Understanding commitment and the contingent leisure service worker: an interpretive approach

by

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A thesis
presented to the University of Waterloo
in fulfillment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Recreation and Leisure Studies

Waterloo, Ontario Canada 2007

Authors Declaration for Electronic submission of a thesis

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Abstract

Over the past few decades, hundreds of empirical investigations have examined the construct of "workplace commitment". Much of this research is based on the assumption that commitment is tied to longevity within a given organization. In other words, those most committed are those who plan to remain with an organization. Work patterns, particularly within leisure delivery systems, are often inconsistent with the longevity model. Leisure settings often rely less on full-time lifetime employees and more on contingent workers, those working part-time, seasonally or on a temporary basis. Consequently, much of the commitment literature offers limited insight to leisure managers. Further, research efforts within the commitment literature have, perhaps unnecessarily, focused their efforts on commitment to the organization. An emerging literature suggests that commitment may be focused on a variety of entities. This literature would benefit from a more expansive view of commitment and the entities to which it is directed. Traditional views of, and research in, workplace commitment may be inappropriate for contingent employees. Finally, the commitment literature is dominated by quantitative and questionnaire-based methodology (Cohen, 2003). This study is intended to address many of these issues by using qualitative methods to explore the ways in which various commitment types emerge among contingent employees in a variety of leisure settings. Consequently, this study examines the meaning of commitment to contingent employees in selected leisure services. It focuses on what these contingent employees felt most connected to in their specific workplaces; in essence their stories of what commitment meant to them.

The study sample was composed of students enrolled in an undergraduate Recreation and Leisure Studies Program. In order to take part in the study, students were to have engaged in a series of short-term professional-related experiences. Initial contact with potential participants was through a short introduction in 2nd, 3rd and 4th yr recreation class. Six classes were used in this study with a total of 168 responses collected. Class members were asked if they would be willing to participate in a 60-90 minute interview to further discuss their work experiences. 24 participants took part in a semi-structured interview in which questions were asked about the intensity and focus of their commitment. It has been suggested that contingent employees may express little emotional commitment because of the limitations of their work experience (Chang & Chelladurai, 2000). However, in this study, the topic of passion or desire came up repeatedly during the interviews. For these contingent employees, commitment seemed very *affective* in nature. Their commitment was based strongly on enthusiasm and passion for various components of the work setting. There were many such components or foci raised by the participants. Consistent with Stinglhamber et al.'s (2002) multi-foci perspective of commitment, these individuals' passion was typically directed to more than one entity. All five major foci of commitment (to the organization, supervisor, occupation, workgroup and client) helped build passion and commitment for these participants. While this is not

uncommon, it is noteworthy that commitment to the organization (which dominates much of the private sector commitment literature) was prevalent in only two of the interviews. In each of these cases, however, it is unclear whether the organization or people within the organization engendered that commitment. While the individuals expressed support for the organization, their remarks seemed more directed at people in their respective organizations. Overall, those who revealed the greatest commitment (toward any foci) echoed the importance of intrinsic motivation; they must love what they were doing. Among these participants, there was little evidence of passionate commitment to any organization. Instead, the emphasis was more often on some specific element within the workplace. The focus of their attention was most prominent toward clients and toward supervisors. For these contingent workers affective commitment (as opposed to normative or continuance) dominated their thinking about commitment. They worked at the locations because they wanted to be there, not as a result of external constraints. They not only wanted to work in these settings, but they were passionate about their work. It was evident that either they brought that passion when they first arrived or developed a passion while on the job. Although one cannot generalize this finding to all contingent workers in all settings, there was little evidence of outright indifference among these workers. Finally, 2 new foci of commitment were identified. Specifically, participants introduced commitment or attachment to place, and commitment or involvement in activity as they discussed job-related commitment levels. These variables, while new to the management/commitment literature, have each received considerable research effort from within the leisure community. Overall, this study suggests that the dominant business-based commitment literature has largely failed to consider job conditions specific to the contingent leisure service employee. Further, research in leisure settings suggests that attachment can expand beyond the traditional foci (the organization, people, unions, etc.) to include the setting in which the work occurs and the activities around which the work happens. This suggests that traditionally leisure-based issues (place and activity) can bring much to the work setting and the commitment of those who toil in those settings. For managers of contingent workers, understanding the importance of place and activity in addition to traditional indicators of commitment may prove significant in helping develop a more committed contingent employee in the leisure service settings.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the faculty, staff and my fellow students in the Recreation and Leisure Studies program for making this a great experience. I'd also like to express my gratitude to all the participants who volunteered their time and shared their experiences to make this study a reality. Thank you also to Dr. Allen Webb and Dr. Don DeGraff for sharing their thoughts and helping make this a stronger document. A special thanks goes out my committee members from our department: Dr. Troy Glover and Dr. Mark Havitz. Finally, a big thanks to Dr. Ron McCarville for his humour and positive encouragement, his perseverance in editing countless drafts of this document, and most importantly, for his mentorship and friendship.

Dedication

To Mary, without your love, support and adventurous spirit this journey would have never even begun. To J.P and Cameron, you are a constant reminder of the importance of curiosity. You continue to put a smile on my face and keep my priorities straight: Thanks lads! To my Mom for her unquestioning love and her support of my numerous forays back to school: Thanks Mom! Finally a special dedication in loving memory of my Dad, who was a living example of commitment.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Human resource development represents both an opportunity and a challenge for any organization. Employees are critical to the smooth and efficient functioning of organizational processes. More than that, as Pfeffer (1998) reminds us, human resources offer one of the few forms of competitive advantage that cannot be easily copied. However, making the most of an organization's human resources has proven to be both challenging and intensely complex. The challenge is in finding ways to meet the dynamic requirements of any workforce. "If management wants to deliver an outstanding level of service to its customers then it must be prepared to do a great job with its employees" (Reynoso & Moores, 1995, p. 65). It is perhaps little surprise then that a great deal of academic and managerial attention has been devoted to understanding employees and their performance in organizations (Gallagher & Parks, 2001).

The question becomes, how do managers follow Reynoso and Moores' (1995) advice and "do a great job" dealing with human resources? Further, how do activities devoted to human resources translate into desirable employee behaviour? Recent research on this topic has focused on the importance of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Cohen, 2003). As Meyer and Allen noted, overall feelings of attachment, identification, and belonging hold considerable permanence. Consequently they can offer long term guidance to workers as they carry out the duties they are assigned. For this reason, within the larger human resources literature, commitment has received a great deal of attention over the years.

Much of the early commitment research focused on commitment to the organization. This research was guided by the assumption that employees who were committed to an organization would perform in a way superior to that of workers who lacked such commitment. Unfortunately, despite its conceptual appeal and intuitive promise, organizational commitment has failed to explain much variance in the behaviour and attitudes of employees (Riketta, 2000; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

As research on the topic matured, it soon became clear that commitment to the organization may represent only one way of exploring the role of commitment. Indeed, there may be many targets of a worker's commitment. Reichers (1985) argued that employee commitment could best be viewed as a collection of multiple commitments to various groups both in and related to the organization (p. 469). Reichers' proposed that devotion to other entities such as one's career, work group, supervisor, union, or customers may become a relevant focus for an employee's commitment. Reichers' early predictions have generally been supported by subsequent investigation. The most prominent targets of commitment discussed in the business literature are commitment to (1) the organization, (2) a profession or occupation, (3) a workgroup, (4) a direct supervisor, and (5) a union (Cohen, 2003).

The leisure literature has also devoted considerable effort to understanding the role of commitment. For example, leisure researchers have considered the role of commitment as it is directed to place (e.g. Moore & Graefe, 1994; Schreyer, Jacob, & White, 1981; Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, & Watson, 1992; Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989), community (e.g. Arai & Pedlar, 1997; Glover,

Parrry, & Shinew, 2005; Yuen, Pedlar, Mannell, 2005) and activity (e.g. Havitiz & Mannell, 2005; Kyle & Mowen, 2005; Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2004). Although these studies have considered leisure from the context of the leisure participant and not the worker, they do suggest that there are many foci that might gain the attention of the individual.

Public leisure settings are noteworthy for other reasons as well. First, public leisure providers represent what Jacobs (1992) labeled as "guardian" organizations. Their collective mandate is one of service to the community. As such, their employees may identify strongly with the purpose and mission of their respective organizations. Such identification may help build commitment levels.

Further, systemic work conditions within leisure agencies may influence how those organizations are perceived by members of their work force. Most notably, leisure agencies are faced with increasing numbers of part-time, contract work and seasonal work arrangements. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that for every 4 permanent leisure jobs there are 5 contingent positions (2005). In Canada, contingent workers play a key role in the delivery of a broad range of leisure services as diverse as summer camps, municipal pools, and large commercial theme parks (Human Resources, Canada, 2005). In many areas of leisure service (summer camps, for example) seasonal employees comprise the bulk of the workforce. Yet our understanding of commitment related to these nonstandard work arrangements is quite limited.

This study explores the ways in which commitment is created and maintained among workers in leisure settings. Specifically, it will consider the foci

of commitment as well as the meaning placed on commitment among members of a contingent workforce (temporary, seasonal or contract workers). This latter point seems all the more relevant given that the contingent workforce is growing as a pervasive byproduct of the changing workplace (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004).

Defining Commitment

Commitment is a pervasive term used to refer to a variety of related contexts or situations. The term may refer to involvement in a relationship, adherence to some behavioural change such as an exercise program or diet; or even devotion to some higher purpose in keeping with one's spiritual beliefs. Commitment reflects a sense of belonging; identification with and attachment to the focus of ones' commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Traditionally, the study of commitment in the workplace has focused on commitment to the employing organization. This is commonly referred to as organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Although many definitions of organizational commitment exist, the most prevalent definition is from the seminal work of Porter, Mowday, Steers & Boclian (1974). They viewed organizational commitment as "a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a definite desire to maintain organizational membership"(604).

Meyer & Allen (1990) argue that, the commitment construct has three components or dimensions: affective commitment (desire), continuance

commitment (need), and normative commitment (obligation). In short, affectively committed employees *want* to stay, continuance committed employees *have* to stay, and normatively committed employees feel they *should* stay. It has been argued that affective commitment is the only *true* form of commitment as it reflects an emotional attachment and is intrinsically based (Cohen, 2003). Conversely, normative and continuance commitment have their basis in obligation and external reward or punishment respectively (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Though many studies use only the affective dimension of commitment, there is growing evidence suggesting that continuance and normative commitment may interact with affective commitment to impact upon the strength of that commitment (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2002).

Workplace Commitment Outcomes

In the last twenty-five years, hundreds of studies have examined commitment, primarily to the organization. The vast majority of them have been questionnaire-based and quantitative in nature (Cohen, 2003). Two trends are evident within this literature. First, meta analysis on organizational commitment research suggests that the focus of commitment research has been on the elimination or reduction of negative behaviours (Riketta, 2000). Second, more recent efforts have been devoted to better understand positive behaviours in the organization, such as in role and extra role performance (Pittinsky & Shih, 2004).

Consequently, we now know a great deal about workplace commitment. Much of the research on this topic has used the organization as the focus or target of an employee's commitment and has concentrated on the affective dimension of that commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Therefore, it is no surprise that our understanding of the consequences and antecedents of workplace commitment is primarily informed from the study of affective organizational commitment.

Work experience factors (such as empowerment, support, freedom to do one's job, and perceived fairness) act as antecedents to affective commitment and that affective commitment plays the greatest role in influencing a variety of outcomes directed at the organization, customer and employees (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). The dynamics of workplace commitment seem generally consistent with any typical relationship. The actor seeks support, freedom and fairness and when this is present attachment is both developed and maintained (Homans, 1961). Highly committed employees are less likely to leave, or consider leaving, an organization (Riketta, 2000). In addition, committed employees display lower absenteeism and, albeit to a lesser extent, exhibit higher job performance than do less committed individuals (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002).

More recently, research has begun to explore what outcomes workplace commitment may have for the clients of an organization. Research in this area is still in its infancy but there is some empirical evidence suggesting that affective commitment can lead to improved customer outcomes such as higher service quality evaluations. For example, a recent study found that more highly committed

employees provided better service and performed more customer focused behaviors (Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004). It is worthwhile to note that this study focused on commitment to the organization. As such commitment to other foci might not have garnered the same results. Would employees offer conscientious service levels if they were deeply committed to their union but the union discouraged flexible staff response to customer service issues? What if their work group favoured efficiency over effectiveness and client requests were deemed an imposition by that work group. In such cases, would commitment to the union or work group discourage responsive behaviour?

In short, we know that employees may be committed in different ways to different parts or entities within or related to an organization. We know too that the outcomes of commitment can have positive outcomes for an organization, the employee, and clients (Cohen, 2003). It is further understood that employee commitment is multi-dimensional and encompasses components of emotional identification and attachment (affective commitment), obligation (normative commitment), and the weighing of alternatives and investments (continuance commitment) and that these dimensions can manifest themselves as commitment to a variety of workplace related entities (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2002).

A changing focus on workplace commitment and outcomes

Recent changes in the workplace may influence the way in which commitment develops within the workforce. For example, notions of working for

the same employer for life have been replaced by project-based work arrangements.

Statistics Canada figures suggest that, in 2001, the share of all employed people

holding a job with a pre-determined end date had reached 11% compared to 7% of

employed persons in 1989. How do these new work conditions influence

commitment patterns? Pittinsky and Shih (2004) investigated highly mobile

temporary employees, so called contingent workers, (technical employees in the

information technology field) and found that theories that have long presumed that

employee mobility and employee commitment are inversely related did not hold

true. Recall that Porter et al's (1974) definition (that has served as the basis for

much of the subsequent twenty-five years of commitment research) had as a key

component "…a definite desire to maintain organizational membership"(604).

Pittinsky & Shih found through quantitative analysis and qualitative interviews that

although contingent employees were aware that their time with their current

employer was limited they were often highly committed and focused on positive

outcomes for the organization as well as being highly active in decision making and

the organizational community. The authors also found that traditional management

efforts to foster commitment often focused on retention and proved to be of little

use in producing positive employee behavior for this type of employee and in this

context.

New Directions: Studying Contingent Employees in Leisure Services

The vast majority of research on organizational variables like commitment has taken place in settings where employees are employed fulltime and where they expect their employment will continue indefinitely. Consequently most organizational theories, including those explaining workplace commitment, reflect a very specific type of experience for the worker. Little research has considered commitment within contingent employment situations in leisure or sport organizations. One of the few studies to do so was conducted by Chang & Chelladurai (2003) within the context of Korean sport organizations. They found that part-time work is not as conducive as full-time work for developing affective commitment or organizational citizenship behaviours. They also found that part-time employees displayed more of a continuance orientation whereas full-time employees seemed affectively committed. This finding supports the general thesis (common in commitment research) that part-time and temporary employees are less affectively committed than full time employees and, in turn, less likely to perform positive behaviours for the organization or for its clients.

Jacobsen (2001) explained this pattern, not in terms of hours worked, but rather in terms of responsibilities assigned while in the workplace. Using data from ten Norwegian institutions caring for the elderly he found that full-time employees were often given more involvement in organizational decision-making. He speculated that greater involvement in decisions and decision-making processes may be an antecedent to commitment. He then suggested that, in order to build commitment among contingent workers, managers should involve such employees

in decision making. Evidence from full time workers within the leisure field has supported the hypothesis that greater participation in decision making is related to higher reported levels of organizational commitment (Nogradi & Koch, 1981) but remains unexplored with contingent employees.

Conversely, McDonald & Makin (2000) found contingent employees actually had higher, rather than lower, levels of job satisfaction and affective commitment to their organizations. The authors suggest that contingent employees noted fewer violations of their perceived psychological contract with the organization. The psychological contract represents a set of expectations regarding the relationship between the employee and the organization (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2003) and that reduced (contingent) work relationships may reduce opportunities for management to violate that contract.

Consequently, the relationship between contingent employments and commitment remains unclear. Improving our understanding of how and why commitment develops within these workers is particularly important for leisure service organizations given (a) their ongoing reliance on contract and temporary work arrangements and (b) the prevalence of the contingent employee as the key interface between clients and leisure organizations.

New Directions: Commitment and employee meaning

The survey based and model driven approach of most commitment studies has contributed greatly to our overall understanding of commitment. Many of these

studies have focused on scale development and model building. However, these positivistic approaches may not be particularly suited to investigate ways in which commitment is viewed and operates within in the minds of contingent employees. This study will instead utilize an interpretive approach to further our understanding of contingent employee commitment in a leisure service workplace (Creswell, 1998).

Purpose

This study examines, through interpretive methods, contingent employees' perceptions of their own commitment focus and level. It is guided by three research questions.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

R1 How did the employees' commitment influence their behaviour toward the organization, clients, or the community?

Sub questions:

To what entities are contingent employees committed (e.g. the organization, profession, workgroup, supervisor, clients or community)?

How intense is their commitment?

R2 How is commitment formed in contingent leisure service employees?

Sub questions:

Do critical incident(s) in the workplace influence the intensity or target of commitment for a contingent employee?

If critical incidents play a role, what are the key incidents that have played a critical role in establishing, maintaining or altering the employee's feelings of commitment?

Did the employee perceive that the employing organization did anything (formal or informal) to develop commitment in contingent employees? Was it effective?

A similar focus on other entities to which commitment is directed

Did key incidents change to what or whom the employee's feelings of commitment (positive or negative) were directed?

R3 What does commitment mean to contingent employees in selected leisure services?

Sub questions:

How do contingent employees define commitment?

How is it demonstrated?

Summary

This chapter offers a brief glimpse into the challenges that arise from the study of commitment. This study considers commitment from the perspective of contingent employees in several leisure services workplaces. The goal is to develop a better understanding of how these employees perceive commitment and how they believe it influenced their behaviour. As will be discussed within the methods chapter, Critical Incident Technique will be used to examine specific incidents and their subsequent influence on commitment levels and types. These incidents and the accompanying narratives will be used to further our understanding of the meaning of commitment for part-time, contract and seasonal employees.

Chapter 2 Literature/Conceptual Review

Introduction

Over the past several decades there has been a significant amount of managerial and academic focus on the construct of commitment in the workplace. A committed workforce, committed employers, and a high commitment workplace have all been discussed in the popular business literature as contributing to the retention of employees and improved employee performance. The academic community has also been very much interested in commitment. Academics have spent over twenty-five years studying workplace commitment and, in the process, have published hundreds of studies relating to the construct (Cohen, 2003). This chapter will review this academic literature for insight into workplace commitment.

As suggested earlier, the primary emphasis in workplace commitment research has focused on the relationship between the employer and the employee, commonly referred to as organizational commitment (Mowday, et al. 1982). Research efforts have focused primarily on scale development, model building and the identification and establishment of antecedents, correlates and outcomes of organizational commitment (Cohen, 2002; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). The goal has been to discover how managers might create and maintain an effective workplace. As Gallagher & McLean (2001) suggest, "within the conclusions of many empirical investigations of organization commitments are suggestions or prescriptions for organizational commitment building by employer organizations" (p.182).

Over the years, researchers have begun to accept that commitment is best captured by examining multiple foci or entities (Becker, 1992; Morrow, 1993; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Cohen, 2003). While workers may become attached to and may identify with the organization itself, other forms of commitment are also pervasive. They include attachment to the job (employment commitment), the perceived importance of one's job (job commitment, often referred to as job involvement), and commitment to ones' career, occupation or profession (occupational commitment) (Gallagher & McLean 2001).

As the notion of commitment expanded to include several foci, research began to explore the many targets of commitment including one's direct supervisor and one's workgroup/ coworkers (Meyer & Allen 1997; Reichers, 1985). More recently, research efforts have begun to consider issues related to but outside the place of employment including unions, customers, employee associations, and family (Cohen, 2003). Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) "It is now well recognized that employees can develop multiple work-relevant commitments, and that commitment itself is a multidimensional construct" (p. 299).

Utilizing this multidimensional, multiple commitment concept, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) have presented a conceptual model (see figure 1) that will be used to structure this discussion. Note that this model is presented for explanatory purposes only and is not a focus of testing in this dissertation. Rather, it is offered for demonstrative purposes allowing the researcher to better structure a discussion on the current state of the literature on workplace commitment.

Figure 1A Conceptual Model of Workplace Commitment Antecedents, Foci and Outcomes.

BASES or Antecedents

•organizational characteristics

•personal characteristics

•work experiences

Adapted from
Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p.317

Desire (Affective)

Cost (Continuance)

Commitment
Binding forces *

Obligation (normative)

*commitment to
•Organization
•Supervisor
•Workgroup
•Career or occupation
•Customer
•Union

Discretionary

Focal Target - Relevant Outcomes**

Target Relevant Outcomes**

**Outcomes relevant to :
•The organization
•The client
•The employee

The Roots of Workplace Commitment Research

Workplace commitment was originally equated with the notion of loyal employees. Committed employees were those who would remain with a company through good times and bad (Morrow, 1993). Empirical work initially focused solely on outcomes of such commitment including the reduction of negative behaviours such as absenteeism, turnover, theft and an unwillingness to relocate

(Morrow). The employee's commitment was thought to be focused solely on the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Consequently much of what we have learned about employee workplace commitment has its genesis in the study of organizational commitment. That focus continues to remain vital in many commitment studies today.

Early research on organizational commitment also dealt with conceptualization of the construct. A key distinction in the development of the commitment construct was that there are two main but not incompatible features of commitment; attitudinal commitment and behavioural commitment. Mowday, et al. (1982) suggested that

> "Attitudinal commitment focuses on the process by which people come to think about their relationship with the organization. In many ways it can be thought of as a mind set in which individuals consider the extent to which their own values and goals are congruent with those of the organization…Behavioral commitment, on the other hand, relates to the process by which individuals become locked into a certain organization and how they deal with this problem"(p. 26).

Studies on attitudinal organizational commitment have focused on measuring this commitment and understanding its antecedents and consequences (Buchanan, 1974; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Steer, 1977). Meyer and Allen suggested that "the objectives of this research were to (a) demonstrate that strong commitment was associated with desired outcomes (from an organizational perspective), such as lower absenteeism and turnover and higher productivity, and (b) determine what personal characteristics and situational conditions contributed to the development of high commitment" (p. 9).

Behavioural research into organizational commitment has focused on the commitment of the employee to a particular course of action such as keeping one's job rather than commit to any particular entity (Meyer & Allen, 1997). In turn one's commitment to maintaining employment, for example, may also lead to a mindset that sees that organization in a positive light. This perspective is based on the theory of cognitive dissonance whereby ones' actions are aligned with one's attitudes to avoid psychological discomfort or dissonance (Festinger, 1957; Kiesler, 1971).

