non-committed group was significantly higher in their turnover intentions than the AC/NC dominant ($M = 2.07$; $SD = 1.03$), Neutrals ($M = 3.41$; $SD = 1.31$), and Highly committed groups ($M = 3.03$; $SD = 1.60$). Finally, the AC/NC dominant group's mean turnover intention scores were significantly lower than four other groups (all but the AC dominant group). With regard to job satisfaction, the AC/NC dominant group ($M = 6.09$; $SD = .70$) had significantly higher mean scores than the Neutrals ($M = 5.22$; $SD = 1.00$), CC dominant ($M = 3.98$; $SD = 1.21$) and Non-committed groups ($M = 4.84$; $SD = 1.33$). The CC dominant group was significantly lower in job satisfaction than all but the Non-committed.

Consistent with other such studies (e.g., Sinclair, Tucker, Cullen, & Wright, 2005) the findings imply that athletic departments should consider using commitment-based interventions aimed at certain profiles. These "profile-focused" interventions may be more effective in moving employees from one profile to another and ultimately minimizing turnover. Further discussion will include the caution that must be taken to not create or reinforce stereotypes within intercollegiate athletics along with other implications for athletic administrators.