More on Defining Commitment

As indicated in the first chapter, Mowday, et al. (1982) presented a thorough and in-depth review of the literature on commitment. They reported that there was little consensus on the meaning of the term citing that "researchers from various disciplines ascribe their meanings to the topic, thereby increasing the difficulty involved in understanding the construct" (p. 20). Later, Meyer and Allen (1991) reviewed the ways in which commitment had been defined. Their work, commonly used as the standard today, is grouped into three categories; affective oriented definitions, cost-based definitions and obligation or moral based definitions. It is suggested that no one definition encompasses commitment but that these definitions reflect three broad themes. From this work Meyer and Allen proposed a three-component model of organizational commitment that is commonly used today (Cohen, 2003; Meyer & Allen; Meyer et al 2002). The labels used in their model are affective commitment (desire), continuance commitment

(cost) and normative commitment (obligation). Meyer and Allen describe the

differences between the forms of commitment this way:

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

Alternative Views of Workplace Commitment

In addition to the work of Meyer and Allen (1984;1991) several other

classifications of commitment have emerged. O'Reilly and Chapman (1986), much

influenced by Kelman's (1958) early study of attitude and behaviour change,

proposed that commitment is best seen as a psychological bond to the organization

and that that bond can have three forms. Those forms are compliance, identification

and internalization. Compliance occurs when attitudes and behaviours are adopted

not because of shared beliefs, but simply to gain specific rewards. In this case,

public and private attitudes may differ.

> Identification occurs when an individual accepts influence to establish or maintain a satisfying relationship; that is, an individual may feel proud to be part of a group, respecting its values and accomplishments without adopting them as his or her own. Internalization occurs when influence is accepted because the induced attitudes and behaviour are congruent with one's own values; that is, the values of the individual and the group or organization are the same. (O'Reilly & Chapman, p. 493).

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Initial empirical investigations, using this framework, found that identification and internalization were negatively related to turnover intentions (attitude) and turnover (actual behaviour) and positively related to prosocial behaviour (O'Reilly & Chapman, 1986). Compliance revealed the very opposite pattern. A strong contribution of O'Reilly and Chapman's work was to suggest the multidimensionality of commitment. However, after years of effort it seems clear all three measures tend to be highly correlated with one another and are weakened by the difficulty of distinguishing between identification and internalization (Meyer & Allen, 1997, Caldwell, Chapman, & O'Reilly, 1990).

Later work by both Chapman and O'Reilly combined identification and internalization to form a factor called normative commitment. (Chapman et al 1990; O'Reilly et al 1991). To further confuse construct definitions, Meyer and Allen (1997) suggested that this normative commitment actually more closely describes the affective components of commitment they themselves had discussed. A number of other attempts have been made to classify commitment (Angle & Perry, 1981, Jaros, Jermier, Koehler, & Sincich, 1993, Mayer & Schoorman, 1992, Penley & Gould, 1988) but there seems general agreement that Meyer and Allen's work represents the standard by which others are judged.

Multiple Commitments in the Workplace

The Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) model presented earlier expands on the original work of Meyer and Allen(1984) in recognizing that commitment is not only multidimensional but that employees may be committed to different entities in the workplace. This view of commitment acknowledges that not all desire, obligation, or cost is a result of one's commitment directly to an employing organization. Instead each may also result from relationships with supervisors, one's work group, customers, a union or one's career or profession. Employee attitudes and behaviours are affected by more than just their commitment to the organization itself.

Despite this recognition the vast majority of the work that recognized the multiple commitment concept still viewed organizational commitment as the key mediating focus of commitment. In a sense, one could see organizational commitment as the centre of the commitment universe (Hunt & Morgan, 1984). It is this view of multiple commitments that guided much of the research commitment to different entities. That research will be reviewed in the following sections.

Occupation, Career and Professional Commitment

One of the most studied foci has been commitment to one's career, profession, or occupation. Occupation, career, and profession have been used interchangeably in the commitment literature (Meyer & Allen, 1993) and represent the overarching concept of the importance of one's chosen profession regardless of

whether the profession is formally recognized (Morrow, 1993). For example, a lawyer and craftsperson may both have some form of "professional" commitment. Typically this type of commitment has been referred to as occupational commitment. Occupational commitment can be defined as ones' "devotion to craft, occupation or profession apart from any specific work environment, over an extended period of time" (Morrow, p.40). This devotion is more specific than commitment to work in general (a work ethic) and broader than job or organizational commitment (Blau, 1985; Cohen, 2003).

Two main themes have driven the construct development of occupational commitment. One is the extent to which one identifies with and endorses the values of ones' profession. The other is the degree of motivation to work in ones' career or its centrality in his/her life. One may see themes of affective, continuance and normative commitment within in occupational commitment. This point has been reviewed conceptually and supported empirically (Meyer et al 1993). Research on occupational commitment supports the adaptation of Meyers and Allen's (1984, 1991) three-component model of organizational commitment to occupational (Meyer et al 1993)

Work Group Commitment

The study of group commitment or one's identification and sense of cohesiveness with others in the organization (Becker, 1992; Randall & Cote, 1991) is a relatively new variable in the mix. Much of the work on group commitment in the workplace relates it directly to organizational commitment (Randall & Cote)

through enhancing social involvement that can develop social ties with an organization (Cohen, 2003). Reichers (1985, 1986) argued that group commitment should be studied along with organizational commitment because the coalitional nature of organizations makes employee commitment multidimensional. In the studies that do include group commitment along with organizational commitment, it has been demonstrated that the constructs are empirically distinct (Becker, 1992, Randall & Cote, 1991). In other words commitment to the organization and commitment to the work group appear to be related but distinct foci of one's commitment. However, Cohen suggests that many measures that have been used have been very basic and simplistic, often using only one item or question, or have simply taken organizational commitment questions and replaced the term organization with group.

Supervisor Commitment

Commitment to one's supervisor has also received empirical attention. Like commitment to workgroup, commitment to one's supervisor seems to be related but distinct from organizational commitment (Becker, 1992, Becker & Billings 1993, Becker, Billings, Eveleth & Gilbert, 1996). Despite the apparent differences, behavioural and attitudinal outcomes of supervisor commitment can be expected to be similar to those of organizational commitment. However, there is evidence that the proximity of one's supervisor may result in a stronger relationship to attitude

and behavior than the "amorphous" commitment to organization (Lawler, 1992; Mueller & Lawler (1999).

These intra organizational commitment forms (organizational, workgroup and supervisor commitment) have received the majority of empirical attention in the literature; however, some research is examining forms of commitment outside of the organizational sphere (Bentein, Stinglhamber, & Vandenberghe, 2002). The following sections review this work.

Union Commitment

In addition to the commitment types discussed above, union commitment has also been suggested as a variable that may moderate other forms of organizational focused behaviour (Cohen, 2003; Swailes, 2004). This is not a new area of study because the study of commitment to unions has been a focus of academic study for over fifty years. Union commitment can be seen as having four components. First, it addresses loyalty to one's union, reflecting both pride in membership and acknowledgement of the benefits of membership. Second, it includes a responsibility to a union to fulfill day-to-day duties and protect unions' interests. Third, it suggests responsibility to work for the union often above and beyond the call of duty. The fourth dimension is that of a belief in unions (Gordon, Philpot, Burt, Thompson, & Spiller Gordon, 1980). One can see Porter's (1974) early work on organizational commitment reflected in these four dimensions of union commitment

An early focus of union commitment research was the notion of dual commitments. Dual commitment studies have attempted to explain the relationship between commitment or loyalty to the union versus commitment or loyalty to one's organization (Dean, 1954; Purcell, 1954). Results tended to show that one could hold commitment to two entities and that commitment to one did not necessary mean hostility to the other (Cohen, 2003). It was not until the 1980's that research focus in this area began again in earnest. Gordon, Philpot, Burt, Thompson, and Spiller (1980) theorized that union and organizational commitment were based on the same principles and in turn should be measured in a similar way.

The study of union commitment typically takes place in blue-collar settings but there does exist some work on unionized professional environments. Swailes (2004) found that in a professional or white collar setting, high levels of union commitment correlated most strongly with people who where uncommitted to organization, workgroup, or supervisor. It is suggested that high levels of union commitment will detract from organizational foci and in turn increase the focus on issues such as continuance commitment (pay, benefits etc). Angle and Perry (1986) suggest that this can be moderated in an environment where the organization is perceived to support union involvement. It is important to distinguish between organizations that merely encourage "good relations" between organization and union and those that explicitly support it. Swailes suggests it is the latter of these environments that may allow for dual as opposed to competing commitments.

Commitment to One's Clients

In comparison to the other foci of commitment, commitment to the client is a relatively new addition to the literature. Although client commitment to a provider has received extensive attention in the business and leisure literatures, little work has addressed employee commitment directly to ones' clients. Stinglhamber, Bentein, Vandenberge (2002) were the first to examine employee commitment to one's clients using the Meyers and Allen (1991) framework. The authors state "it is surprising that this focus of commitment has been ignored until now since human service organizations' researchers have long recognized that service quality and customer satisfaction are critical for organizational effectiveness and survival (e.g. Schneider & Bowen, 1985; Schneider, Gunnarson, & Niles-Joly, 1994; Schneider, Parkington, & Buxton, 1980). Consequently one might expect that those employees who are committed to customers would contribute to organizational effectiveness through high quality services."(p. 125). Their findings suggest that client commitment is a relevant focus but suggests that further work is needed to understand the relevant behaviour outcomes of a high client commitment.

Interactions of Multiple Foci of Commitment

This review suggests how employees can be committed to one of several foci related to the workplace. It further suggests a single individual can be committed to several foci at the same time. Indeed commitment profiles may

emerge. Profiles of commitment are a set of commitments that unique identify or segment a particular employee. For example, an internally focused employee may demonstrate high commitment to her/his organization supervisor or workgroup but not high commitment levels to her/his community or clients. Though work in this area is limited Becker and Billings (1993) found four clusters of commitment profiles. Their work is particularly significant in that it raised the importance of understanding commitment to different entities within the organization and added the importance of differentiating between direct supervisor commitment and top management or organizational commitment.

Their four commitment clusters were referred to as locally committed, globally committed, committed and uncommitted. Locally committed employees were committed to their workgroup and direct supervisor. Globally committed employees were committed to the organization and top management. Committed employees were equally committed to both the above two foci and the uncommitted showed overall low levels of commitment. They believed these clusters would be useful in better understanding how a variety of commitments may influence employee behaviour.

Swailes (2004) extended this work with accountants in the U.K., and found that a multiple commitment approach better explained employee behaviour related to acceptance of change and innovation. Swailes also found that the committed group (high in organizational and work group commitment) revealed the highest levels of effort but that innovative behaviour was equally high between committed, globally committed and locally committed groups.

Clearly different approaches to developing commitment may be possible. Although Swailes' (2004) work did generally support Becker and Billing's (1993) groupings, he believed that his own work on commitment may have been somewhat limited (particularly in a professional or white collar setting) by restricting the foci of commitment to the organization, work group and supervisor. Swailes suggested that some of the variance within his study may be explained by commitment to some other entity such as professional or career commitment. There is evidence from other "helping" professions, (teaching and nursing), that professional/ occupational commitment is a significant variable explaining overall commitment and subsequent job performance (Cohen, 2003).

Recent work has attempted to integrate both the multidimensionality and multiple foci of commitment (Stinglhamber, et al, 2002). The Stinglhamber group considered commitment as being both multidimensional and as having multiple foci. Their work extended Meyer and Allen's (1984, 1991) three-dimensional model of workplace commitment by focusing not only on the organization, but also on the workgroup, supervisor, and customer. They included intra organizational commitment, the work group and supervisor, commitment to one's occupation as well as commitment to the customer (Stinglhamber, et al). They found that "the results of this research provide evidence that, besides the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990) and the occupation (Irving et al., 1997; Meyer et al., 1993) Meyer and Allen's'(1991) three-component model of commitment can be generalized to the supervisor, the work group and customers" (132).

The Bases of Commitment

The question of how commitment develops has perhaps generated the greatest research interest within the study of workplace commitment. Unfortunately, as Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) observed "the research has been largely unsystematic and, as a result we have few clear cut answers" (p. 315). This observation seems to emerge generally from two primary shortcomings in commitment research; the lack of consensus in the conceptualization of commitment and a failure to consider process issues (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). Like the vast majority of commitment research most of our understanding of the development of commitment comes from research focused on organizational commitment. Despite these issues, there is a significant body of literature that helps inform understanding of the development of commitment. Hundreds of studies have examined the correlations between affective organizational commitment and its hypothesized variables. From this large body of work, antecedent variables can be classified into three general categories: organizational characteristics, personal characteristics, and work experiences (Mathieu & Zajac, Meyers & Allen, Morrow, 1993; Mowday et al 1982).

Antecedents of Commitment- Personal Characteristics

Personal characteristics represent both demographic variables and dispositional variables. As suggested above it is generally accepted that the relationship between

demographic variables and affective organizational commitment is weak or non existent (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Riketta, 2001). Mathieu and Zajac also found that marital status and gender, for example, have consistently shown no impact on affective commitment. More recent work in this area reaffirmed this position and added that family structure also seems to have no significant relationship to one's level of affective commitment (Lingard & Lin, 2004).

The issue of age is a bit more complex. We know, for example, that on its own age exhibits only a weak relationship with affective commitment. Other variables may confound this pattern however. One's tenure in the organization or stage in one's career may interact with age level to influence commitment patterns (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). The issue of tenure is particularly noteworthy. Tenure is generally positively related to affective commitment (Cohen, 2003; Cohen, 1993; Mathieu & Zajac). When tenure and age are separated, however, the power of tenure is reduced significantly. This suggests that tenure and age work together to influence commitment patterns (Meyer & Allen; Allen & Meyer, 1993).

The direction of this influence may change from one setting to the next however. McDonald and Makin (2000) found that time at work actually diminished affective commitment in a workplace that did have highly committed employees. They found, for example, that seasonal employees were more committed than full time employees. They believed that negative experiences (actions that violate employee trust and perceive fairness) with managers may diminish an employee's

commitment. This work highlights the importance of context in understanding commitment antecedents.

Meta analytic reviews have suggested that other key demographic variables (marital status and educational level) do not correlate with affective commitment (Riketta, 2001; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Among dispositional variables "perceived competence" has been reported as having the strongest correlation with affective commitment (Riketta, 2001; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Perceived competence represents an individual's self-rating of how skilled or competent (s)he is at various aspects related, in this case, to her/his job. Meyer and Allen suggest that, although this represents an interesting finding, this may be symptomatic of more highly skilled individuals being able to choose better organizations (p. 44).

Antecedents of Commitment – Organizational Characteristics

Organizational characteristics examined in commitment studies have focused on organizational structures and centralization of the organization in relation to the level of one's commitment. Although evidence does support a relationship between organization characteristics and affective commitment that relationship is both inconsistent and weak (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990, Meyer & Allen, 1997). Specifically, the relationship between flat structures or more decentralized operations and high levels of affective organizational commitment is inconsistent and weak (Meyer & Allen, 1997). It has been suggested "that in forming attitudes

toward an organization, employees are more attuned to their day to day work experiences than they are to these less tangible macro-level variables" (Meyer & Allen, 1997, p. 42). Factors closer to "home" seem to influence behaviour more than abstract organizational factors.

Antecedents of Commitment –Work Experience Characteristics

It seems that work experience factors, or the workplace environment, seem to play a significant role in impacting upon affective organizational commitment. Mathieu and Zajac's (1990) meta analysis on antecedents found considerable support for the role of work experiences as a predictor of affective organizational commitment. Following is a review of the current state of thinking on work experience factors and the creation of affective commitment.

Job scope has been shown to have a strong relation to affective commitment (Meyer et al. 2004). Job scope encompasses several dimensions including the breadth of one's job, autonomy in performing that job, and the variety of skills used in that performance (Dessler, Starke, Cyr, 2001). Mathieu and Zajac (1990) reported that composite measures of job scope were better predicators than any one variable alone. Having the freedom to choose how to accomplish one's assigned tasks and the ability to perform a number of different tasks throughout the day correlates with higher levels of commitment.

The development of commitment is often discussed in terms of fairness in the workplace. We know, for example, that perceptions of fair treatment are more

likely to improve affective commitment than is satisfaction with one's own personal outcomes in the workplace (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Sweeney & McFarlin, 1993). Discussion of fairness often focuses on the notion of organizational justice. Organizational justice is itself conceptualized as having two primary dimensions, those of distributive justice and procedural justice. Distributive justice is based on equity theory (Adams, 1963), which states that employees compare their effort (job inputs) to what they receive in return. Procedural justice focuses on the process used to make decisions (Alexander & Ruderman, 1987). It is an evaluation of how decisions are made and their perceived fairness. For example, research suggests the importance employees place on the support they believe they receive from their employer (referred to as perceived organizational support). Perceptions of support influence employees' global beliefs about the level at which an organization values their contributions and cares about their well being (Eisneberger, Cummings, Armeli &Lynch, 1997).

Procedural justice seems a much better indicator of affective organizational commitment than distributive justice (Folger & Konovsky, 1989). Coyle-Shapiro, Kessler, and Purcell (2004) support this view, suggesting that procedural justice is not only the better predictor of organizational commitment but it also represents a better predictor of organizational citizenship behaviour.

A third justice factor, interactional justice, has also been shown to play a role in eliciting organizational citizenship behaviours. Interactional justice refers to the quality of interpersonal relationships one has with one's employer. Like procedural justice, interactional justice has been shown to positively influence

organizational citizenship behaviours (Coyle-Shapiro et al, 2004). Meyer and Allen (1997) also cite studies where the manner in which organizational policy is communicated may be linked to affective organizational commitment (Greenberg, 1994; Konovsky & Cropanzana, 1991). This would be consistent with the research on justice where the quality and quantity of information communicated from managers to employees may provide a context through which fairness or justice may be judged.

Organizational Outcomes of Commitment

There has been consistent reporting of a negative correlation between organizational commitment and both intention to leave and actual turnover intentions (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002; Allen & Meyer, 1996; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al, 2002). Although the strongest relationship has been with affective commitment, all three dimensions (affective, continuance and normative) of organizational commitment have demonstrated significant relationships with both turnover intentions and behaviour. In a leisure context, Culverson (2002) presented a case study of organizational commitment in Parks Canada. The study utilized Mowday, Porter and Steers' (1982) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire as well as qualitative interviews. She found that commitment levels were lower in locations where the most substantial change had taken place. Culverson (2002) also noted that that the groups that "expressed the least desire to remain in the organization reported the highest levels

of commitment to the mandate" (p.viii). This finding also supports to the notion that, in certain situations, different foci of commitment may be in conflict with each other.

Employee job performance has also received significant attention within the academic literature. Mathieu and Zajac's, (1990) meta analysis on commitment suggested that affective commitment and absenteeism had a modest mean correlation of .10. However, many of the twenty-three studies including in this analysis failed to differentiate between involuntary and voluntary absences and, in turn, may have under-represented the relationship (Meyer et al, 2002; Meyer & Allen, 1997) Several recent studies now suggest a significant relationship between voluntary (but not involuntary absence) and affective commitment (Meyer et al, 2002; Meyer & Allen, 1997.) Normative and continuance commitment have not been shown to impact upon absenteeism (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Commitment and job performance

Performance on the job has both in role and extra role components. In role performance constitutes employees' actions that fall within typical job requirements. Extra role behaviour is that behaviour that extends above and beyond one's job (Cohen, 2003). This extra role behaviour is often called organizational citizenship behaviour. Organizational citizenship behaviours are discretionary individual behaviours that promote effective organizational functioning, yet are not directly recognized by the formal reward system (Smith, Organ & Near, 1983).

These behaviours lie outside the employee's defined work tasks and roles and include helping a fellow employee with a task, minimizing conflict, and helping build a positive work environment for clients and employees. It reflects a willingness to go above and beyond one's prescribed work role. A number of studies have found that employees' self reports of such effort were significantly related to affective commitment (Meyer et al, 2002; Bycio, Meyer & Allen, 1995; Leong, Randall & Cote, 1994). Commitment has been linked to both in role and extra role behaviours but Riketta's (2002) meta analysis found that in role performance actually had a weaker relationship to commitment than did extra role behaviour.

Reasons for this seeming inconsistency may be a function of reciprocity. Decades ago, Bateman and Organ (1983) referred to the "good soldier" concept suggesting that a happy worker is a productive worker or more precisely that job satisfaction results in increases in performance. The roots of this are grounded in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). It was proposed that that organizational citizenship behaviour was the outcome of employee reciprocity for good treatment (or withheld for bad treatment) from ones' employer (Organ, 1988). This social exchange or reciprocity view of organizational citizenship behaviour has been shown to have a stronger influence on job satisfaction than it does on task performance, that is, in role behaviour. (Bateman & Organ, 1993; Organ & Konovsky, 1989).

Others have discussed organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB) in terms of fairness rather than reciprocity. Moorman (1991), for example, suggested that

OCB was less a result of reciprocity than of fair play and procedural justice. Coyle-Shapiro, Kessler, and Purcell (2004) support this view, suggesting that procedural and interactional of organizational commitment and, in turn, organizational citizenship behaviour.

Still others have suggested that OCB may result, not from reciprocity, but as a result of role enlargement (Morrison, 1994). Morrison suggests that employees who are more committed to an organization define their jobs more broadly. Under this definition, much of citizenship behaviour becomes part of what employees define as their job even though the behaviour may not formally be part of one's evaluation or job description.

Coyle-Shapiro et al (2004) examined the relationship between the idea of reciprocity and the role definition hypothesis. They believed that the concepts were not competing but rather complementary. Their findings support this position. "Relationships based on mutual commitment influence organizational citizenship behaviour in two ways; first, by directly affecting the ways individuals engage in organizational citizenship behaviours, and second, by influencing how an individual conceptualizes the boundaries of their job, which in turn, affects the extent to which individuals engage in citizenship behaviour"(Coyle-Shapiro et al 2004, p. 99).

Self reported measures of citizenship behaviour have shown that significant relationships exist between affective organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour (Bienstock, DeMoranville, & Smith, 2003). In a meta analysis of organizational citizenship behaviours, Organ and Ryan (1995) reported

significant relationships between altruism and compliance with rules and norms, two frequently used dimensions of organizational citizenship. Although weaker, Meyer and Allen (1997) suggest that normative commitment should also demonstrate a relationship with OCB.

In a 1993 study of nurses, Meyer and Allen found a significant relationship between both affective and normative commitment with normative commitment showing a slightly lower but still significant relationship to OCB. Later on Meyer and Allen (1997) would state "you are much less likely to hear an employee with high affective or normative commitment state that it is not their job" (p.35).

Client Outcomes

As was mentioned earlier, we know very little on the relationship between commitment and client outcomes (Stinglhamber, Bentein, & Vandenberghe, 2002). "In recent years several claims have been made in the management literature about the relations between employee attitudes and customer reactions (e.g. Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997; McCarthy, 1997; Reichheld, 1996; Weaver, 1994). The general argument is that positive work attitudes, on the part of employees, will translate into greater loyalty to, and satisfaction with, the organization on the part of customers. Despite these interesting claims, relatively little empirical work examining these linkages appears in the research literature (Allen & Grisaffe, 2001).

Anecdotal evidence abounds in management circles that committed employees are likely to offer better service thereby leading to loyal and committed customers, yet empirical evidence has yet to bear that out. The proposed link between employees and the customer has primarily been based on general, often anecdotal models. For example, Heskett et al (1997) describe the idea of a "satisfaction mirror", an analogy suggesting that employee attitudes will be mirrored in their customers (Allen & Grisaffe, 2001). Allen and Grisaffe conclude that "beyond these general arguments, however, there is little theoretical or empirical work that directly links employee commitment to the organization and customer reaction" (p. 215). They suggest that the emphasis should be on affective commitment given that "both theory and research findings suggest that employee commitment that is affective in nature will be positively related to various aspects of work performance – both customer relevant behaviours (that are likely to influence customer reactions) as well as more internally oriented work behaviours, such as interactions with co-workers" (Allen & Grisaffe, p.216).

Nogradi and Koch (1981) provide one of the few leisure organization based studies to consider employee commitment and its effect on the client. They found that recreation administrators exhibited commitment to the organization and the profession, but the highest degree of commitment was to the community or clients. Another Nogradi (1982) study reported that municipal recreation employees felt a sense of job involvement as well as a sense of commitment to their department, profession and the community. The expressed willingness of the respondents to work after hours, to accept greater responsibility in their jobs, to solicit, understand

and act on the desires of community members supported the notion that involvement and commitment are qualities of municipal recreation employees in general. However, given that the Nogradi work used measures consistent with that time it was limited by the weaknesses of those measures. The methods used in many commitment studies of this time are somewhat suspect given that "their measures consisted of two-four item that are created on an a priori basis for which little validity and reliability data are presented (Mowday et al, 1982, p. 219). Despite these shortcomings these studies do give us some indication that examining commitment to the profession and clients may be important foci to include in commitment studies within a leisure context.

Commitment and service quality

Providing quality service to clients is an important desired outcome for most, if not all leisure service organizations in that it can enhance client commitment to an organization (McCarville, 2002). Buchanan (1985) suggested that client commitment is enhanced by affective attachment, positive behaviours toward an organization, involvement and/or side bets. Becker (1960) viewed side bets as investments, financial or otherwise, that made changing difficult. The cost of a gym membership, new golf clubs or even the time invested in learning to golf are all forms of side bets. There seems to be an overarching importance of distinguishing affective attitudes from other types of attitudes and that affective attitudes of both customers and employees lead to more favorable outcomes for all involved. In one of the few empirical studies linking employee commitment and

service quality directly, Malhotra and Mukherjee (2004) examined the relationship between service quality, the three forms of organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative), with job satisfaction in a call centre setting. They found that affective commitment and job satisfaction were the only factors significantly related to service quality performance Malhotra and Mukherjee stated that "although job satisfaction has been the most studied construct in the literature, affective commitment is found to be more important in explaining service quality"(p.169).

Commitment and Employee Outcomes

Are there personal benefits to being an affectively committed employee? The literature in this area seems to suggest that this is the case. For example, there is a negative correlation between affective commitment and measures of psychological, physical and work related stress (Begley & Czajka, 1993; Jamal, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Ostroff & Kozlowkis, 1992; Reilly & Orsak, 1991). That is, high affective commitment is correlated with lower levels of workplace stress. Further, Begley and Czajka (1993) found that high affective commitment served as a buffer against stress during a period of intense organizational restructuring in a hospital setting.

We know too that high affective commitment at work does not seem to adversely impact nonwork life. Cohen and Kirchmeyer (1995) found that employees with high affective or normative commitment levels did not view their

commitment as impacting their satisfaction with their career or their nonwork satisfaction. Conversely high continuance commitment levels did relate to lower levels of career and nonwork satisfaction (Cohen & Kirchmeyer; Meyers & Allen, 1997). While these insights are certainly interesting, caution should be exercised in their interpretation. Research in this area is limited and further work is needed to more completely understand how commitment effects employees.

In summary, affective organizational commitment appears to offer benefits to the organization, client, and employee. The magnitude of the impact of this commitment on behaviour is, however, relatively low (Riketta, 2002). One possible explanation for this is that the vast majority of outcome oriented studies have examined only commitment to the organization. Further examination of commitment outcomes in relation to multiple commitments is needed. Preliminary work in this area is discussed in the following section.

Multiple dimensions, multiple foci and commitment outcomes

Vandenberghe, Bentein, and Stinglhamber (2004) examined commitment in terms of a variety of behaviours including turnover and job performance in three studies. Two of the studies took place in diverse industry and public sector settings while a third study examined nurses in a medical setting. All three studies utilized affective commitment as the key driver of employee attitude and behaviour, (commitment to organization, supervisor and work group were also studied). This study is significant in that it supported the construct validity of affective

commitment to different foci in the organization. It also demonstrated that the impact on commitment varied depending on context. In the nursing context, there was a direct relationship between commitment to supervisor and organizational commitment and job performance. Further, there was an indirect commitment effect through the supervisor. In this case, however, work group commitment had no effect on job performance. While one might expect that the work group would play a greater role (for example, if one relies on information or support from that work group, the relationship between work group commitment and job performance should be positive), such was not the case among these nurses. This result may have been a function of this particular work setting but the authors were unsure why the results played out as they did. Indeed, settings can have a profound effect on commitment levels. As Lewin (1951) suggested decades ago, behaviour is a result of not only personal characteristics but also of the social setting one finds oneself. For example, proximity matters and therefore commitment to an entity will likely result in behaviour directed to toward that entity (Bentein, Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe, 2002).

Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) also found that commitment to a specific target was a better predicator of behaviour relevant to that target than more general organizational commitment. The evidence to date suggests that a multi foci of commitments approach, especially one that deals with the affective dimension of those commitments, will provide the richest source of information relating to in role and extra role job performance. This finding is important in that it suggests that organizational commitment is but one of several foci of commitment and does not

appear to hold any greater weight in dictating behaviour than other entities. It also suggests that context matters and that fully understanding the relevant entities of one's commitment in different contexts is important to know for both theory and practice.

Commitment and a Contingent Workforce

As discussed earlier, commitment research originally focused on retention issues yet many workers are now no longer expected to stay with their respective employers. There is considerable reliance on contingent workers (part time, temporary, seasonal, or contract staff). Our understanding of commitment also indicates that context is important (Cohen, 2003). Therefore further research in this area would seem to be of particularly significant in recreation and leisure settings. A few studies have begun to address the issues raised.

For instance, in a study of Korean sport facility workers, Chang and Chelladura, (2003) found that full-time employees demonstrated greater levels of affective commitment and subsequent organizational citizenship behaviours than did part-time workers. Part-time workers also revealed higher levels of continuance commitment and consequently lower levels of citizenship behaviours. Unfortunately, this may have implications for customer service and customer loyalty. For example, in high contact service environments (like sport facilities) customers often develop commitment to the service employee and that then directly influences commitment to the organization and indirectly influences loyalty

attributes (Hansen, Sandvik, & Selnes, 2003). These authors also found that "the importance of creating emotional attachment such as liking and trust to both employees and the firm is an important avenue for creating loyalty and in our study far more important than creating loyalty through switching barriers" (Hansen et al, p. 363). Low affective commitment (due to the use of part time staff) and potentially low citizenship behaviours may have a negative impact on service delivery, the recovery from service failures, and the development of long term relationships with customers. This suggests that the employment of seasonal workers in leisure services may be problematic. However, there is mounting evidence that the use of contingent employees in service related positions does not necessarily lead to negative consequences. Although not directly focusing on the commitment construct, a recent study considered the impact on employees working at a seasonal camp (DeGraaf & Glover, 2003). Their study, based on in-depth interviews, centered on three themes (motivations for working at the camp, impacts on employees personal and impacts on the employee professionally). Overall, the experience was seen as positive, which added a fourth category, that being "what made the experience special?". This study highlights the value of an interpretive approach to understanding a seasonal leisure employee's experience. Equally important is the finding that these seasonal employees reported very work positive experiences. Indeed, over 90% of participants reported a positive experience (DeGraaf & Glover, 2003). This study builds on research in leisure studies that has examined motivations of seasonal workers, in particular camp employees (Servedio, 1981; Henderson, 1982; Becker; 1983; Hoff, Ellis, & Crossley, 1988;

DeGraaf & Edginton, 1992; and Lyons, 2000). It is noted, however, that the individual nature of motivation and that "...none of these studies examined how the motivators of staff may impact their work performance or their satisfaction with their work experience once it is completed" (DeGraaf & Glover, p. 7-8).

Evidence from high tech organizations also suggests that high levels of commitment may be possible from contingent employees. Further, data suggest that such commitment may not directed toward the organization but rather to some other entity (Pittinsky & Shih, 2004). In turn, this may also result in positive employee, organizational and customer outcomes. McDonald & Makin (2000) also found that full time and temporary staff employed in a customer service function of large holiday sector organization did not differ significantly in whether they see their involvement with the organization as being transactional or relational. One may equate transactional relationships with continuance commitment in that both are based on economic exchanges. Conversely relational contracts are those built up between the employer and employee based on mutual trust perceived fairness and mutual respect. This psychological contract would seem to be similar in concept to affective commitment.

In addition, McDonald & Makin (2000) found that part-time employees actually had higher, rather than lower, levels of job satisfaction and commitment to the organization. The authors suggest that this may be due to part-time employees noting fewer violations of their perceived psychological contract with the organization. This contract represents the employee's understanding or belief regarding the type of relationship they have with their employers (Coyle-Shapiro &

Kessler, 2003). This contract helps employees understand what is expected of them. In the case of part-time employees, they may have less contact with supervisors and managers so there is less opportunity for violations. Further, a short work relationship may also reduce the possibility of contract violations.

Other, more recent, research efforts offer even more evidence that contingent employees may express considerable commitment within the workplace. For example, Pittinsky and Shih (2004) found high levels of commitment among mobile workers. They focused on positive outcomes for the organization and were highly active in decision making and the organizational community. The authors noted that traditional management efforts to foster commitment often focused on retention and were, in such cases, of little use in producing positive employee behavior. They suggested further research into the enhancement of commitment to in relation to positive outcomes for the organization (Pittinsky & Shih). The issues of contingent employees are of utmost importance broadly, but particularly for those in leisure service organization. Given an increasing reliance on contract and temporary work arrangements further study is required.

Summary

It is understood that employee commitment is multidimensional encompassing components of emotional identification and attachment, (affective commitment), obligation, (normative commitment), and investment or alternative based choices, (continuance commitment). Perhaps normative commitment and

continuance commitment although important factors in understanding the workplace commitment are not true forms of commitment but rather are spurious forms of commitment much like that found in discussions of loyalty (Bachman and Crompton, 1991).

We know too that commitment can be focused on a number of entities ranging from the organization, supervisor, work group, occupation, customer or union. Our understanding of the consequences and antecedents of these forms of commitment are primarily informed from the study of affective organizational commitment. From this research, one can see that work experience factors play the greatest role acting as antecedents to affective commitment and that affective commitment plays the greatest role in influencing a variety of outcomes directed at the organization, customer and employees. These behaviours include organizational outcomes such as reduced turnover, absenteeism and higher job performance both in role and extra role (OCB). Our knowledge is less extensive in terms of related outcomes for customer and employees, but some empirical evidence suggests that affective commitment can lead to improved client outcomes (such as service quality) and may reduce work-family conflict and workplace stress for employees.

Taken together, we know that (1) affective or emotional attachment to an entity seems to have shown the most promise for positive outcomes, (2) that proximity to an entity seems to be important in the formation of commitment, and (3) that and our understanding of commitment to other entities, particularly those external to the organization is limited. Within this context, it seems appropriate to re-examine the appropriateness of organizational commitment as a main focus of

workplace commitment research. It is also time to look at commitment and its impact on entities other than the organization (most predominantly the employee and the clients they serve). The proposed study will attempt to further our understanding of these concepts in various leisure service environments. In particular, it will address contingent employees in leisure organizations. It is felt that this "revisiting" of the concept of workplace place commitment in leisure service organization is best served through a qualitative study. The perspective of contingent employees will be sought to help further our understanding of this significant employee group. The following chapter outlines the details of this proposed study.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Introduction

In the last twenty-five years, workplace commitment has received extensive attention with hundreds of empirical investigations examining the construct. The vast majority of these studies have addressed employee commitment to the organization and utilized questionnaire based quantitative methodology (Cohen, 2003). This work is built on a definitional foundation developed over a quarter century ago. Over the same period of time the workplace has undergone a metamorphosis. Work patterns have changed from pervasive lifetime employment to increased use of contingent workers. Further, technology has facilitated change in the workplace by enabling work to occur from increasingly remote locations (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004). Organizations, in particular those in the public sector, are now faced with greater accountability and more public scrutiny (Fountain, 1999). This trend has led to a drastically changing organization, downsizing, and a stronger reliance on new, more market driven models of serving one's clients. The workplace in which organizational commitment was initially operationalized, to a great degree, no longer exists.

Yet very little work, (none in leisure service) has gone back to confirm that employees still perceive commitment in the way it was originally operationalized in the early 1980's. In the case of contingent employees, it simply is not clear that they see commitment in terms similar to those of their permanent counterparts. In

addition, the research is clear that commitment to other entities than just the organization can be more important than that directed to the organization itself.

To address these shortcomings, this study examined workplace commitment from the perspective of contingent workers in leisure service organizations. Traditional views of workplace commitment and the subsequent operationalization of commitment measurement instruments may not make sense for this group since maintaining membership in the organization may not be a goal (or even be possible for seasonal workers). Given the changing nature of the leisure service workplace, a traditional reliance on quantitative measures in commitment research and the lack of knowledge we have of the contingent employee/commitment relationship, a qualitative explanation of commitment in the context of leisure services is warranted. A qualitative approach may play a role in helping more fully understand commitment in a leisure service setting as well enhancing our understanding of the broader construct of commitment, in particular the role commitment plays for contingent employees and the subsequent impact on leisure service organizations and their clients.

Research Philosophy

To understand the purpose and focus of the study it is important to have some understanding of the perspective and philosophical approach proposed by the researcher. This study will utilize a realism paradigm - a perspective that assumes that "abstract things are born of people's minds but exist independently of any one

person. The third world is largely autonomous, though created by us. Here perceptions are a window to that blurry external reality"(Perry, 2004).

Perry's quote refers to three worlds: in addition to the realism perspective he labels the other two as the positivist paradigm, and the critical theory/constructivism perspective. These perspectives are based on previous work by Guba and Lincoln (1990). For explanatory purposes they are presented at their extreme, that is a positivist sees the world as having one truth for which we are searching and each subsequent study moves us closer to that truth. The constructionist perspective lends itself to exploration of how meaning is created and is a perspective ideally suited to addressing how individuals see and interpret their environment.

One purpose of this study is to inform management practices related to commitment. The primary purpose, however, is to contribute to the ongoing development of theory on commitment in the workplace. The traditional view of commitment used by researchers may not fully reflect the organizational realities of today's workplace as experienced by those working in it. Part of this study will address the issue of understanding what those shared meanings or commonalities may be for contingent employees. To address this issue this study will utilize in-depth interviews with contingent leisure service employees. The goal of this approach is to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning and form that commitment takes in the everyday lives of contingent leisure service employees, and to develop an understanding of the process by which they feel commitment was

developed, maintained or diminished through their experiences in organizational life.

Given the purpose and philosophical underpinning of the study, in-depth interviews are an appropriate method for investigating the nature of the commitment experience in the leisure service workplace. The study used semi-structured interviews based on the interview guide presented in Appendix A. The interview guide approach was chosen to best use the time available with the participants in exploring the issues crucial to this study. Subsequently the interview transcripts or 'field stories' will be transformed into individual narratives and then in turn these narratives will be examined for key themes. Details of this analysis are presented later in this chapter.

Critical Incidents

A commonly used concept, in the service management literature, is the "moment of truth". Moments of truth are key events or points in a service experience that are critical to customers' experiences. They are the judgment points for the customer (Carlzon, 1987). These internal "moments" may also help us understand the experience of service employees. That is, commitment may be influenced by critical events such as encounters with managers and co-workers, performance reviews (or the lack of them), perceptions of fair treatment, or highly stressful projects/periods in either the organization's or individual's life. The researcher explored such moments using Critical Incident Technique (CIT).

Critical incidents are narratives of real events. In this case, they were used to describe effective or ineffective actions in the workplace. CIT involves the collection of detailed reports of incidents in which an individual did something that was especially effective or especially ineffective in achieving the purpose of an activity. The use of the term critical in this context refers to the pivotal role of the behavior in the outcome of an activity and not to whether the situation itself was an emergency, a matter of life and death, or critical in some other sense (Gremler, 2004). Fountain (1999) supports critical incident technique for public sector management based studies, arguing that "the chief value of the critical incident technique is its potential to help researchers understand the behaviours critical to complex jobs and positions in public or nonprofit organizations" (Fountain, 1999, 1). CIT has a long history in organizational research (Chell, 1998) and in service focused research in organizations (Gremler, 2004). When CIT was first devised over a half century ago (Flanagan, 1954) it was originally used within a more positivist paradigm. Indeed, a criticism of CIT is that often it is used as a way of documenting the critical incidents but it fails to delve into the meaning of those incidents for the employees (Gremler, 2004). Critical incident reports, particularly in services management focused research, are often collected and analyzed using content analysis with little or no regard to the meaning of that incident to the participant.

Now CIT is seen as being most valuable when used within an interpretive or phenomenological perspective (Gremler, 2004; Chell & Adams, 1994). Gremler (2004), in particular, has called for a more interpretive approach in Critical Incident

analysis focusing more on the meaning of narratives and the richness of the data provided than on quantification of the number and type of incident reported. Gremler's (2004) suggestion was followed here.

Sample

The study sample was comprised of students enrolled in the University of Waterloo's Recreation and Leisure Studies Program, approximately half of the students in this program are enrolled in co-op. The University of Waterloo's strong co-op education component enhanced the likelihood that students in the program would have had leisure related work experience. Co-op students alternate terms beginning after fall term of their second year. The students then alternate between academic and co-oop terms in equal measure so that most students have taken 5 co-o-op terms prior to graduation. Further, students provide an accessible population for this project. In order to take part in the study, students were to have engaged in a series of short-term professional related experiences.

Initial contact with potential participants was through a short introduction in University of Waterloo recreation classes in the winter term of 2006. Classes were selected from each of 2nd, 3rd and 4th year classes to gather initial data. 1st year classes were not surveyed as the likelihood of career related experience is less likely than in subsequent years. Class members filled out a short screening paper based survey (Appendix C). Six classes were used in this study and a total of 168 responses were collected. Items on this screening questionnaire have been adapted

from a scale that considers both the multidimensionality and multiple foci of commitment (Stinglhamber, et al, 2002). The questions selected were used to measure the affective dimensions of commitment to organization, occupation, supervisor, work group, and customer. The instrument also asked if respondents would be willing to participate in a 60 minute interview to further discuss their work experiences. If they agreed they were asked to supply me with their preferred method of contact, email, phone etc.

researcher's goal was to explore a variety of perspectives and experiences. For this reason, the survey results were used to identify students with a range of work experiences (ranging from high to low commitment), job types and settings, and even the number of jobs in which they had been involved. Willing participants were grouped, then selected to participate in an interview. Thirty-eight participants agreed to interviews but not all of these ultimately were interviewed, There were a variety of reasons why all thirty-eight were not part of the study. For example, two students could not subsequently be reached by as their contact information was not current. In other cases, students were unable to arrange times during which they could meet with me. The sample size was therefore reduced to 24. Twenty-four interviews represent well above the acceptable threshold normally cited in qualitative research with respect to theoretical saturation (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002). Each of the 24 eventually attended an interview and was asked to discuss his/her most recent leisure–based work experience.

Recent qualitative research in leisure and tourism settings (Manning, Freimund, 2004; MacKay, 2001; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997) has used items

(such as the participant's own photos) that are personally relevant to participants to add depth to discussions and interviews. Although this methodology is often utilized as part of visual research or photo elicitation, it seemed to offer some promise as a means to support and encourage discussion during the interviews. Participants were asked to bring along any items that they believed were representative of their work experience. For example, a summer camp counselor might bring along a camp shirt or photos from the summer experience. While participants were encouraged to bring items that may assist in the interview this was not a requirement.

Recall that the study used critical incident methodology. At the beginning of each interview, participants were given a sheet of paper with a straight line printed on it. This line served as a timeline of their work experience. The participants were asked to mark on the line when/where critical events took place during their work experience. The line was used as a reference point throughout each interview. This concept has been suggested as a useful tool for the participant to orient the timing of critical experiences (Symon & Cassell, 1994). It also served as a useful resource material as the researcher reviewed transcripts of the interviews, and in the subsequent development of individual narratives.

Interviews took place in a private office on campus and each lasted approximately 45-90 minutes. Prior to the interview participants completed the consent form (Appendix B). They were also were provided with a written study explanation that let them understand the nature of the study and to start the participants thought process in preparation for the interviews. The request to bring

reminder items (photos etc) was also be made at this time. A day prior to the interview a confirmation email or phone call was sent/made along with a further indication of topics to be covered in the interview. In order to encourage participation, all those who agreed to take part were told they would be entered into a draw for a gift certificate to the university bookstore. Three certificates each valued at $20 were purchased for this purpose.

The in-depth interviews represented the primary data collection tool for this dissertation. In addition, all interviewees were asked to supply any information that may help explain their organizational experience. Each interviewee was also provided with a confidential email address to which they might send any additional thoughts that may occur. Finally, after the completion of interviews the interviewer set aside a day whereby people who have previously been interviewed could return to discuss anything they felt may have been missed in the initial interview. No participants took advantage of these options. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim and written notes were also taken. Study findings were shared in writing directly with all participants involved in the study.

Researcher's Background

Patton (2002) suggests that researchers' own biases and reasons for conducting a study be explicitly considered and stated before the collection of data. My own experience includes a number of seasonal and contract positions, and I have also worked as a manager of contract employees. The following experience informs my personal understanding of commitment: throughout my undergraduate

degree I spent the summers working as a teaching professional at a tennis club (a publicly operated but membership-based facility). I felt very committed to my workplace and performed my job with little or no supervision, but the focus was not on retaining my job, it was more on providing a great experience for my students and the club's members. This commitment seemed to be shared by my fellow employees. It was common for each of us to work at the club even on days we weren't scheduled to be there. This level of commitment wasn't coerced or even expected from our managers. We were provided with the freedom to use our skills, and the tools and environment needed to do the job. Returning to that club over the years after I had moved on, I have sensed that the new employees behave in a very similar fashion.

I have also worked in a senior management role in government, here I supervised staff consisting of professionals seconded from industry and other areas of government. These positions were temporary and yet I found that these employees demonstrated both passion and commitment to their assignments often beyond that expected of them. These experiences have suggested to me that contingent employees can be committed to their workplace and to other foci. My awareness of these issues made me cautious of reading these views into the interviews or of leading participants in that direction. The research questions and subsequent interview guide do not presume one view over another. After 15 interviews I began to get a sense that the same stories and patterns were beginning to be repeated. As raised earlier this is not unusually given the amount and richness

of the data collected (Patton, 2002). However the remaining 9 interviews were all conducted in full and added further support and richness to the study.

Data Analysis

A number of approaches were taken to examine the data and to develop findings. As Patton (2002) suggests "no formula exists for that transformation. Guidance, yes. But recipe no."(p. 432). Two different approaches were taken in this project in order to both addi to theory relating to contingent leisure service employee commitment and to inform leisure service management practice. First, individual narratives were created from each of the 24 interview transcripts. This approach is called narrative analysis (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Glover 2004, 2003). The second approach then analyzed the narratives for their key message or themes. This second approach is often referred to as analysis of narratives(Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Glover 2004, 2003). Details of how these approaches were used follow.

Narrative Analysis

The narrative analysis was done by 'restory-ing' the transcripts or field stories into individual narratives. These narratives focused on the key events or critical incidents involved in each work experience. They also outlinedkey personal and social interactions in the workplace (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In addition, the timing of events and the context were also incorporated as key

elements of the narratives. All names and specific references to place and organizations were changed to ensure the anonymity of the participants, their clients, and the organizations with whom they were involved. The summary narratives for the twenty-four participants are presented in their entirety in Chapter 4.

As suggested earlier, a critical incident approach was central in discovering important events that helped shape individual's commitment. Critical incidents became the central part of each narrative. The incidentswere then further developed to include details on timing of events, the personal and social interactions of the particpants and material on contextual variables. Patton (2002) suggests that such an approach will combine incidents in order of importance to the study participant rather than a chronological history. Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002) further suggest that the approach taken " leads to a broader more holistic lens that the researcher uses to tell the story" (p.343). Due to the narrative approach taken in this inquiry software was not used for data analysis, as the researcher wanted each story to remain as unique and intact as possible.

In developing each narrative the researcher reviewed transcripts several times and notes for each individual interview were collected. However, the most valuable analytic tool was that of listening and re-listening to the interviews. This was done for each interviewee a minimum of three times and notes were taken and refined each time. The researcher felt it was important to hear the words as spoken

by the participants' themselves. Their tone of voice and cadence helped the researcher to understand the depth of feeling connected with their comments.

Analysis of Narratives

A key focus of this study was also to inform management practice so the narratives were examined for their key focus or essence. Rather than pulling pieces from each story out of context, the researcher sought key theme(s) from the experiences as the participant related them. These themes were then reviewed and organized. Themes were not predetermined but rather came directly from the data. Transcripts, interview tapes, and field notes were consulted to support the information taken from each narrative and ensure that the information used was consisted fully within the context of each participants work situation. The information from this analysis is presented in Chapter 5.

Authenticity

The concept of authenticity is a frequent source of debate and criticism within qualitative methodologies. Patton (2002) suggests that qualitative approaches must consider three key factors as they seek authenticity within their findings: the rigour of the methods, the credibility of researcher's background and experience, and the philosophical belief in the value of qualitative inquiry. Each of these issues has been discussed in some detail in this chapter.

Further, the data were treated in ways that sought to ensure that the tone and meaning of the participants' words were represented. For example, this study utilized verbatim transcriptions and relied heavily on the actual spoken words of the participants. Multiple copies of the data will be kept and a master copy will remain unaltered for future review or confirmation. In addition, the researcher kept both field notes and a research journal in order to document the research process and to support the recorded material with written back up notes.

Purpose

This study attempts to expand our understanding of contingent employee commitment in a leisure service environment by using an interpretive approach to understand the meaning and impact of workplace place commitment. The intent of this study is to examine how critical incidents impacted on employee perceptions of commitment in a leisure service context.

Research Questions

Recall from Chapter 1 that several research questions guided the study. They are restated here for the convenience of the reader:

The following research questions will guide the study:

R1 How did the employees' commitment influence their behaviour toward the organization, clients, or the community?

Sub questions:

To what entities are contingent employees committed (eg. the organization, profession, workgroup, supervisor, clients or community)?

How intense is their commitment?

R2 How is commitment formed in contingent leisure service employees?

Sub questions:

Do critical incident(s) in the workplace influence the intensity or target of commitment for a contingent employee?

If critical incidents play a role, what are the key incidents that have played a critical role in establishing, maintaining or altering the employee's feelings of commitment?

Did the employee perceive that the employing organization did anything (formal or informal) to develop commitment in contingent employees? Was it effective?

A similar focus on other entities to which commitment is directed

Did key incidents change to what or whom the employee's feelings of commitment (positive or negative) were directed?

R3 What does commitment mean to contingent employees in selected leisure services?

Sub questions:

How do contingent employees define commitment?

How is it demonstrated?

Summary

Workplace commitment was reexamined in a leisure context using a qualitative in-depth interview approach. The goal of this study is to better understand how contingent employees perceive workplace commitment. The process used was to ask past employees to describe critical incidents that enhanced (or decreased) commitment. Finally, the goal was to explore the results of these

incidents for interviewees' own behaviours and for subsequent performance levels in the workplace.

Chapter 4 Narrative Analysis

The narratives developed from each participant's field story are presented in this chapter. The narratives are structured around the key events or critical incidents that occurred during participant work experiences. The "restory-ing" approach taken centers on participant interaction within the work experience, from both a personal and social perspective. The narratives also consider context and the continuity of time as key elements in the development of each story. This approach has been suggested to allow for a broader more holistic view of the participant's experience (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002, Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

As expected, some stories are extensive and vivid and others less so. As such, the length of the stories varies considerably as does the detail and richness provided. Where possible, the author attempted to retain the voice of the participant while conveying the tone and content of the participants' messages. The following summary provides an overview of the participants and their work experiences.

Profile of Participants

Twenty-four students from the Recreation and Leisure Studies program at the University of Waterloo were interviewed. The mean age of the seven males and seventeen females interviewed was twenty-one years. The students spoke about their most recent leisure related work experience. Twelve of them reported on a co-

op work experience while twelve more reported on work they had found on their own, usually a summer position. The average work experience was four months and two weeks in length with the experiences ranging from just over two months and one week to eight months. The vast majority of these experiences lasted approximately four months. These students reported working in a wide variety of settings. Five worked in a resident camp situation, four each in fitness club settings, in non-resident summer camps, and in therapeutic recreation positions. Three more reported working in municipal recreation, two in non-profit/charity positions, and one each in commercial recreation and in a professional sport organization.

Much of the work in which the participants was involved placed them on the front lines, dealing directly with their organizations' clients. On average, they reported spending more than 60% of their time directly with clients, with sixteen of the twenty-four participants reporting that they spent more than 80% of their time with clients. Most of the experiences the participants described had both positive and negative elements. Ten of the twenty-four interview participants described their most recent work experience as being mostly positive, with seven reporting a primarily negative experience and seven reporting a neutral experience.

I Highly committed experiences

The following stories are those that participants identify as being very positive or highly committed.

Karen – Athletic/Recreation Therapist

Karen worked in healthcare setting as a recreation therapist. She noted that there were no significant events that impacted her commitment intensity or focus but rather that the social atmosphere of the place brought her closer to her clients as she progressed through the work experience.

> It was very laid back situation everybody did their work but we all told jokes or said stories even the clients were involved, it was like an open house thing with the different clients who came in for treatment. It was a social environment and the clients were definitely a motivator. Yeah it was definitely the clients that were more motivating than the people that worked there, they shifted on and off because I was filling in for different ones (employees) during the summer.

She describes how the clients included her in their own banter and how she felt a part of their group. In this situation no particular event triggered a variation in commitment but rather it evolved throughout the summer with repeated contact with the same group of clients. It is not surprising that high contact client situations would result in stronger client commitment. As Karen said:

> The clients… you develop a relationship with them because you've spent all summer with them and you start a bond with each one.

Lisa - Recreation Therapist

Lisa was eager to begin her co-op work experience in therapeutic recreation at a renowned health care facility hospital in a large urban area. As her experience progressed those feelings were strengthening and reaffirmed.

After my experience at (health care facility) it's made me want to even more work there than before. (Health care facility) kind of solidified that for me. I mostly heard a lot of good things about it. One of my friends, we were talking about (health care facility) and how it's a really good TR experience so I was interested in that…. that's probably why I was so drawn to it. I really liked working with older adults but I wanted to make sure I saw other parts of the field as well not just older adults so this was a lot of younger people.

Responding to a question about how or if her commitment changed over the course of the job Lisa answered:

It definitely goes up. First it took me a while to get into it. it was overwhelming getting all that documentation stuff and working with clients so at first I was kind of… there wasn't great commitment like if I was only there for a month I probably wouldn't be going back but over time as I got more comfortable with that team then I felt more committed like even before in the co-op process I don't think I felt as committed. I feel really committed to a lot of the residents who are there because there's a couple of them who just really like to hang out and talk so I really like to go in and see them and I also became really close with my co workers too so it's nice to be able to see them and I love the profession too so it's a mix of all those things If any more than the other I'd say the patients I'm usually more committed to them.

Talking about specific events related to commitment Lisa offered the following insight.

I think there was a turning point for me for commitment to (health care facility). We did this big event for a fall fair and one of my first days the other TR supervisor who was running it and I had started talking about it and it had been decided before that I was going to be helping on this project. We started brainstorming some ideas and it was really exciting because I was really interested in how we were going to do this fall fair so we planned and did all this crazy stuff but I felt like as I was doing that you're kind of like doing more and more of the planning of the recreation part of it then. I started feeling more committed to making sure it was something the clients wanted so that was a good turning point for me. If I didn't have that project I don't think I would have been as excited about what we do because it turned out awesome.

She also talked about the importance of her supervisor's actions. The following story was central to Lisa's commitment to her supervisor.

There was a lot of (support) like my supervisor wasn't working with me directly on it but she gave me support like how to ask companies for donations and stuff she was pretty supportive during it like, she kind of took a side step but helped me as much as she could, it helped a lot. My recreation team was really helpful, they're really used to having co-op students every term so I think they're used to integrating a co-op student quickly so what they do is they set up a meeting with everybody in the "rec" team. They set up a time when you're going to meet with that person and see what they do that helped so you got to know each person it just kind of happened. You're all working together and there are issues that will come up but you know, I could go to her (supervisor) with any issue like regarding who I was working with or my "shadow" (her name for a client who followed her everywhere) he would always try and throw something in on you like he would tell you things that were too personal and once a week we had to have a talk with him about it. She would help me with that and even issues with another co worker or if there was a problem like that I could go to her and I guess because she was younger too it was easy for me to talk to her. She just seemed to understand from where the student was coming from like when I needed help with documentation she was really good to try and explain that stuff to me. I don't know what she did I really don't.. I was making her a birthday card the other day and I was like you're so awesome!!! I think she had it all figured out she was very prepared and organized she did my final evaluation and asked me if I could ask things for her to improve on and I was kind of struggling because she wants to have that feedback for the next time but I was really struggling to think of something. I hope that if I was ever a supervisor for a co-op student that I would have some of those skills that she has. It took a while because at first I remember- not that I didn't get along with her but I was a bit intimidated by her because she was so successful when she graduated. I felt a little bit intimidated but she wasn't like she never did anything to make me feel that way. I think it was over time like we had one incident where I was taking people bowling on (a transportation organization) and they're not really that dependable we had to book it in advance so I had my confirmation and all that and we went and I was taking a lady who was on oxygen and there was another lady with a brain injury that can be very challenging. We were waiting for the bus to come afterwards and the time before we waited almost an hour for (a transportation organization). I called one of my

supervisors and she was like its okay they're usually late just wait. So I waited an hour with these people and they never came so I was like okay this isn't good so I tried calling back to (the health care facility) but no one was there and my supervisor was really sick that day and had gone home so I ended up paging her and it was almost two hours later from the beginning and she got my page and called me back. I was like freaking out because this lady has like half a tank of oxygen left. My supervisor turned around and got back to (the health care facility) and called (the transportation company) because she had a private number of one person there and managed to get us a ride home. So when I came back I was like so stressed out. It was a nice time to have her there to fix the problem so I think that probably helped with the trusting. She was there for me so I think that's where I put more trust in her as a supervisor. I realized how helpful she is, even when she was really sick. I really miss my supervisor she was a great mentor. It was her first time supervising a student but she was really good she was really supportive of anything that came up.

As the story above illustrates at times there were challenges, but these challenges seemed to present an opportunity to solidify Lisa's commitment if handled well and in Lisa's mind her supervisor passed with flying colors.

It was not all perfect though, as Lisa described.

There were times when like there was one client, for some reason I didn't have a lot of patience with this person, not that I would show him directly but there were times where I was having a really hard time with a client and I had to get a lot of support from my supervisors to be able to work with this person so it was kind of a little bit of an issue just trying to work with him. He was in one of my groups and it was hard to get along with him and sometimes there were issues with co-workers. It was six females all in the same office and sometimes it was a commotion like we'd be having meetings and sometimes there was tension. The stress I guess. It's a high stress place especially around Christmas time.

Lisa expressed a strong commitment to her chosen career as a key factor that kept her going through the tough times.

I'm really interested in the patients. I like what we do and you see how it helps them so I went into this place with commitment just to the clients and as it went through time I became more and more

committed to my co-workers and especially to the profession. I just switched into TR thinking it was something I wanted to do, could get a job at, but this gave me the extra push because I really liked the process and then I became more committed to TR through that. Also I was more committed to my co-workers because they were very helpful and fun people to be around. I'd say my committed evened out.

Lisa also kept coming back to her clients as a constant reaffirmation of her

commitment. The example below is an illustration of this:

There's always a couple of patients who stick out in your mind and you tend to form closer bonds with them, usually the people I'd see one to one so I really miss spending that quality time with them. There's one patient in particular who is my shadow he's a younger guy and he is just like the co-op students, so he just hangs out with the co-op students, I miss joking with him.

Jane- In home Therapeutic Recreation Provider

Jane worked for a private health care provider in a major urban area in a

therapeutic recreation related position. She would visit and interact with families

who had children with special needs and would help them to expand their leisure

opportunities by assisting the clients and their families in negotiating their leisure

constraints. She described the job as follows: "Throughout my work term I would

work with six or seven families each on a one or two week at a time basis".

Jane's initial excitement for the job came from a desire to work in the

therapeutic recreation field and to gain further experience working in families with

special needs children. Although she remained strongly connected to the career she

felt her overall commitment really depended on the family situation she observed

from week to week. She remarked how it was the "connection" she had with each family that added to her commitment and allowed her to go above and beyond for that particular family or child.

> It was a social thing, where the parents really appreciated me and what could offer was key to this. Some parents, well some parents are the constraint! And you are not always welcomed. You still do the best job you can but others you can go above and beyond you know? Some clients are challenging but you know you can help and that feels good. It makes you want to help them more.

Jane didn't have any specific incidents that impacted her commitment but she did feel her supervisors tried very hard to be there for her to "vent" or talk about things despite having very heavy caseloads of their own. She also remarked that she felt part of team rather than a student. This sentiment was repeated in many of the positive evaluations. She noted that there were no specific incidents but having people (her supervisors) who showed they cared by listening was really important. She also noted that "seeing that you have helped some family really makes it all worthwhile."

Jennifer - Fundraiser

Jennifer worked as a fundraiser for a local office of a national charity. She had little direct client contact and went into the position feeling connected to the cause and developed a strong connection with her supervisor. Jennifer described her supervisor this way:

> Different events would occur and she (supervisor) would come up to me and go Jenn only five more days. We'd talk about all the positives and what we could change and all the negatives of what

the events were and just going through that process with her. It made you feel better about what you were doing, it showed you when you're committed to a project 100% it's that much better than if you give 50 or 60%. You go over and beyond you can see the difference.

Jennifer also noted the importance of being given an opportunity to be challenged and then being recognized for her achievements as significantly enhancing her connection to her supervisor.

There was never a policy but they encouraged you to do your best. There was a bunch of different offices that had meetings together and we would always be like oh this is how we're doing this assignment and my boss would be like well this is how Jennifer laid it out and then everybody would be like oh can we have a copy of that. It would just show that because we had a lot more planned than just one little letter you submit to offices. We actually made a package, it was appealing, something interesting to look at besides a fax so I guess those meetings really helped too and hearing the positive reinforcement getting some support for what you were doing. Yeah, definitely it made you want to work even more and do better. She (supervisor) kind of showed off what our work had been and how we worked together and instead of dividing our office like you do this we worked together on ideas and packages.

Despite this ideal supervisor relationship an interpersonal incident in the workplace challenged Jennifer and made her reconsider her commitment.

There was a problem employee that was there last summer. It was a position I had been in the summer before so I had left everything really structured and organized so I could just jump right into it the following summer and all that disappeared and every time she made a mistake I was accused of doing it. Author: By her (other employee)? Yeah by her. I knew my boss knew better and she was encouraging me and telling me I know it's not your fault but I felt there were people in the organization who didn't look at me as highly so that brought my level of commitment down like there was a period I didn't have an interest in being there it was like I was there because I have to be and when will this day be over or when will she leave and it was a small office.

The incident may have had more dire consequences but:

she (so called problem employee) went away, she took a break for about a month so we got a lot of work done and she came back as I was finishing up so my boss tried to structure it and tried to sit down and talk to both of us because she was a problem for a lot of people. It was addressed and I appreciated that and I still volunteer with that organization because I enjoy what they do. It was just that period where I couldn't stand that person like everything was being thrown on me and it wasn't fair considering I was a student. I wasn't a full time employee.

The ability of the supervisor to address the coworker issue seemed to reinforce Jennifer's feeling to the supervisor, even though the problem was never really solved. However, Jennifer did imply throughout the interview that she may not have been able to continue in the position if she had to continue to work with this person (the coworker).

Catherine - Outdoor Education Programmer

Catherine worked in a residential outdoor education setting at an established year round facility. She entered the position highly committed having knowledge of the facility's outstanding reputation and excited about the chance to be part of the tradition there. Her two great loves attracted her in the first place.

Well the outdoors and children those are my top two; camping, summer camps being outdoors has also been something I've been interested in and I want to be a teacher so, education, outdoor education is a natural.

As she experienced the camp Catherine spoke about how her connections evolved.

It is still the place, kids and outdoors but through that (working there) I found a love of the people who work there. I mean my supervisor, now I'm engaged to! (laughter). So I'm pretty

connected, but he moved over to run another camp but is still in the area and Jimmy who is probably the, anyone in the camping world knows him, he is involved in international camps all over the place. He is the program director he runs the outdoor centre, Dan (her direct supervisor) was underneath him and then three of us below that. Jimmy is very much connected we've stayed in touch he is in our wedding party and that's what brought me back like the it was the people that brought me back the second time, even though my future husband had changed camps, so the people, the leaders are really important. The relationship I gained with people I was working with was a big part of it. I mean you are not just part of the outdoor centre you are involved with the school and the maintenance people and you really focus. They train employees to have a really good sense of the whole picture so you're walking by and you see a piece of trash you don't just leave it or wait for the maintenance staff to get it you just pick it up. If there is a broken porch or something you report it. I think we learned from example so Dan (supervisor) would go by and do it so we would do it or he would call us on it if we didn't do something if we walked by the trash and not noticed it. There is also a lot of caring like the school would write us thank you cards when we set up their parade float for the Santa parade and those things just make you want to be part of the whole picture you know.

Catherine was inspired with the measures supervisors took to build

social bonds among staff.

Teachable moments like Jimmy (program director) would just say lets do a ski this afternoon and we would go over to the big trails across the way and ski for four hours just taking in those moments. I mean if you see an opportunity to increase the bond, the friendship that is there then they take those. I mean they know it is such a commitment and they know it is those things that keep you going. Those little moments and those big events that sort of tie you in. Outdoor education is all about those teachable moments I mean you're skiing and you see a woodpecker and you do a little learning and they really embody teachable moments ideas and everyone's personality is like that just because they are sociable and people oriented and right into what they do. I think that really helps build that atmosphere. I miss that constant challenge that Jimmy would give you. As a supervisor I think how am I going to

do this and then you would find a way to do it and that's a really those opportunities that happened often at (camp name) but then in regular life they don't seem to happen enough. You know emotionally I say regular life, I guess the life that you lead there is very much in a little bubble…ummm so I guess those people and challenges they give you is what I miss most.

Catherine also faced a challenge to her commitment to the job.

The first winter I was there I noticed a lot of stress in the office and found out there was a whole story with (uncomfortable pause) people who had been… after two months now they are close friends there was hostility between these three directors that ran (Camp name) and one ended up leaving and that had just happened before I got there and people would just come into the office crying and so at the beginning we didn't know what it was all about. Eventually Dan (supervisor) explained the details and that helped. (Camp name) is very traditional and they ask people to be that way, short hair no piercings. Now they have these amazing traditions but not everyone accepts them. It is well known and the tradition is important to them but the people do love it. But from the outside looking in we may question some of their traditions but the people there understand that so they live that way. The tradition sometimes causes people to butt heads. Like Jimmy is completely committed he does work those 6 months of 7-11 but I look at his family life and it is not as strong as a family life I want to have. So that is what people see if I want to part of the (camp name) crew I have to do this I have to be that committed so I think they may lose some really key people because they won't compromise, they won't individualize. Do it or not. No flexibility and if you are really into it, it can be the most amazing thing but that's why I realized four months is great but I could never do it as a full time career. The dispute didn't impact my commitment to kids and outdoors though. Also the amount that you learn, the role models that are there for you were important. Jimmy like I said is known worldwide and like I have never spent four months learning as much as I did. I mean leadership style I wasn't a confident leader before I went but now I feel like I don't have any problem with presentations, I could lead a group of a hundred kids on my own. So it is like those skills and the skills of just looking at the whole picture that was another thing I was just astounded with the amount you can develop over that short time you are there it is intense and your really develop a lot of other skills.

Despite the great experience Catherine also realized however that her future was not in this camp or in a similar setting and this was very important for her.

Catherine summed up her view of the work experience as follows.

I mean, I think you don't develop a friendship until you have trust and if that is part of it then yeah then if you want a family environment then relying on other people, trust pretty much same thing. I think that for people to be committed they have to be in areas that they enjoy if there isn't a common liking if you don't like what you are doing it is hard to be committed or to stay that way. I think that that is probably a bare minimum for commitment.

Kim - Instructor Sport Camp

Kim spent her summer months as an instructor at a sleep over equestrian camp in a rural location in central Canada. Kim's initial love of horses and for coaching future equestrians is what initially connected her to the job. It was however, the people and, in particular, the clients and ownership that strengthened her connection throughout the term of her employment. Kim told me about the time when she first started to feel a special bond with this position.

> At the end of the week they have little activities and I remember the first time I was a counselor there it was a pretty big deal for me, it was a pretty big step and then at the end of the week the girls would write like things about how their week went and they'd go beside their picture and then the owner showed me different things or stuff they had written to their parents about me. They were so nice the things they said about me. Like they had a great time that it was rewarding like okay this is why I love it so much, it really changed me. They gave me the most advanced group so they were always pretty ambitious and they wanted to learn so they really look up to you and at the end of the week there's always a show so to actually see them perform it was very rewarding. The personalities like all the instructors I guess they're all very similar once you get there, there is common ground you know lots of interesting people.

For Kim ultimately thought the lack of challenge lead her to move.

> For the last couple of years that I was working there I was riding with a coach outside of camp and by the time I went back the next year I had become far better than I had realized and I felt that the teaching like I wasn't learning anything there even from the top dogs that's when I went I'm done it's time to move on.

Overall, however, Kim thought the experience was an exceptional one for her. She talked about the events she felt built her commitment.

> I really like that they'd always asking questions and giving advice and they would give us a lot of freedom in what we chose to do and they would just have complete trust in us so we were quite free in what we wanted to do and different activities or if we wanted to completely change things up they would let us, they would give us the freedom to do that. They really trust you like she (owner) would say Kim I have to go and run some errands see you later and for insurance purposes as well they're responsible for all the riders safety and when you have sixty people at the camp and you're going off into lessons you're going off into large fields and you're responsible for anywhere between three and nine kids all on horses and you're on your feet and it gets really hot you can get dehydration and heat stroke there's just a number of things because you have to wear a black helmet and long pants quite hot so you know they trust you when they're letting you sort of take them out on your own because it's their responsibility.

As we were about to close our conversation Kim indicated that she wanted to tell me one thing she thought was really important in bonding between the staff and ownership:

> They (owners) had their house right on the property we all ate in their kitchen well they had an extension. It was almost your second home, home away from home that was nice.

Tina: - Youth Programmer

Tina worked in youth programming for a municipal recreation agency. She was drawn to working with youth but through her experience her supervisor was clearly her strongest connection to the workplace and had a big impact on her future career decisions. When Tina spoke about her supervisor she had a big smile on her face.

> My supervisor always was really helpful she gave us a lot of autonomy but also directed us. I guess there's a really fine balance giving us a lot of responsibility and it's an open environment within the policies of the City and the program that we're trained to run so it's been pretty good. I've made a lot of friends working there in the different programs and facilities it's just been a really positive experience overall. I would also say it's a commitment to the career path I want to take. I really want to work in municipal recreation doing youth programming and so I've had a lot of opportunities getting that experience working with the City just even other part time stuff with some of the programs and that really influenced my choice to switch into recreation and leisure studies (at university) so I'd say it was a big factor being able to have that experience and then being able to realize that it was something I'd potentially want to do. I changed from Arts I was doing a major in history and I switched into "rec" in my second year.

When we began to discuss key events that influenced her commitment Tina had this to say:

> I would say it wasn't the (organization) itself that attracted me it was my first job, I was working at the summer camps working with kids was my first thing Oh!! I would say my supervisor when I worked with the council (a city sponsored youth council) she also oversaw the day camps over the summer; she was one of the main reasons why I switched to "rec". I think that was my second year working with the council and she was considering doing her masters and I realized that program might be something that I was interested in doing. So I would say that she had a lot to do with my changing programs. She was also someone who was really encouraging and open to new ideas to take (the program name) to a new direction that wasn't intended in the beginning and allowed

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us the opportunity. We applied to do a presentation for a symposium in Calgary they were running it and we just kind of… we happened across the information at the conference in the November before and the deadline was two days before and we thought just do it just to see if we get it we get it, if we don't we don't. it's not a big deal we ended up being accepted to do this presentation it was really exciting. She was really excited for us even though she knew that sending a non full time employee to a conference like this being, compensated for it through the city, it was like incredibly taboo. There are many full time employees who love to go to these conferences and don't get any help from their departments but also at the same time it was a really great opportunity for us to go out there and network and get our council out there and just get the experience of presenting at a conference of this level and so she helped us. We ended up being able to get half of our registration and our flights paid for there. We were like we'll pay for whatever else because we really, really want to go. It was just an experience that you couldn't turn down and she was really encouraging for us to do that and so I think that just the fact that she didn't step on our dreams, Instead of saying it's just not going to work because we can't she bent the rules for us a little bit and made it so that we could actually attend.

Tina also spoke of a negative experience, the departure of her supervisor from the organization, and subsequently she told me she was no longer interested in working for this particular organization because of the way this situation transpired.

There have been a lot of changes there's been a lot of politics and the youth side of it doesn't get a lot of attention and the people who are like the organizational leaders I guess for the youth programming they don't get a lot of support. There tends to be I don't know how to put it when there's a project that comes up or when people leave they tend to break up that person's responsibilities and give it to people who are already working there and so the focus gets lost and that happened when my supervisor left for a number of reasons. One because they were trying to.. I guess make her work on another project that wasn't youth oriented and they weren't really giving her a choice to do it and that's not what she wanted to do and they weren't being very supportive of her possibly pursuing her masters part time neither and once she left, well there was a void in program design and it basically just stopped there so we haven't had new program designs since she left and the youth side of programming doesn't

get enough attention or resources or staff or money and that sort of thing so I'd say that's another reason why I'm not planning on staying with the city . I have a lot of great personal connections with people that I've worked with. I don't think I've come across anyone that had a negative impact on my work experience there. I think the negative things kind of stem out of the politics driven issues that come up.

Martin - Special Needs Camp Counselor

Martin worked at a day camp as a counselor for children with special needs. He was extremely connected to the camp, the kids he worked for, and the people he worked with. Martin's passion was evident from the moment I corresponded with him to set up the interview. When we discussed events that impacted his commitment Martin had this to share.

A lot of out of camp things, like they'd have a lot of staff nights where like, one we had a big scavenger hunt all over downtown with like different camps. There's like different dinners with camps and also there's a lot of like bursaries and things just to encourage staff to perform the best they can.

When we talked about critical incidents Martin felt that it was really a series of smaller things that added up to his commitment; some from within himself and others from the way the camp was run and the feedback he received. Here is what Martin had to say:

Another thing that was important working for him (supervisor) was he provided a lot of feedback. Like every session, and then during the middle of the summer, all the directors of the camps would have like conferences with their staff and tell them what they were doing well, what they could improve on. I thought that was really important. And the way it's all done is just so friendly. At he end of July and then in August, all the directors are taking every day of the a week, they take one staff out of his last camp and they have other staff cover his kids and they sit them down and they just have a conference about what they're doing well,

what they need to improve and then I think that's great. Then we are ready to go back again for another couple of weeks.

The evaluation day provides a break, allows the supervisor to connect individually

with each counselor, and also provides feedback when the counselor still has an

opportunity to improve in subsequent weeks.

Martin went on to say:

> I also love developing skills in kids, they don't just want the kids to be dropped off and you baby-sit the kid all day, they really appreciate the staff being involved in developing a program that expands the kids' horizons. The people you work with, everything works together, and it makes everyone just so happy to be there. Yeah. The staff, they're happy to be there, the kids, they're as happy as you are to be there and then you come up with great ideas and you present them to the camp and everyone loves that your friend comes up with amazing idea and you just love working with that.

Martin said his commitment started before he even began the job:

> The interview process is they ask every staff to come and teach and like the interview process is like a group of twenty people or twenty-five people and every single person has something they want to present to the other group like an arts and crafts kind of activity, or like a sports activity and they have to teach everyone. So they're being tested on how much energy, charisma they express and to teach somebody something new, how good they are at teaching and like just all the skills they're going to need for the camp. And it's also like everyone is mingling and getting to know each other before they're even hired and you're seeing all these really cool people that you could be working with. Yeah. I don't remember, the staff is probably like seventy or eighty people and they get about two hundred get interviews, I think and they have even more people that they don't even have come in for an interview.

One of the ongoing events that was key for Martin was the feedback. This idea was repeated throughout the interviews. Martin provided some insight into why this may be so important.

> I think a lot of the time it's just me that makes me, like I think I did a really bad job, my god why did I do that, I shouldn't be here and then like the next day I hike up my pants and just give all I can give and then I realize that I'm really doing a good job. It's more so myself. I found in a lot of jobs if I don't get a lot of feedback, I start to think what am I doing, thinking maybe I'm doing something wrong, I'm not getting any feedback, either good or bad. So I'm pushed to the side and it doesn't even matter that I'm there. Like if they appreciate me, I know I should be there and if they tell me some things I should work on, well then I know they still want me there.

Martin also spoke of the casual everyday recognition, the "pat on the back" that was commonplace in this camp.

> A lot of the directors, they just talk and then they will come to you and go 'I heard what you did, that was really cool' and somebody is like 'wow Martin, yesterday you were dressed up as diver and kids loved it, I heard it was great'. So they talk and they pick different staff and there's staff they know and some they've never worked with them, but they still talk and stuff. They tell them they know they are doing good work.

Martin's only negative incidents came from interaction with partner organizations and suppliers. "I guess one of the things I hate a lot in working is a lot of the politics and just the bickering and the random stuff like that. Yeah, but it brings you down." He cited the following examples.

> Our camp is a big camp and then there's other camps. I actually worked at for one week and one of my good friends was working there they help us out, but a lot of the times they're really not the same kind of staff as we are. (The camps often do activities together or share a facility) They're not as energetic as we are. It's just like different attitudes. Like a lot of them are there just to have fun and the kids are there, and they push the kids around like older

brothers, kind of rough housing. We're there just to make sure the kids are having fun not roughhouse around at all. We mix. We're like what they hell are they doing, this guy is pushing this kid in the head and like the kid is getting really angry and wants to fight and they're just like 'what?' we're having fun. They just continue the cycles of what they think is normal in their camp and same with us. One of the other problems we encounter a lot is the bus drivers. Some of them are the most loveable characters you'll ever meet and some of them are really they shouldn't be doing this. They shouldn't be driving kids in between six and twelve home after camp because they're (kids) really energetic and they're screaming and having fun and singing and stuff and the bus driver slams on the brakes and turns around and yells at these kids. It's like I've worked on the bus my first year we had a bus driver yell at a six year old girl because she wouldn't sit on her bottom. This girl was just terrified of the bus driver. Because they work in a union we can't do much but so a lot of the time we'll have like bus driver that's just terrible for the whole summer. And it's the staff on the bus, they have to work with her and make sure the kids are having fun. It's really hard. We just say don't worry she's crazy. It's not your fault. She yelled at two kids once because they're father was continually late (visibly upset by this).

In these negative instances Martin enhance his commitment to his clients and what he did and implied through out that he realized how "lucky" he was to work in such a high-energy positive environment. This is an important point to note though, that interaction with partner agencies can, at least in this instance, have an influence on the employee.

Maggie - Youth Programming

Maggie worked on temporary contract on a cruise ship programming for kids and youth. She had just started the position and had done two short contracts one of a couple weeks and a subsequent contract of about a month. She talked about the job this way

I love that job….Yeah I'd go back now it's snowing in March!! (laughs) but to be honest actually the cruise ship line I'm with is all about employee empowerment and they are on top of that, they are completely on that page and it's great I do my job but I never have anyone looking down on me if I wanted I could go out and suntan it's almost like you have that respect for them so they have it for you do you know what I mean? To me that's what builds the commitment there they treat you like a person.

Although the exposure was short Maggie talked about how this compared to other another job she had where she felt she was never really considered important, yet even for very short term work arrangements she felt the cruise lines really showed that they cared about their employees regardless of their term of employment.

It's crazy because I could do nothing but it's almost like I want to go back so that's another motivating factor but at the same time they give you so much, you get paid well accommodations food it's almost like your morals come into play You feel you owe them some good work. I'm young so I haven't really gotten to experience as much of the incentives as someone else but just the fact that they fly you out there you stay in a hotel at night they provide you with discounts on the ship they just treat you like great; even the captain he doesn't do that much with us but my supervisor brought me in the first day I got to know him, he's really nice and afterwards he'd be like come back and hang out with us after you're done so just the fact that they treat you like a person is something you have respect for. There's other people that have the same job as you on the ship so you work with them so why would you want to do anything else, know what I mean?

There were no particular incidents that Maggie felt impacted her commitment but just that the overall impression of being cared for and treated as in her words "a person" really helped her commitment level. Maggie also talked about the environment being a great place and beautiful weather made her really anxious

to return, something she plans to do for a much longer time once the school year ended.

Sara - Sponsorship/Event Management

Sara found this particular co-op position on her own. She was excited about the job working in sport, a career focus for her, but she was not particularly involved with the organization or the sport itself before taking this position. She describes her job as follows:

> I planned the (championship) sponsor events. We did different promotions to run for the (championship) a lot of them give away promo trips so we were coming up with different ways that they could run contests and designing web pages and stuff like that and then we did party planning for the sponsors. We did a (championship) party during the game and one in (major city) for whenever the clients arrived.

At first Sara told me that she saw commitment as:

> Work output, effort, so when I was there I loved it and I was doing everything I could do to get the job done so I didn't care if I was working twelve or fourteen hour days it was like I wanted to get it done for myself and I would say in terms of emotion and loyalty it's (commitment) what you say and what you do. I was passionate about it, still am, yeah I still talk to them.

I asked Sara if she started that way or if there were any events that contributed to her feeling throughout her work term. She went on to tell me the following story:

> I was excited at first but I didn't start committed because I didn't understand what the job was going to entail. I didn't know what it was going to be involving and I think too it's what you make of it and it's you have to prove that you can do things. I got to do a ton of things that I never thought I would do and that increased my

commitment as oppose to there were three interns and one of them didn't get to do anything so it's sort of as it went along it kept growing with me. It was different like in a different job that I worked at I had no interest we were at a gym and did not care at all we'd come in at nine and surf the web and wouldn't talk to any of the clients, it was just like that, no interest. I would say what commitment would look like I would say obviously you're not going to be surfing the net or whatever you don't have to do your job the entire time to be committed but you need to enjoy your job, to be someone who generally sits there and enjoys what they're doing and isn't just there for the money. I think committed people usually, it has a lot to do with group environment and I was certainly committed here. To me the social aspect, It's huge. I go out of my way especially in work places, it's super important because everyone else there is doing the same thing and working their butt off we were all in the same spot during the two weeks we were in (championship city) we weren't sleeping and we were out like out for dinner and it was like we're all in it together if no one talked or did anything together I think it would make the job harder. I think the interesting part was we all worked for the sponsor I would do it for the team the people (the supervisors), that I worked with definitely, I did it for myself as a learning experience but it was in teams because it was the (league name) we were all going all cylinders so you didn't want to let anything drop.

I went back and asked Sara if any events triggered this connection or did it

just evolved over time. She said:

Two weeks in one of my bosses went away for a week so I was left with doing an entire sponsor package on my own which was huge. I had been there for two weeks, there were others who had been there before who didn't get the opportunity to do it and it put me right into the show and it was a (large company) promo, so I was working with legal on the all the sides of deal and with the (company) to make sure that all the wording was right and we designed the actual promotion and a web page and with all the parties that was huge commitment builder. First I got the opportunity and the responsibly and the more you learn the more I got to talk to the sponsors. That was when some of the hours started getting super long because you're trying to connect and (company) head office is in Calgary so it's like three hours behind so I could get there at eight but I'm not going to talk to them until eleven maybe, so that was huge on commitment, but time never seemed an issue. Yeah it was trust and responsibility.

I asked Sara about being equipped to do the job or if she felt just thrown into it. She told me that:

> I definitely thought I had the skills I started with her (supervisor) doing it on the Thursday, so I had a comfort level. There are some places where they give you no training or skills before you do it, and there were other senior people there to help. I think the first day is scary because you're approving things. But I was supported throughout it. It was ok to mistake, Oh yeah and we did!!"

I asked Sara to tell me more about the responsibility she was given in this position. .

> Sara: We didn't make major mistakes, but they would say, we can always fix things there's definitely no worry.
>
> Author: So you wouldn't get barked at if you made a mistake?
>
> Sara: No, no and it was also because we didn't know everything it was more of a learning experience like 'okay you did it this way, but you could have done this we were supported if you made a mistake.

Sara went on to describe a few other events that impacted her commitment along the way.

> I started getting taken to some of the meetings like lunch meetings or so that increased it (commitment), the fact always that like again there's others that can go or they don't have to take me at all they were fantastic at involving me. I think some places are threatened to take you but the more they got me involved that way the more committed I was. They took me (on the road) for three weeks where others only had one week and they took care of us all the time. You feel appreciated, yeah.

Sara loved this experience and would love to work for this or a similar organization, but she concluded our conversation by telling me that this particular type of job wasn't one she thought she could sustain full time.

At the same time though I know that if I did it, I mean as my job, I don't know if it could be long term well the higher positions those ones, yeah. But realistically I knew that at the end of the (championship) I could sleep and take it easy. I don't know if I could do those hours long term it would be awesome but I don't know everyone there is going on adrenaline.

II   Negative Experiences

The narratives in the following section all ended badly in the eyes of the participant.

Karen –Outdoor Adventure Camp Instructor

Karen job's was a co-op position in a rural area in Ireland. She worked as an instructor at an outdoor adventure centre focusing on climbing. The camp catered to a wide variety of people from school groups to corporate training groups to tourist and adventure "junkies." Karen reported a lifelong interest in the outdoors and has high-level skills in climbing. She lived on site and her role was to instruct outdoor adventure type activities (in particular climbing). Karen found the position on her own and was primarily interested in getting an international experience and being out of doors. During our conversation she outlined the critical events she felt had impact the focus and intensity of her commitment.

> I was really excited about the opportunity and I have never been to Ireland before so this was great. I tend to be pretty committed to things so I'd say I started off pretty committed I mean they hired me without knowing me and I got to travel so I was really looking forward to it. But it was kinda weird from the beginning. I arrived and they just said you bunk here and to be at work the next morning at such and such a time. No real welcome or formal introductions, that was done at breakfast but just this is Karen she is Canadian, that was it. Don't know what I was expecting but it didn't make me feel great. It was a pretty impersonal place.

Karen went to talk about a couple of things that really had a negative impact on her commitment throughout her stay.

One day they promoted me to a supervisor but never asked if me if I really wanted to. I mean it felt good for a while but there was no extra money and I was still expected to do all the stuff, then other people (co-workers) started treating me different. They also never had any flexibility in our days off even if we worked it out ourselves, I mean we never had two days off in a row and it was a long way into town let alone elsewhere in the country, it was impossible to plan anything or go anywhere.

Karen also talked about the living conditions.

Our food was awful and the place was a mess. A couple of us ended up cleaning all the time but we got no support from our bosses. The kitchen for the guests always had extra food and it just went to waste and we ate crap, it didn't make any sense. They also would move our rooms around without any input from us it was not very professional. You felt like a kid.

They also didn't really seem to care much about the client experience. Karen told me about the lack of training she had to organize an orienteering event. She found out the day of the event she was to do this and they handed her the instructions and told to go run this event for a corporate group. However, she had never been trained in this event and basically was left to fend for herself. She felt it was not only hard for her but also didn't make for a great client experience.

Karen describes how at the end of her work term she agreed to stay for an extra week and was paid not only the usual rate but a bonus. She had no idea this was coming and had agreed to it for the lower amount. However, she felt this had little impact on her overall negative impression of the place. Even though the money was needed for school, Karen felt that a more people centre approach and more recognition through the term would have been more beneficial than the extra cheque.

Jeff - Swim Instructor

Jeff was a swim instructor and lifeguard at a private family resort and yacht club. He was resident there for much of the summer. Jeff felt he was strongly connected to his job through a love of swimming and the chance to be outdoors. "I love the water, been a competitive swimmer, it is me a big part of me doing that and getting paid ..right!"

Through his work experience he found that his clients became both his biggest source of connection to his job and the largest drag on his commitment. As the summer progressed Jeff repeatedly referred back to how great it was to see the kids progressing and how the experience had helped develop a love for teaching something he now hopes to pursue in some form as a big part of his future career. Jeff was very emotional talking about getting kids who were afraid of the water to be swimming independently by the end of summer. "I just love to see them, getting on, improving it was great."

The parents however were in some cases a different story. Jeff was uncomfortable discussing what can only be called racist and bigoted commentary from some of the members. He did not enjoy having to listen to some of the jokes and felt pressured to smile or laugh along although as he said "he was repulsed" by some of the things being said. At this point in the interview Jeff was visibly upset by this discussion, he still felt uncomfortable about going along with it. Jeff was courageous enough to raise the issue with his bosses but also felt "disheartened" when his bosses reminded him who paid his salary and that it was the members' club. A few members also were well aware of this and Jeff recounted how the staff

were often looked down on and mistreated by a small group of an otherwise "great" group of members. An especially painful incident Jeff recounted was a story of how one of the club members' children had offered him a ride home at the end of the weekend only to have her Dad inform her in front of Jeff that "we don't fraternize with help" and a ride was "simply not possible." Jeff was careful to say that this was an exception but the club's tolerance of some the members' attitudes and behaviors significantly coloured his experience. He was extremely disappointed in the behaviour of his supervisor who appeared to do nothing to support or even care to listen to staff concerns about this issue. He is unsure if he would return, but thinks it likely.

Finally, Jeff also talked about the importance of his coworkers as a way to bridge some of the stress of the workplace and as a chance to share "war stories" and lament. His coworkers helped him get through the troubling times and were a memorable and enjoyable part of the summer. He continues to socialize with some of the people despite being in different cities during the school year. "It was great we would eat, go to the bar have some drinks just hang out we had lots to talk about!" The work group appeared to play a significant role in making a difficult situation bearable for Jeff.

Jan – Camp Administrator

Jan worked in an administrative role with limited client contact at a not-for-profit summer resort. Jan loved the place, just being in a beautiful area that was

near her childhood home. As she described it "It was on a one hundred and forty acre waterfront and we had everything from the marina to beaches to everything. It's gorgeous."

However, the setting alone was not enough to make the experience a memorable one. Overall Jan was fairly neutral about the position and her commitment decreased as the summer went along. As she said:

> I definitely felt connected because it was an overnight resort with my job I didn't have to stay overnight all the time but everybody else did like all the program people who were in charge of the children had to stay overnight I was more of the administrator in the office working with the head people in the organization. I think at the beginning for me I was more committed at the beginning than I was in the end because of the way things turned out. The administration was really lax they were really relaxed with how everything was going so much so they didn't seem to care. So at the beginning I remember being so involved and in the end it was like it's almost the end of the summer. You kind of lose that whole commitment. I mean for sure I still did my job but the energy level and everything is different. The work group more than anything else is that what got tiresome, especially in this type of setting (resident camp). So at the beginning of the season everyone was so into it and you saw that a lot in the workers and by the end the motivation level is definitely decreased so as much as the people still loved it like the people at the resort you could tell that it was a different type of environment

Jan saw a gradual diminishing of her commitment:

> Nothing dramatic happened that I can recall but I'm sure that's how people are I can't think of anything I think it was just time, every single day. For me it wasn't as hard because I could go home often but for those who were living there I think you could see it more. My sister lived there and I could tell by the end of the summer she was like okay when is school going to start. But it was a fun job it was different at the end than at the beginning. As far as the people go you got more comfortable with them you became better friends with them at this place you're friends for life but so I think that whole comfort level occurs and not that you I don't

know how to say this without saying it, because it's not that the job wasn't getting done but it was almost easier you know what I mean it wasn't as difficult so you didn't have to put as much effort as you would have in the beginning. So the challenge maybe drops off a bit.

Jan then recalled one incident that colored her impression of the organization and brought to light her relatively negative impressions of the organization.

There were a couple people who were high up there who didn't really know what was going on down below but they acted like they did so it created problems. Supervisors, yeah some of them didn't know what they were doing. They would work 9-5 and it's a 24 hour 7 day a week resort and they would be in the office all the time but they never really would be outside but they may go outside for lunch and they'd see something and that five minute occurrence is their whole perception and they don't know what's going so it creates problems with the counselors. Oh yeah we used to get gratuities at that job and then they (supervisors/management) felt that we shouldn't get those tips they took those away so we were hired thinking we were going to be making extra money at the end of the summer but they took that away from us so we had to fight to get what they promised back but for those coming back next summer they're not going to get that so those incentives were taken away from us. So I think that also it's a really big problem that happened and how. They sent a letter to the employees but the people paying into the gratuities they didn't tell, but the problem was the gratuities would now go back to the organization but the problem was a lot of the workers' families come because you can rent cottages so they would tell their families. Word of mouth is amazing and it looks so bad on the them (organization) because they're paying so much money because we clean their cottage at the end. We have those features like food (room service) and everything so people pay money for gratuities thinking that their kids and friends are going to benefit from it but ..no…It was so bad.

James - Community Recreation Programmer

James is a very intense person. He is very career focused and is looking to get the most out of his education and co-op positions. James was visibly upset by this particular experience and harbors a lot of anger about "how things went down" during this experience. The interview was a lengthy one and James offered a detailed description of his position as follows:

> It was a co-op placement with the (city name) but because it was eight months it's thought to be more significant than your standard four month trial period. We were there on a contract and I was the assistant recreation coordinator underneath the recreation administrator or coordinator. I guess I was responsible for recreation programs specifically, summer day camps which were my pet project. I headed that up in terms of all aspects marketing, budgeting financing, staffing all of it. I would say my commitment was in big part towards the people of (city name) our clients because I knew what we were doing was beneficial but as my relationship grew with my coordinator in terms as a friend and someone I could talk to I didn't want to let her down I wanted to make sure I did my job well and went above and beyond expectations because in my head I didn't want to let Jane down, Nina on the other hand who was my other superior was completely different story.

James describes his commitment to his position as follows:

> I go all out, no quit, and that pushing, constantly wanting to raise the bar, I think frustrates some people. Challenge seems to be part of commitment too for me. I want to try to push it and set new challenges that can be achieved so as a whole the program is being improved the end goal is always what can I do that makes it better because I see myself as competing against every other person who has held this job before me so it's like okay they did some great stuff what can I do to make it better to leave my lasting legacy to say I was the best.

James described in length the events that impacted his commitment during this work experience.

From beginning to end I was committed the entire time I think it was a matter of energy and attitude and how I brought it and how I saw the two programs the one under the one person was all out, don't quit, balls to the wall and the other one was pardon my language I don't give a shit I don't care if this goes down in a flaming pile of crap because it's not my neck on the line so whatever.

I asked James to tell me how he got to these very diverse impressions of different parts of his job. James told his story as follows:

It was a series of events that first off the having the two supervisors from day one, the interesting thing was it was a function of the department because they did a poor job of telling Nina that and this didn't come out until later that Nina wasn't my direct supervisor Jane always was so. The person that was in Nina's position because Nina was filling in for mat leave, had talked to Jane and said you know what we don't think she can handle it Jane you're going to be the #1 and Nina will be a part of that but Nina didn't really ever hear that so it was always her thinking I'm directly responsible for him not Jane up here. So I think that right off the bat that lead to some tension. Yeah all hindsight I don't think she did find out in our office a lot of people talked and what not and it really started early on where I remember there were incidents where I would go into her office and I would be making suggestions and saying things and she would be shooting me down and I was like okay well what do you want me to do. It got to the to the point where other people in the office went and stood up for me they went and talked to her afterwards and told her to give me a chance to talk. It was weird because I didn't find out about any of this directly this came out after the fact and then I started finding out about people standing up for me that was the earliest incident that I remember and then from there it was interesting because I think it probably almost peaked. I think it was very much like this because it came to a head and I felt that we talked about it aired it out and we came to this understanding that it was very much okay we can get along as long as we're civil and I do what you ask me to do and what not and so I thought all things were fine. Then I'm hearing from Jane that Nina says I'm not doing my job and in my pre-evaluation word comes out that Nina feels I have an anger problem and I'm short tempered!! Where's this stuff coming from and so I feel almost betrayed and from there it was just basically crashing and burning and the funny thing was my contact with the leaders who I

was directly responsible for was fine in terms of the playgrounds. I would just go over the things that I wanted to do and whenever I needed help and would look to her she'd never be around she'd be on vacation or leaving early at a spin class so I just started going around her or above her, basically I started cutting her out. Was that the right thing….no not necessarily and I admit that was a mistake but I was feeling at the time that I needed to get this done so what am I going to do? I think it was very much a personality thing right off the bat because coming in and being very forward and although I'm small and what not I'm very aggressive and out there and people notice that and it's been described as cocky bordering on arrogant and I think she really took offense to that she couldn't handle me that's what people would say. Jane was the opposite. We were fine absolutely fine I would always self check myself and get with her if there is there anything I'm doing wrong because I would hear about what Nina was saying and I'd be like I'm the same way with her as I am with you what am I doing wrong? The big thing I found was that everyone was talking behind everyone's back so you'd always hear about hearsay and this and that not just with me but everyone also knew about the situation even if I didn't directly know about it… it was even little things that set her off and that's why I think it was personality from day one we just clashed. I would come in and she'd want something done and I would just drop it on her desk and turn around no hi no bye no small talk. Why do you need that from me you asked me to get something done it's done there were other events but one particular that was the final evaluation and in not so many words she screwed me out of an evaluation that I deserved. The continuum is outstanding, excellent, good, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory and she wanted to give me a good. Jane wanted to give me outstanding, they settled on a very good and I'm looking at the record of achievements I was responsible for all of playgrounds she was doing a poor job of leading me and showing me what to do therefore I was doing it on my own as well as the success I was having with the skate park, 90% increase in sponsorship! I was doing big things that had never been done before and you're telling me you're going to give me a very good I'm sorry I don't think so and I was looking at the evaluation and I'm looking at Nina and her thing is already checked off we're not even at the end of it yet at the end she's like do you have anything to say and I was like well what she said well you got a very good do you agree? I was like no I absolutely do not agree. I think that it ridiculous and she said well you can write that down. What are your points and reasons and I just went off and it was articulate it was well spoken. Look at all the things I've done you're telling me

in any major organization you would give someone that when they've done all this you're saying just because you don't get along with someone you're going to mark them down? I would like to see you try that at any Fortune 500 company. I remember showing it to her she just signed off on it and that was it done and over with. It was just a co-op evaluation and no one cares about these if this was a real promotion then I'd worry. I asked Jane why she gave me what she did and Jane asked her the same thing. Nina said well you're the one that said he had an anger problem and hands in stuff late, she used the authority she had to mess with the evaluation; the only thing is I'm not denying any blame for things I've said and I've did but it was going both ways. I snapped at her and made snarky comments that I know she didn't like and it was wrong of me to do it but it went both ways but for it to come down to that and I remember feeling that everything was okay we could get along and the next thing I find out is nope same old junk. It was probably about mid term we could see we couldn't get along it was just trying to be humorous with her I would go in and I wouldn't give her any ideas I wouldn't try to push it. It was like you tell me what to do and I'll go do it simple as that and she was like everything's fine but the next thing I know she still is enraged with me. I don't know it was confusing and it was really frustrating and if you were to talk to the girl who worked next to me she could attest that it was a emotional roller coaster it was up and down sometimes depending on whether or not I had a conversation with Nina because I came out of there wanting to break something. Everyone there knew Jane was in charge everyone but Nina because the city forgot to tell Nina and the city did a poor job of training so Nina was just trying to do her job and refused to admit that she didn't know what she was doing. Jane did a very good job of telling me okay this is the timeline this is what needs to get done. Nina's version of training was the organizational chart; this is what needs to get done and when go do it. I'd be like Nina how do I do this and she would be I'll get back to you six months later it was that kind of thing and she'd say where's this, how come it's late and I was like well I didn't really know what I was doing so what do you want from me? What also really bothered me is she was stressing that the playgrounds were doing so poorly yet everywhere you looked I was out there in the field every single day going to every site making sure everything was in order. Then she'd get mad at me because I was never in the office. I still have an email from her where the reports they wanted at the very end and I remember I was doing my work report but I was submitting them to city council in the form that would benefit them. One was the reason why they should change the safety

policy and the importance and value of leader training so I did those and put them together but I submitted them both to Jane because Nina was on vacation so when Nina gets back I had banked enough lieu hours that Jane is like you can't stay here you're earning extra money that we can't afford to pay you so basically you got a paid week off so I'm like okay so I take off and Jane is telling me that she's getting emails from Nina saying that she didn't preview my report and wanted to and wants them re-done. Jane is like tell him directly and Nina was like well he's never there in the office so Jane cc'd me in the email so that Nina could tell me directly to redo the reports and I never heard boo not a word from her. She knows I wouldn't have responded, it was a very interesting situation at the end of the day I'm not saying I'm an angel but I know I didn't deserve what I got. I don't want to be involved in well I shouldn't say that I don't want to be involved in municipal rec but I don't want to be involved with the (city name). I will never work for them again and anyone who asks me about Nina I don't have a single kind word to say about her. It's unfortunate but it's to the point where you know the actions she showed were disappointing of somebody who was in that position. I think probably the one thing I would say is just how I know I changed as a person and that I started to trust no one. People can see it in my attitude, I went from being fun loving happy go lucky to for a period of time to cold stone faced. I shouldn't care but there are some people that are good and that aren't the way Nina is so I shouldn't do that it was always back and forth. I know I was difficult to work with because I was so angry and so filled up with rage but I got to a point where I was like I don't care (visibly upset). I'm going to get through this and I'm not going to be stuck in this dead end job. I'm going to make it a goal that I won't end up where these people are in some senses. To summarize if you treat me well I will go to war but if you spite me or scorn me you don't want me on the other side of the battlefield because I will bring you down, watch your back.

Obviously I was only able to get James' perspective on this experience and his frustration and anger is still evident nearly five months after the position ended. Regardless of the perspective taken one can see the importance of the supervisor relationship, this example demonstrating both the extreme good and bad from the employee's perspective.

David – Fitness Club Salesperson

David worked at a for profit fitness facility in a large urban area. Like James' story David is still left with a bitter taste from his experience here. He described his job as follows.

> The job I'll talk about then is my co-op job at a gym called (gym name) in Toronto and it's was a four month co-op nothing too special. My job changed like three times, I did some personal training but mainly I was a membership manager and my boss changed three times while I was there; it's a really shifty organization, basically I scammed people into buying memberships. I called people and said they won stuff and really they had to buy a year to win stuff. I sold people memberships and I dealt with people's problems too; canceling memberships stuff like that. I was that membership guy up in the office.

David was not extremely committed to the position. He described what he saw as commitment:

> To me commitment is I gotta enjoy what I'm doing and for me a big part is I have to enjoy the people because if I'm sitting there by myself in a corner no matter how much I enjoy doing what I'm doing I'm going to feel like shit because I'm all alone I have to get along with my co workers and I have to be appreciated that I'm there. Throw in some work but I have to know people care.

His reasons for choosing this job were more representative of continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997) rather than with the passion or desire one often associates with affective commitment. As David said

> Well I had to find my own job so I was going to work in (area of a large city), I live at the rec centre, and this place, I found I just walked right in and they looked at my resume and I had a short interview and I got that job. I thought I'd enjoy working there, free gym, good money I went in saying well for four months I can do this and we'll see where it takes me. Well its close to home was key but the main thing was I used to work out there and I loved it, it's expensive as hell but it's an incredible gym and I went in there

thinking I can work out for free and one of my main motivations was working out a couple of times a day and all of my friends were still in school so what am I going to do? Go home and talk to my mom all night?

But David's smile told me the job didn't turn out the way he had hoped it might.

He goes on,

As I said it's a pretty sleazy operation probably the biggest and best club in Canada it's huge, a multi million dollar club as I said. We changed managers three times in four months the first one who hired me was a great guy, incredible guy, but he only saw me as a co-op student so he didn't let me deal with customers, he gave me all the 'ass' work like typing and stuff. One of my monkey jobs was getting references into the computer, you had to have a certain amount referrals but he wasn't a stickler for that so people weren't getting enough referrals so he would hand me a phone book and I would sit there for hours typing in people's numbers and eventually he got caught doing that and that's the only reason he got fired, but it was my fault technically. Well not really, well he kinda blamed me and then the next manager came in and I was more than a co-op student and he pushed me hard a little too hard and he started letting me deal with customers more and trying to make sales and getting on the phone with customers and doing stuff and he set my quotas ridiculously high!! I went in committed but then I was doing nothing and I was like this sucks and then this new manager came in and it was back up here again (raises his hand high in the air) so I had a really good month where I was just a couple of grand short of my quota, excited about it but then the next month I was done and he set my quota really high again and I got in big arguments with the manager and the head guy because on breaks I would be reading my distance ed books and they didn't like that because I was supposed to be an (club name) full time employee not a student and I had to make my choice. So I'm like screw you I'll stay as an employee but I didn't try as hard so my commitment dropped again and another manager came in again and yelled at me for not being an employee and for being a student it was really interesting.

David described his desire to work with customers and how the expectation and the

reality of the job never came together for him.

I wanted to work with customers but they started throwing me all this stupid work and I was like this is 'gay' and then they just threw me in and then a good thing happened, the training I got was incredible; I learned a lot. They had this guy there who made one hundred grand and he had this VP training title and I was his last trainee because after that they were like why are we paying this guy so much when he trains one person like he spent a whole week with me everyday going through all this stuff so they just made him a manager of a different club but I was his last person and he was incredible like he wrote the guidebook. But then they put the onus on the managers to do all the training and as I said he went to a club where he was a manager so the people at that club were good but my manager had no idea what was going on. A lot of it is seniority and this guy was a sales manager and he was making eighty grand a month (in revenue) so when you're doing that well and you get promoted where you're making the money but it's a different role he wasn't very good with the team. I basically got in at 10 am worked out, my work weeks were 60 hours a week and this wasn't my choice I was scheduled to work like 60 hours a week which is ridiculous and I would stay until like midnight I was there for 12+ hours I went in there thinking you know what it'll be good experience working with customers.

There was another incident that reaffirmed David's attitude about the place and the people who run it.

A lot of times the sales part of it sucked, there would be these ballots that I had to drive around and go to places like (fast food chain) and put this box in their store and I'd call every single ballot and say you've won second prize which is four months free but no one wins first prize and I actually got in huge shit once because some guy apparently has written books on selling and stuff like this and he was like well who won first prize and I'm like uhhhhh and he was like I think this is all bullshit no one wins first prize you're just trying to scam me. So I just picked a name on my list and said this guy won first prize and he was like really give me his phone number so I can call him and ask so I gave him my number and I called him I almost got fired we had to give both of them free memberships because of my idiocy that was a long story. I got stuck in a position where they expected me not to give anyone first prize…well ultimately he (manager) said that information is confidential or I don't have it in front of me I wasn't on my toes that day. I was trained quite a bit but for that

specific situation he caught me off guard, the guy completely knew what he was doing.

David acknowledged that he made a few mistakes through his time at the club, yet for him the change in supervisor was key. It wasn't a job he loved but he was committed enough to learn and take on the sales challenge provided he was given an opportunity to learn. He was appropriately challenged and he felt that his work was recognized.

Mary – Front Desk Staff

Mary was excited to get a highly sought after position with a university athletic department fitness centre. Even though the job itself was relatively simple and straightforward the organization received a large number of applications and Mary felt a sense of accomplishment at being selected among the large number of applications. However, her feeling and impressions for the place were soon to change.

> Well I just thought that I would be more involved with people that were coming through and have a chance to talk to them but it's more just I'm going to hand them a basketball not really interacting with people at all. They don't have a lot of development with their staff. Like when I worked at the desk it was kind of like here are the basic things you need to know, go do it. Like no here's how to make people happy here's how you know something, here's how to go out of your way to do stuff, it was just the basics and from that I can tell a lot of the staff aren't motivated to go farther to make people happy or to do anything extra than what they've been told to do. The way that it kind of seemed was that it seemed this was a really sought after job and everyone wanted it. I know he (supervisor) had like two hundred applicants and I felt very special that I got the job but I realized after he's one of those people that really didn't look at my resume

much it was more of the fact that I was persistent with him and I kept emailing him. It was like are you looking for people now and you know that was how I got the job it wasn't based on my skills at all which didn't realize until about a month into it. So I'm going in there thinking that I'm special for having this job he thinks I have something that is valuable so I want to be able to show him that that I deserve the job. So in terms of that I think I was very motivated to work hard and prove that I should be there but I realized that it really was anything that I had, it was just random.

This realization was very important in shaping Mary's impression of her work experience. She went on to talk about a few other critical incidents that shaped her experience. She offered the following comments.

The big thing was my supervisor and realizing that he's not committed to his job at all. The person who hired me is the supervisor and he really didn't care about anything and that made me think if he doesn't care why do I care? Then I worked for the same person every weekend that I worked and he had the same outlook of like I don't' care I'm just here to make money and that's about it. Things like we're supposed to have a half hour break and we would take two hours breaks just because that's what my partner did. No one really cares and he said to me you can do it too. Why not? No one really cares if I'm here or not might as well. Little things like that.

Commenting further on her supervisor's behaviour Mary said:

He did the same thing he would take off for hours at a time and he also talked about clients in the back room and was very negative about it and like he would go these "stupid kids" really negative things and it was like you obviously don't care about these people (clients) at all. I saw it a little at the beginning but I don't think I realized. I thought he was trying to be funny or something and once I heard him talk about it more and more, I could believe it, it was real! Not just being sarcastic or joking. I didn't like it. It just went downhill and also like I have my supervisor and then there's the facility manager and she's a very scary person, very scary. She didn't make any attempt to learn my name or acknowledge I was there. If she would come up, all she would do was have negative things to say. This isn't' done and she just didn't have any else to day. I don't know she was lacking that whole motivational thing that a manager should have. Hearing all the negative stuff made

me negative. I'm one of those people that needs to be busy all the time and I was never busy and I was sitting there doing nothing and that's what I hated the most.

The following interchange between Mary and myself encapsulated her experience there.

> Author: Did you ever get any positive reinforcement there? Did anyone ever say good job or..
> Mary: (She stops me mid sentence) "No!"
> Author: Four months, nothing?
> Mary: Never, not even one time.

Cam – Summer Sports Camps Supervisor

Cam was hired to be in charge of a new set of sports camps at a multi purpose summer entertainment centre. He was excited; he got to run something and most importantly it centered on sport which he said was a "huge part of my life". Cam went on to describe how he felt at the beginning of his job.

> It was my first supervisor position, I was very committed thinking I was going to go and try to the do the best I can and develop a plan that was going to work that would work for years to come. So I'd say that yeah extremely committed when I started. The sport was the big part about it. The fact that I was running the sports camp made me more committed because I've been involved with sports my whole life so it just seemed like it was a good fit for me.

As summer progressed, things changed and Cam felt more and more disconnected from his place of work.

> There was a lot of factors that affected it (commitment) like top management was a big thing that would either boost it or bring it down. On certain days just like the lack direction that I would get sometimes made me feel yeah I need that ownership but I still need and sometimes I would be almost punished for doing stuff. I thought it was going to work and it didn't work and it was kind of like well where's my guidance and then I don't know just things

like that. Yeah it was kind of like talking down, that kind of thing so like you're not doing a good job or like and the thing about it was it wasn't directly to me that they would say it. It would be I'd hear it through the grapevine and that's never a good thing. It was that kind of thing that brought my commitment down I'd say.

Cam did develop a real sense of connection with his clients, the kids, though.

The kids was (were) the big part of it. Seeing them develop in sports or seeing them have fun really raised my commitment because I could, I felt committed more to the kids than I did the organization. I felt like an obligation to be there for the kids to teach them more than I did to be there for the organization.

Despite this connection the summer continued to spiral downward for Cam.

The lack of feedback and poor communication continued to be troublesome throughout the summer.

There was three different camps. There was a golf camp a day camp and a sports camp so there was a supervisor of the day camp and one for the sports camp and none for the golf camp so that was kind of on me to oversee both of them and that was another thing that kind of brought that commitment down not being told like I thought it was just strictly sports camp but then having to do all these other things that I wasn't aware of when I got into it kind of would bring that down a little bit. I found out the first day almost, of camp. It was kind of like well there's no supervisor it's going to be like sports and golf camp. So as far as co workers went there was a coordinator above me and then there was two supervisors and then I'd say depending on how many kids we had for that week I'd say ten counselors, ten to fifteen cause sometimes we had 150 kids. They hired all the staff… I didn't like they hired them first then the supervisors and then the coordinator so they did in a complete reverse order that you think it would be done in, right?

Knowing that the job was temporary Cam felt he was treated differently than if he was in this for the long haul.

I would say maybe towards the end of the summer knowing that I'm going back to school and knowing that this job it is temporary, kind of brought my commitment down. Not only did I know that so did the managers and stuff so it was almost like instead of

treating you like we want you to come back and this and that it was just like see you later here's your last pay cheque. It just didn't seem like it was a very tight knit unit. Any chance anyone got to talk bad about their supervisor or just anyone within the company they did. No one liked the CEO because he was always, he was very anti social and he was like it was my way doesn't matter what anyone says. He wouldn't take input from anyone.

When I asked Cam about what impact this had on the camp he told me the following story:

Maybe the kids didn't see it, maybe not so much the kids, but the parents, but it did impact them. Right from the start the sports camp has a limited budget of the equipment they could get and the thing was the day camp would take that equipment so what is the sports camp supposed to use if day camp is taking it? I expressed that to my boss and he was like well they can't deny them from taking this equipment and I was like well maybe we should think about getting them a budget to have their own equipment and then separate the camps entirely. There was no accountability for the equipment either. Counselors would come out give the kid the ball and then leave them with it. Say the kids threw it and just left it and it would get lost in the forest and you need it tomorrow to do volleyball or something and it's gone. I think by the end of the summer we started with fifteen volleyballs and by the end of the summer we were down to four or five. Nobody came down, like the CEO never came and checked on the camps. Well he would come by and just stand there and see if everything was going good but he would never say anything and if he did say something it would go down the line. I don't need someone to give me a bonus or anything like that but I would say things that go a lot more they go a long way you did a really good job today or I like how you did this everything you're doing is great like just talking to them and letting them know they're doing a good job instead of just informing them, it seems like a cop out that you're just doing it because you have to.

The situation continued to worsen at the sports camp.

Sometimes they would schedule events using the day camp area and they would schedule it so that the set up had to be done while the camp was still running. So it's like you got this other supervisor telling you he's got to take out all the tables and stuff but then at the end of the day are we just going to sit on the floor

or tarmac so I think that was another thing that would bother me it seemed like day camp was last on the list. I did get this feeling that we were last on the list. On rain days, if it was raining we were supposed to be outside all day and then there's the indoor facilities and if those were being used by other events then we would just have to stay under the day camp tents until it stopped raining and some kids are terrified of lightning so we'd have to sit get soaking wet under the tents because even if there wasn't things going on in indoors we couldn't go in there because they would say we would be too loud so it would disrupt the other groups there. Another thing was when we did actually get to go inside all we could do was watch movies and keep the noise down. One of the options I suggested was when it was raining outside was we can change and set up two nets and play ball hockey inside but wasn't allowed at all it was like if you are inside you have to stay as quiet as possible that's if we were allowed inside at all. It wasn't good at all (Cam is visible upset by now recalling this part of the summer). On those rain days if we went inside the parent pick up wouldn't be at the day camp area anymore it would be inside and things would get left at the tent areas like their lunches or snacks so parents would come to the day camp area and it was up to me to be outside standing in the rain telling them they're inside telling them which hall they were in and then so kids would, well they'd go pick up their kids and go back to the tent area and sift through the stuff a hundred bags under the tents.

In Cam's eyes the summer had started as a great opportunity to work in sport and to help build something. It ended with frustration. Cam recently received a call from the camp.

They had called me in early months of this year asking me if I was planning on coming back and I told them no, I'm going to look for something else.

Cam didn't have another option yet and told me he really needed the work but there was no way he was going back to that situation.

III   Varied or Neutral Experiences

As the title suggests the stories in this section are mixed, with some positive and some negative experiences.

Jill – Recreation Therapist

Jill was excited about her co-op position in therapeutic recreation in a large urban hospital. She described her job in detail for me:

> My most recent job was at an urban area hospital doing therapeutic recreation in the geriatric psychiatry unit so that was exciting, all of my work experience has been within my hometown pretty much and then when I came to school I did some stuff here but going somewhere else was neat. I was always busy I wished there was another student there to job share it was overwhelming. I ran programs conducted assessments based on psychiatrists or doctors' reports that left something for me in my box saying a new patient has come please assess them. It was a twenty-six bed in-patient unit and the average day it was more like forty-three people, but I wasn't able to determine when they could leave. Some days they had already left and I didn't even know they had left! It was really frustrating on my part just because in class we talk about TR going from the whole process of assessment and evaluation and termination eventually but I didn't really get to see the whole process because even evaluation wouldn't happen because somebody would go and a new one would come in. It was hard to stay on top of everything on a daily basis. It was meetings at the beginning of the week inter-disciplinary meetings, sometimes there would be family meetings programs as I said meetings with the TR team, if there was some hospital event coming so that's how the day was structured.

Jill liked her job but also felt pressure to perform. Her initial discussion of commitment focused more on obligation more than on passion.

It was cool they offered me the position. I didn't consider myself being one of their first choices so knowing that was also a fear to it because I was afraid of failing or not doing well so that made me more committed to doing the best that I can. I think my commitment overworked me a little bit because I know for the first month I was very stressed and I remember just getting up at 6:30 every morning without my alarm clock because I was so scared of being late it was just this fear and that also drove my commitment by not doing well. I think it was a little bit of everything. I think if it was more school related I think the fear would be letting down my parents but I think the fear was a bit of everything letting down the hospital because people who chose me. I'm their first choice so I guess they saw something in me. I think a big part was letting myself down, the fear of not doing well was very scary to me just the fear in doing well in TR as my chosen career as my interest and not having a good experience and not doing well just made the fear greater.

Jill described the evolution of her experience:

At the very beginning it was a really welcoming environment and that played a huge role because I was nervous and excited, this was different from any other work experience, I've been a part of, it was such an amazing team I worked with. They were nice people they were committed and good people who wanted to help me not just in the job but tips about the (city) because I had never been. My supervisor was friendly and they told me that for the first week they don't expect much of me which took a load off my mind; just take it easy, learn as you go. If you can't run a program right now we understand. That was nice to hear and I could take things at my own pace. I think the first day in the afternoon one of my big fears was not knowing the patients' names and you have to be comfortable to get them to come to the programs but they don't know me and I don't know who they are so it was helpful that the occupational therapist said if you want to we can go around meeting people which was nice of her and that helped a lot.

Jill continued to speak of her experience and told a story of change in the

workplace that had a significant impact on her commitment:

During the four months there were a lot of changes that impacted me pretty closely. At the end of the first month my direct supervisor had left for another job but it was hard because she was the person I went to to ask questions so I had to rely more on my team members and myself and take the initiative. In the second month the

occupation therapist I was working with, she was covering for someone on mat leave, and the previous occupational therapist came back and that was hard working with her because I had a relationship with the first one. We worked well together so that was hard adjusting to someone new to work with. The first OT (occupational therapist) treated me as a co-worker but the new OT saw me as a student and she reminded me I was a student and it was hard because I saw myself as an integral part of the team.

I asked Jill if that changed how or what she did or what she was willing to try?

I noticed myself a bit more on edge or like I would get upset a bit. I would try and set myself back and just be professional about it but I did notice it made me frustrated, more cautious about my decisions and before when I got really comfortable with that position I was more willing to talk about things even though I knew I might not have the same knowledge as everyone but I wasn't afraid. After she came back I was more cautious about things. Yeah that put a bit of a damper on the second half I had already built up such a good reputation so I think if the second OT was the person I had been working with in the beginning that would have definitely created more of a damper on the experience. Everyone else was pretty good. Well, the nurses had to be rude in general they were the most stressed out but everyone else on the team they all seemed to have a stable and balanced life outside of work at the end of meetings we were joking around and things I learned about their families and what they did it just showed they were really balanced. I understand people don't want you to make mistakes but I think not having that fear of making a mistake makes you work better. Before I was able to make mistakes knowing that it may be bad and they might be upset but they were willing to give feedback and it was a chance to learn. I just learned that this summer I can't go back to my position because someone else is there so I had applied for another position and one of the positions I was offered and the OT I loved, I would be working with her again and I think a big part of why I was pulling away from (other facility) was because I would be working with that OT again and I knew I wouldn't enjoy working at (other facility) as much.

Helen - Event management/fundraising

Helen worked as a fundraising campaign assistant and assisted in event management for a not-for-profit agency. The position was a co-op job but one she found herself as opposed to through the formal university process. Helen's interest lies more in the event management part of the job as opposed to the fundraising component. Her commitment focus seemed to be more of what Meyer and Allen (1997) would refer to as continuance commitment, often focusing on external rewards. As Helen said "(the) not-for-profit area is actually really good pay, they have really good benefits but no I'll do events but not fundraising (in the future)."

Helen felt her strongest connection was to the people she worked with, in particular her supervisors. In response to a question about to what or whom she felt committed, Helen provided the following comments:

> My boss, the office coordinator well he's gay and I still always call him, so not a boyfriend …. we get along so well that we were going out to movies and stuff, so with him there it's better on the boring days and the other boss which is the woman that worked there for twenty years she'll get me going thinking about why we do this rather than just sit there. I ended up cold calling a thousand people and I had to do it for three weeks straight and I didn't want to do it. They were like just think about the (symbol of charity) and I was like this is not working but I still come in. She has been there for twenty years and she's been running this campaign by herself and they don't give her any recognition other than a table for a desk and phone line and that's it. She comes every year in September to run a campaign until April and she does it for free and it's because her husband has cancer and her daughter also has cancer. She's so passionate about it all.

She went on to talk describe her commitment to the job and the events that shaped it:

> Yeah to the people there (she was committed to) I think people leave because of their bosses rather than the place itself. Two of the fundraising coordinators which is the one I'm more close to and the

office one left as well just recently so I'm not going back just because the atmosphere there was well….the boss, the boss you know the one that doesn't recognize people, the big boss he's more on the money side rather than how the people work there and that makes it bad there. The people, they were genuine about what they do as well as passionate, they might not be passionate about (organization name) but they were passionate about something.

Helen then told me about how her commitment began to get stronger as she saw how committed others were, as her responsibilities increased and as they became more challenging.

The first three weeks I was cold calling, I got bitter at two weeks and then what happened was I started having volunteers helping me with other things so for about a week and half I was half training volunteers and doing my own work that was fun but there are some volunteers who drive you insane. I started helping out with other things with other fundraising. It (commitment) actually increased because I didn't take event management before and I didn't know there were so many things you have to do in planning an event because of all the things involved the people who are sponsoring you are sometimes horrid and a new guy came in he's a co-op student as well from college somewhere on my last month and he made it really fun we just hit it off. So putting all the pieces together all these people coming in with this great energy thinking about this daffodil thing it's just selling flowers what's so special but they were hard core and it started to change even though it was two weeks of craziness it was fun.

Helen summed it up saying "that is pretty much what I think if it's not challenging I need the people".

Helen went on to identify a few incidents that she felt negatively impacted her commitment. "The most negative thing, I got really mad at the boss because he refuses to recognize some of the volunteers that were there. I almost banged the door in the one of the rooms, it's what drives the organizations." The incident that caused this anger was the organization's leader refused to give the group $150 to

run a volunteer recognition event, but rather said they should get it donated.

According to Helen this however was symptomatic the larger problem of the boss's

attitude to people in general. She went on to say:

> I wouldn't work for the boss (again) I might not go back to the same unit but I'll go to another one if someone really asked me I'd go. He has a military background and I think the main thing about him was his goal is to make a million (dollars) he's inward focused on the goal. I need someone who has…..they pretty much have an open door policy I would recognize the volunteers more as well as the people working there in terms. It seemed that when they (other workers) started talking about the cancer thing that was more important than making a million dollars. For the people it was the vision of bringing everything together they don't see the million dollars the boss sees the money sign they see the whole picture so the manager needs to understand so I 'd probably want the manager to have at least some sort of training skills well developed people skills.

Although Helen began this position thinking about non-profit organizations

as better paying with better benefits she began to develop more passion for the job

feeding off the energy and enthusiasm of her coworkers and in particular her direct

supervisors who "were really into the cause". Ultimately though, she would not

return because of the organization's leadership.

Matt - Director Sport Leagues

Matt worked as the Director of Sport Leagues at a live in training centre. It

was a co-op position and one Matt desired. Matt describes his connection to that

job as follows.

> I didn't necessarily feel committed or connected to the actual organization as a whole but I felt more committed to the people I worked with frequently and to the actual (people) who were going

through the program because I felt if I wasn't doing a good job I was letting them down. I didn't care about letting the organization down I mean ultimately they're my employer but honestly….

As Matt worked at the job he described how he felt his commitment evolved.

The longer you were there the more committed you become or maybe the more friendships you build so I think the more friendships you build the more committed you might become to that place, the people but not necessarily to the organization but to the people around you…because the first day you're there you don't have allegiance to anything. Creating relationships, getting to know people on a personal level, that was unique. About everyone who worked there lived there. People who taught the officers were officers themselves and they lived on site during the week so at night you don't really have any family or friends so you have to get along, they're all open, it was great for me for networking I made a ton of connections. I worked at nights by myself and all the other full time employees would be gone so it me and the recruits.

Matt describes a couple of events that he felt strongly impacted his commitment to the camp.

One of the people who worked there, his daughter became really sick and so we always have a charity hockey game and so that year we were giving all the money to the family to help them along because he had to take extra time off work I think to an extent I felt committed because I wanted to help that person as much as possible.

Matt also described how the feedback used had a negative impact on him.

At the very end the recruits fill out a questionnaire with a rating scale like how I did there's always comments I guess after you read some of them you get some negative ones so it's like you know why did I bother doing this.. this person thought I did a terrible job but I guess you could also look at it like well what can I do better. The supervisor did nothing with it. It was like "Here's your comments, thanks for coming"

Matt was troubled by the lack of feedback or supervisor guidance in this incidence.

Over time the relationships may have strengthen but Matt also felt that the lack of challenge in the role diminished his commitment.

> I liked it at times but sometimes it was like well what should I be doing now because the tasks they set out for me I could do very quickly I found and then I'd have nothing else at times like that it was hard so I'd try to find to little projects to work on. They say the best way to manage somebody is to give them the task and let them do it which I guess they did that but there were times where I'd have everything done that I needed to have done and then I'm like what do I do know I have a week's worth of work done and it's only Tuesday morning what do I do now. I also began to hate the political bull shit just policies and processes. If you have to do anything you have to go through five sets of managers in order to get it approved it was a joke that it's easier to ask for forgiveness than permission that was the going slogan with some of us. I knew what I could get away with and what I couldn't. I think with being a co-op student I'm only there for four months so it doesn't really matter I don't have to deal with it long term anyways unless I was looking for a career there, so I would just do stuff.

Jana - Community Based Recreation Programmer

Jana worked in a municipal recreation setting working in community recreation. She started this out as something she had to do and really didn't have a great passion for it, her interest were elsewhere. Although she never really developed a passion for community recreation she did remark on a series of events that impacted her commitment during this co-op experience. At the beginning those negative feelings were accentuated as she worked in a building away from her direct supervisor and felt really out of touch. As she said,

I started off in a community centre and my boss was in city hall so the communication was difficult because we weren't in the same building and that's when I was doing a lot of the work and then I was just kind of done it all and yeah so I just sat there. Then I had gone over there to help her for a few days and then she asked me to stay at the building because a desk had come up and so I think it wasn't' that I was being put in that building because she didn't want to communicate with me I think she just realized that me being there was easier for us, so me being there in that new building (city hall) helped a lot.

That move changed Jana's impression of her supervisor and highlighted to her that it wasn't that she was being "banished" to the community centre but rather just something the supervisor really hadn't thought over. After the move Jana felt her commitment grow.

When I was there (city hall) every time I did something she had positive reinforcement for me and like always said thank you or wow you did a great job on this and constantly saying good things. She always had criticism too but she said them in a nice way. She would just be like this is how these are the city guidelines that we go by and formatting this a little different here's another document that you may want to include some of it, here's some background information that would make your document a little stronger, rather than this is wrong. Finally, I felt like I was doing something real rather than just a temporary job.

Jana's story relays the importance of personal contact and reinforcement, a theme that came through in the vast majority of the conversations conducted. The importance of being challenged also comes up in a number of these stories and fly in the face of conventional wisdom that contingent employees are looking to do as little as possible.

Christine - YMCA Administrator, Programmer and Instructor

Christine's job allowed her to try out various positions at the YMCA.

> I was able to work in four or five different areas, I worked as assistant to the general manager so I got to see the business side like budgets and clerical stuff and hunting people down to get this and this the stuff he didn't enjoy! Doing that was cool and I worked at the front desk doing memberships and customer service dealing with anyone's complaints, everything. I also worked in the pool and child and youth programs as a leader and instructor.

Christine discussed why she chose this particular position at the YMCA.

> Because I had worked at the Y as an instructor since I was young and I was familiar with it and I had some difficulty getting a co-op job. It was January and I thought if it didn't work out I thought I could work there, I don't' want to say it was a last resort but I ended up there. When I started I was around a seven or eight (her commitment level out of ten). The whole time I was thinking, I'm not going to do this for the rest of my life I enjoy it at this stage of my life but in the long run I don't see myself working at a 'Y'. I went in thinking I'm not going to do this but I knew it would be a good experience and it was and I got good references, connections. One of the girls I worked with, she worked in Switzerland for three years so I applied to do that this summer. I was still really committed to the job and did a good job but I knew I wouldn't work in a Y for my future. It's not my passion. I was committed to making the members happy if someone was upset I would do whatever I could to help the situation and I also really wanted to have good relationships with my co-workers so I guess I was committed to that and also doing my work to my best, yeah not really the job itself. My connection was to co workers and clients not the 'Y' as an agency, I mean I believe in the 'Y' but you know I support what they do.

I asked Christine if that changed throughout her work term. She told that "I think I became more committed especially when I got to know more people; like members would know me by my first name, someone would come in at a specific time just because they knew I would be working. It was like a big family I found the more I worked there I became more pro-Y. Yeah it's closer to home if you

know someone you want to help them." Christine recalled one incident that stuck in her mind that changed her attitude.

> One thing that I didn't have to do, but I volunteered to do, was teach Aquafit classes. It's generally older women and they're not afraid to tell you if they don't like you. They have no shame! They write comment cards or they'll say it right to your face that it was a bad class stuff like that. So I was a little leery about doing that and I had to take a couple (classes) myself. I did have previous experience doing it but, I was nervous but after doing the first class I got really positive feedback. My boss said that a bunch of the ladies said I did a great job so that was really nice to hear and I remembered that as being significant, they never said good things so I felt great.

It was also important that her supervisor took the time to convey that message to

Christine. Her coworkers and especially her clients also helped make a job she

didn't love into an ok experience. "I miss talking with some of the co workers I

built some good relationships and seeing some of the members you get to know

them it gets to be routine seeing them at a certain time every day, a good routine!"

Christine explained how the experience could have been a better one for her.

> My GM, he admits it himself, he's not good with positive feedback and that's something that is important to me. I like to get it and give it, if someone does something good I would tell them. The GM doesn't think to do that he's just very business like and I think a lot of people reject him for that. A big thing is the Y is very dependent on their volunteers for instructing and many feel like they just aren't appreciated. So I would want to make sure they felt that way because they are so important. Just little things like going out of their way like the manager of child and youth, she'll put little things in people's mailboxes, notes and stuff. It's little but you know your work is acknowledged or maybe an employee of the month that gives incentive and you're getting noticed for doing things and with volunteers just some kind of volunteer recognition because they do a lot and need to be recognized.

At the end of our conversation Christine explained what she felt was needed for her to be really committed in a work situation.

> One of the key things is trust it is important to trust someone before you become committed to the place or the job. Some people say I just go in and do my job but trust in the sense that when they tell you something they mean it. Definitely the people I was closest with are ones that I did trust I felt my GM did care about me and my work so that's definitely important I don't know why it wouldn't be. I think that another reason I was committed to this job because I did believe in it and everything it stands for and for me that's significant when it comes to any kind of job even in sales I couldn't' sell anything I didn't believe in. I would never be able to sell something that tricked people or took advantage of them.

Misty – Sport Camp Instructor

Misty is a university athlete who teaches at summer camps in a sport she plays at an elite level. She was torn between continuing a summer job that allowed her to be part of her sport and taking on a more career oriented opportunity. Misty saw commitment as more of an obligation than many of the other participants in this study. She describes the job this way.

> I'm in therapeutic rec not just the rec and leisure so I wanted to go more in that angle but then my coach (university coach) and I started talking and we came up with this idea and it sort just spiraled a bit and snowballed so I wasn't going into it thinking I really want to start something up. I really want to go out on my own so I really just sort of fell into it. I was committed I wasn't super committed because it wasn't exactly what I wanted to do but everything we set out to do I did and I wouldn't say I was super committed but I was committed to what I was doing. The (sport) camps they're also Christian camps so I'm Christian and very religious so that was definitely a pull for me. Sometimes we use (sport) as a vehicle like "Power to Choose" to attract different schools and stuff, but our message is motivational speaking, good grades, positive lifestyle behaviors and stuff so

I definitely use (sport) for that whether it's Christian based or just positive lifestyle.

Misty didn't note any significant events over the summer. She described her experience as follows:

Nothing really happened but we did all usually stuff the one on one sessions with the girls and stuff we did them all outside and it's like thirty-two degrees in the summer everyday outside just little things started to grate…that's fine but but it's tough over the course of the summer. Yeah just things like that just built up I don't know just because it kept eating at me that I just really wanted to pursue something else and this is another summer gone by where, because I'm not in co-op, where I'm not getting my experience in the field I want to do but and so I felt not obligated, well maybe, because I could have easily said no I said I'm not really going to continue and going through that but it was just more of things knowing I was passing by.

Later Misty mentioned that her feeling toward her coach (university sport) now boss, were at times awkward.

It's so different because my coach we were friends before and doing "sport program" together before he was my coach and he was a friend and a mentor and then as a boss it sort of changes, you can't just be friends like it's sort of like this now respectively and then going to the boss role he was playing like four or five different roles and it was really hard to keep it all straight and have the same opinion on each role, I felt like coming back into the coaching role it was more comfortable than a boss role and that always felt great. So maybe those roles, yeah that was hard…"

Misty's story was one where she chose to take a position because of a previous relationship and a love of an activity, but yet that was not enough to help her sustain her commitment throughout the summer. For Misty the pull of career and commitment to get it conflicted with her desire to still be around the sport she loved.

Lynn - Golf Member Services

Lynn worked in the back shop at a private golf course, greeting the members as they came in and dealing with whatever they needed to have done from cleaning clubs to arranging for a golf cart or getting answers to their questions. She described her experience this way:

> At first I felt really committed it was my first real job working for someone other than family and friends so it was important and I also liked the job because it was outside talking to people I was busy. I've seen it change over the years when I started I was working with friends so it wasn't just a job it was fun it was social and because we were really good friends we had a connection and could work well and as the years went on people left and last year I was finding it a little different because this job that used to be really fun and I enjoyed it and I had friends to hang out with…well I was more in the supervisor role (now) making sure everyone was doing their jobs properly and I didn't have any of my original friends that I started with so it changed from the not having as many responsibilities and being told what needed to be done to being the one who had to enforce it. So you had a lot more responsibilities and if things weren't' done you had to answer to it. My commitment didn't change because I still enjoyed the job, I grew up there I watched myself change but the whole job changed.

Lynn told me about the following incident that influenced her feeling on the job.

> When I started the assistant pro that hired me was young and energetic and related to us students better than anyone else, he really instilled doing the job well but also having fun and experimenting and it wasn't as I can't think of it, it wasn't as work like. Yeah it was more easy going, you didn't have to be uptight and then he left for another job so we got some new people. They still don't know how the job works and how things go on and some things slide so they had to become more strict saying this needs to be done and this and this and this is how you do it. Which from starting with the other way it was hard to adapt to so it was like it was working back then, why change it? So it was hard. It was also hard because I was one of the people who had to make sure it was being done that way and I didn't believe in it, they never asked me. Last season we also had at our course, we had an incident where our (facility changed) so it challenged the whole club membership and employees so I

think that also had an impact on that because everyone was pulled everywhere because everyone had to chip in and help. We had to work out of a (temporary facility) until the new one was built. Because there are so many bosses now communication isn't the greatest. So you'll be told one thing from somebody and then something different from somebody else. And because you don't determine how you do it person A has one idea and person B has another idea so you can't please everybody. I remember my last week last season they were trying to make it new and change things to make it (facility name) newer but it's working, why change it? But we had to try it but it was just not working at all it was taking more time and energy to do it and I was so frustrated.

Lynn summed up her experience this way.

If you love what you're doing you're going to want to do it well and put everything into it and if you don't enjoy it or you don't look forward to going. And challenge is a big part over the couple of years I found I'm kind of bored with it because it's day in and day out but having that attachment and not wanting to leave it as well, but the job has reached a limit. I emailed my boss and said I was staying in (different city) and not coming back this year, it is hard because I loved that place so much I've been looking for a similar job.

Chapter 5 Analysis of Narratives

Introduction

This section provides a summary of the data collected from the twenty-four participants interviewed for this study. Detailed narratives including direct comments from each of the participants are provided in the previous chapter. In addition to the development of narratives for each participant, these stories and were also examined for key themes. A more detailed discussion of this is provided in Chapter 3.

Several themes were apparent from the interviews and each will be explored in the remainder of this chapter. The first theme relates to affective commitment. For a few, these temporary jobs were simply a means to an end. However, the majority of participants began their work experience with a strong desire to be passionate about something in their workplace, in other words to be affectively committed. The second theme focused on the dynamic nature of workplace commitment. Ultimately the commitment level of the participants was governed by how well their expectations were met in the workplace. Events considered critical by the workers often determined the overall success of the experience. If expectations were met, then the experience was thought to be successful. If events failed to meet expectations, then dissatisfaction was likely to follow. The third theme to emerge was the critical nature of relationships in the workplace. Throughout the interviews it was clear that relationships were the main source of the connection or lack of connection in the workplace. In particular, relationships with supervisors and, to a

lesser extent, clients governed workers' overall feeling of commitment. More specifically the response of significant others to the critical incidents raised in the previous theme played a major role in the employees' feelings of commitment in that work situation.

To help provide some structure for the detailed analysis of the interviews and a further exploration of these themes, the data are presented here in terms of three key research questions that have helped guide this study. The questions are:

1. What does commitment mean to contingent employees in selected leisure services?

2. How is commitment formed in contingent leisure service employees?

3. How did the employees' commitment impact their behaviour toward the organization, clients, or the community?

The first section explores how the participants defined commitment and to determine its meaning to them. The next section is a summation of the participants' descriptions of how the intensity and foci of commitment changed during the work term and the events or incidents that seemed to trigger those changes. The final section discusses the participants' impressions of how commitment influences the experience for themselves, the organization and their clients.

The meaning of commitment

The interviews began with a broad open-ended question that allowed the participants to describe what commitment meant to them. The intent was to understand the focus of their commitment and to allow them to define commitment in the context of a contingent leisure service job. Overall the findings support the multi-foci perspective of commitment as outlined by Stinglhamber et al (2002). Throughout the interviews it was clear that the commitment they expressed was, in the vast majority of cases, directed to more than one entity. All five major foci of commitment (to the organization, supervisor, occupation, workgroup and client) were present. This supports the multi-foci perspective of commitment (Stinglhamber et al 2002; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2000).

In addition, the participants raised two new foci of commitment (commitment or attachment to place, and commitment or involvement in activity). Although neither is discussed as foci in the broad commitment literature, each has received considerable research effort from within the leisure community. The following sections detail these and other findings with a focus on the words and comments of the interview participants.

A focus on people

What does commitment mean to the contingent employee? One common element that came through in the interviews was the connection to their work through a connection to people, (clients, supervisors and the work group).

Participants did not comment on their commitment to their respective organizations, but rather to those who surrounded them within the work space. Study participant Martin, may have put it best when he said:

> The way I view commitment is, I think commitment has to be to someone, not just an idea but to somebody. That's why I really like what I do. Just working with special needs people, just somebody. You have the person in front of you, but you have family and like and it's just so great. I love being committed to somebody, not something.

This idea came through in a number of the interviews. As Matt reflected:

> I didn't necessarily feel committed or connected to the actual organization as a whole but I felt more committed to the people I worked with frequently and to the actual [participants] who were going through the program because I felt if I wasn't doing a good job I was letting them down. I didn't care about letting the organization down; I mean ultimately they're my employer but …

Dan's view of commitment was simple and straightforward, "to be committed you have to like what you're doing and who you are doing it with."

Misty agreed:

> I have to love what I'm doing like if it's just an okay job, you know even if I'm not really getting paid the best that's fine as long as I absolutely love what I'm doing and the other rewards are reciprocating that and obviously working with people is big. I'm big on people relationships so I really want to be surrounded by positive people or people that I can look up to.

Passion: the role of affective commitment

It has been suggested that contingent employees (Chang & Chelladurai, 2000) may not display affective commitment. In others words, they may not show great desire or passion for their work. This perspective certainly has some intuitive appeal. Contingent employees may not have a long term vested interest in the organization so retention or future employment may not be very important to them. While it is true that contingent workers may not have the time to develop deep connections to the work, the idea of passion or desire came up repeatedly during the interviews. Dan's earlier comment suggests at least some focus on people and also brings up a common theme through the interview: that of passion or desire.

Those who revealed the greatest commitment echoed the importance of an affective connection to the tasks they were being asked to complete. There is little attention devoted to this perspective in the existing commitment literature. One possible explanation may be that the vast majority of studies on commitment continue to view commitment to the organization as the only focus of that commitment. As suggested, however, there was little evidence of passionate commitment to any organization in this study. Instead, the emphasis was more often on some specific element within the workplace. As Jennifer stated:

> Commitment is holding true to something to me …I find
> myself more committed to something I'm passionate about
> or something that has meaning to me. It was like they needed
> me to be there between certain hours but at the same time it
> was something that I enjoyed it was a learning experience

and I took something away from it so it was a give and take in that sense.

Mary reaffirmed those thoughts saying:

I find that to be committed to something, well it means that I like it, really like it and I'm enjoying what I'm doing and I think that I have to be able to see the results from it and know that I'm making a difference what I'm doing.

Passion or desire is at the heart of affective commitment. Martin's comments offer a striking example of what Meyer and Allen (1997) would identify as an affectively committed employee:

I think commitment to me would be if you stop paying me, I would probably still be doing it. I'm committed so much that the pay doesn't matter. I mean I need the money but that's what I also love about the field that I'm going into. I don't need to be paid. I have all these experiences that people are blown away by.

In addition to affective commitment, it was also evident that perspectives and beliefs they brought to the work setting could also influence these employees' commitment. Misty felt her view of commitment was strongly influenced by her strong religious convictions and values instilled through her family.

One exception to the idea that commitment requires passion was Misty.

I think to have commitment you don't necessarily have to love what you're doing like I'm not committed to something because I love what I'm doing. I'm committed to it because I either made a promise or gave my word, of course with every job you hate some things but I (am) still committed to it because I said I was going to do it and we set out our goals.

A similar idea came through in Lynn's comments:

I was raised to work hard so I don't know I just feel really strongly that whatever you do you put 110% into it and whenever you're working with others that don't have that it's frustrating, I think it's important for anything you do.

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Misty and Lynn's comments seem to suggest that people bring something with them to the work setting. It is an initial condition comprised of expectations but also of a willingness to commit. One might think of this as a sort of general commitment that is freely given. In addition to the passion or desire expressed earlier it can also come from a sense of responsibility or moral obligation. Both Misty and Lynn seem to describing what Meyer and Allen (1997) would call normative commitment or commitment as an obligation or part of a moral conviction. This is also consistent with the idea of work ethic as a form or driver of commitment. This was identified in the early work of Morrow (1983). Consistent with Meyer and Allen's work, both of these individuals have described a lower intensity of commitment. It is neither passionate nor affective-based. Interestingly, though, later in their interviews both Misty and Lynn stated that they desired and sought out more passionate experiences in their contingent work experience. This would seem to suggest that one's type of commitment (affective, continuance or normative) is malleable and can be altered through the interaction and experiences in the work place.

These interviews would suggest that, among these contingent workers, affective bonds seem to dominate their thinking about commitment. Moreover, in a vast majority of the interviews the contingent employees entered the job with a self-described passion or developed that passion as they progressed through the job. Although one cannot generalize this finding, it is fair to say that some contingent employees (many in the case of this study) can display considerable affective

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commitment. This was evident in the positive and negatively perceived work experience and to a much lesser extent in the work experiences perceived as neutral. Although perhaps counterintuitive, this finding suggests that those with negative and positive experiences came into the experience with high expectation and in most cases a predisposition to be passionate about the work experience they were about to undertake. The degree to which those expectations were met (or not) very much influenced assessments of their respective work experiences.

The following section discusses the focus or target of the participants' commitment.

Committed, but to what? Multi-workplace commitments

The current literature on multi-workplace commitments commonly examines commitment to organization, commitment to supervisor and commitment to work group (Cohen, 2003). More recently Stinglhamber et al (2002) noted that commitment to one's clients and commitment to one's career are also relevant foci. It should also be noted that commitment to a union has also received considerable empirical attention, but given the nature of this study and the examination of non-unionized contingent employees, that particular foci seems less relevant in this context. The following section explores the focus of the participants' commitment as discovered through our conversations.

Commitment to the Organization

Commitment to the organization, the traditional focus of most commitment research, was identified as an important focus of commitment by only two of the interviewees. In both cases these employees were in therapeutic recreation and stated that their commitment was based on the reputation of the facility in the field. For example, Lisa states that:

> Even though it was a co-op I still look at it as being committed to [facility name] and I can only work the four months even if it's a summer job you're only really there for that time and it's special to you or it's something that you really got a lot out of.

However, as both of these interviews progressed it appeared as if the supervisor became the embodiment of the organization for these employees. The following section discusses the critical relationship between supervisor and employee and its impact on commitment.

Commitment to a Supervisor

Relationship (both positive and negative) to the supervisor was a key focus for many of the interview participants. In the most positive scenarios supervisors had immense impact on the employees, influencing them not only in the workplace but also in future career decisions. On the other end of the spectrum a negative experience with a supervisor led to subversive employee action or encouraged a variety of unethical behaviours. Discussion around this relationship was the most dominant part of many of the interviews. What follows is a small sample of some of those discussions.

Lynn spoke about how a change in supervisor changed the experience for her.

> When I started the assistant pro that hired me was young and energetic and related to us students better than anyone else he really instilled doing the job well but also having fun it was more easy going you didn't have to be uptight and then he left for another job so we got some new people. They still don't know how the job works and how things go on and some things slid so they had to become more strict saying this needs to be done and this and this and this is how you do it…starting with the other way it was hard to adapt to so it was like it was working back then why change it so it was hard. It was also hard because I was one of the people who had to make sure it was being done that way and I didn't believe in it.

James talked about how having two different supervisors influenced his

commitment in remarkably different ways.

> From beginning to end I was committed the entire time. I think it was a matter of energy and attitude and how I brought it and how I saw the two programs. The one under the one person was all out, don't quit, balls to the wall and the other one was pardon my language, "I don't give a shit". I don't care if this goes down in a flaming pile of crap because it's not my neck on the line so whatever.

James went to say:

> I will never work for them again and anyone who asks me about Nina I don't have a single kind word to say about her. It's unfortunate but it's to the point where you know the actions she showed were disappointing of somebody who was in that position. I think probably the one thing I would say is just how I know I changed as a person and that I started to trust no one. People can see it in my attitude, I went from being fun loving happy go lucky to for a period of time to cold stone faced. I shouldn't care but there are some people that are good and (some) that aren't the way Nina is. I know I was difficult to work with because I was so angry and so filled up with rage but I got to a point where I was like I don't care (visibly upset). I'm going to get through this and I'm not going to be stuck in this dead end job. I'm going to make it a goal that I won't end up where these people are

in some senses. To summarize if you treat me well I will go to war but if you spite me or scorn me you don't want me on the other side of the battlefield because I will bring you down, watch your back.

Throughout the interviews the supervisor played a crucial role in setting the tone for the work experience. In many of the stories shared with me, supervisors and their actions were central in the development, or in a few cases the dissolution of an employee's commitment. The importance of this and its implication for management will discussed in more detail in the final chapter.

Commitment to Workgroup

Given the age and focus of the positions examined in this particular study, the workgroup could offer a key source of employee commitment. Specifically, most of the participants were in their early twenties and none reported have families so work might well have represented a central life interest for them. Consequently, it was expected that work would offer an important social world for them. The data suggested both good and bad work experiences emerged from interactions with other members of work groups. Many participants mentioned that it was important to them to have a good group of people with which to work and many appreciated the friendships and social support such groups offered. These social bonds with coworkers could provide an important source of support.

However, the work group seemed less central than was anticipated. In some cases, interviewees' relationship with the workgroup was neutral or even negative

yet they reported a generally positive (and committed) work experience. Jennifer, for example, had a very negative experience with a work colleague but still had a very positive story to tell about her work experience. Jan also spoke of how, as the summer went on, being constantly with the same work group actually created a negative experience.

> I think at the beginning for me I was more committed at the beginning than I was in the end because of the way things turned out. So at the beginning I remember being so involved and in the end it was like it's almost the end of the summer. You kind of lose that whole commitment. I mean for sure I still did my job but the energy level and everything is different, yeah it dies down by the end. The work group more than anything else is that what got tiresome, especially in this type of setting (resident camp). So at the beginning of the season everyone was so into it and you saw that a lot in the workers and by the end the motivation level is definitely decreased so as much as the people still loved it like the people at the resort you could tell that it was a different type of environment.

Jan further clarified this by saying:

> The people who aren't committed are those who show up without your Uniforms, show up tired because they've stayed up late the night before … they aren't as engaged in the job as they … are expected to be.

Perhaps the context of these contingent workers may impact this form of commitment, as they were not a permanent part of the organization. Positive coworker relationships may be more important when employees anticipate full time employment in any work setting. The contingent employees with whom the researcher spoke knew that they would be with these coworkers for only a short time. Indeed, if and when contact with coworkers became too intense (as was the case with Jan) commitment could be diminished.

Commitment to Occupation

Given that all the participants in this study were university students and the experiences in this study were freely chosen recreation and leisure work experiences one would expect to see some degree of career commitment. As expected, commitment to the occupation, profession or career was raised in a number of these interviews. However, it appeared as if this commitment was more an idiosyncratic condition rather than a result of anything done by the organization. Commitment to career was very important to some of the students. For example, James and Helga felt pressure to perform well to help their chances at future career prospects. For others, the focus was on not disappointing their parents, or on maximizing their investment in their education, or on concern over how much future careers will pay. In such cases any occupational commitment they revealed was based less on passion or affective commitment and more on continuance or normative commitment.

Conversely, Trisha provides a good of example of someone to whom affective career commitment was important. When discussing her view of commitment and why she took the job she suggested that:

> I would also say it's a commitment to the career path I want to take. I really want to work in municipal recreation doing youth programming and so I've had a lot of opportunities getting that experience working with the city just even part time with some of the programs and that really influenced my choice to switch into recreation and leisure studies. So I'd say it was a big factor being able to have that experience and then being able to realize that it was something I'd potentially want to do.

It was expected that those in a leisure service field would be strongly committed to their profession. This is especially the case given that leisure related jobs may offer fewer financial and other extrinsic rewards than those in other professions. However, focus on career was not a primary focus for many of the participants in the study. The reason for this is unclear, but it may be that many persons at this life stage are still experimenting or trying out career options and have yet to discover passion for a specific career track. Particularly interesting to those involved in developing future recreation professionals was that there was not a strong connection to the "field" evident from these interviews. One notable exception was the therapeutic recreation focused participants who did seemed to be more connected to their career or occupation than others (although it was still not the predominant commitment). Possibly this career path may be more defined and therefore easier to develop an attachment. Others may still have a relatively "fuzzy" picture of what their future careers may eventually hold.

The focus of commitment may not, in fact, be so much to the field but rather to elements within the work setting such as an activity, place, or one's clients (place and activity will be discussed later in this chapter). Leisure services offer a diverse range of career opportunities and a varied collection of employers yet the focus of many of these agencies is on serving clients. This commitment to service or as the literature refers to client commitment may be in a sense a substitute for occupational commitment. Rather than being committed to municipal recreation or some other professional entity the commitment may be directed toward the people

for who that entity service (i.e. youth, children, or certain populations that are disadvantaged or marginalized). This idea of client commitment is not often a focus in studies of commitment and yet it seems an appropriate focus to tap into a passionate connection with a service-oriented profession like those found in the field of leisure service delivery.

Commitment to Clients

Without exception the vast majority of the participants, whether they reported an experience that was positive, negative or neutral, mentioned the importance of commitment to clients. The interviews left the impression that this was more than just a politically correct answer or a "rehashing" of what they have been told in countless 'rec' courses. Particularly, in the negative experiences, the participants seemed disturbed and upset by how the negative work experience eventually diminished the service they provided their clients (who were often children).

In several instances, where the experience did not go as planned, the participant lamented how this must also have had a negative impact on the clients and this outcome troubled them. Cam noted that:

> The kids were the big part of it. Seeing them develop in sports or seeing them have fun really raised my commitment because I felt committed more to the kids than I did the organization. I felt like an obligation to be there for the kids to teach them more than I did to be there for the organization. I would see the kids and working with them and seeing them develop and the bonds and relationships with them. That was the one thing that was making me consider going back even though it was not so good (the job). There were some kids that would come every week.

The relationship you build with them over the summer they
look up to you. That was one thing that would make me want
to go back. But the culture was awful they
(organization/management) didn't care about the summer
camps, about the kids.

Mary was very troubled by policies in a university athletic facility where

clients were treated badly. She was so frustrated that she later turned down a co-op

position with the organization that she had long coveted.

Karen described how the clients included her in their own banter and

how she felt a part of their group. In this situation no particular event

triggered a variation in commitment but rather, it evolved throughout the

summer with repeated contact with the same group of clients. It is not

surprising that high contact client situations would result in stronger client

commitment. As Karen said:

The clients… you develop a relationship with them because
you've spent all summer with them and you start a bond
with each one.

Kim found working with the kids at an equestrian camp exceptionally

important to her developing a stronger connection to the workplace.

They were so nice the things they said about me. Like they had a great time
that it was rewarding like okay this is why I love it so much, it really
changed me. They gave me the most advanced group so they were always
pretty ambitious and they wanted to learn so they really look up to you and
at the end of the week there's always a show so to actually see them
perform it was very rewarding.

Through his work experience Jeff found that his clients became both his

biggest source of connection to his job and the largest drag on his commitment. As

the summer progressed Jeff repeatedly referred back to how great it was to see the kids progressing and how the experience had helped develop a love for teaching something he now hopes to pursue in some form as a big part of his future career. Jeff was very emotional talking about getting kids who were afraid of the water to be swimming independently by the end of summer. "I just love to see them, getting on, improving it was great."

This concern for clients came through not only in therapeutic recreation settings and summer camps, but even in office settings where direct client contact was less extensive.

It is unclear whether this high client orientation is attributable to recreation contexts in general or to the early career stage of the participants in this study. More important, commitment to clients deserves a great deal more attention in the commitment literature and specifically in relation to commitment in recreation contexts and service-focused organizations. Commitment to clients appeared to be important for all these participants, and in all settings, and regardless of the quality of experience.

New Foci of Commitment

As briefly noted earlier, study participants identified two non-traditional foci that may be of particular relevance in recreation contexts: commitment to place and commitment to activity. These particular foci may help understand the relatively low connection to the field found here. Like a connection to service or to

ones' clients, commitment to a place or activity may be important areas to investigate in further detail in future leisure oriented commitment research. The following section explores these findings in more detail.

Commitment to Place

Although attachment to place has received considerable attention in the leisure literature (e.g. Kyle, G. T., Graefe, A., & Manning, R. E. ,2005; Kyle, G. T., Mowen, A. J., & Tarrant, M. ,2004; Kyle, G. T., & Chick, G. E. , 2004; Moore & Graefe, 1994; Schreyer, Jacob, & White, 1981; Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, & Watson, 1992; Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989) it has not been thought to play a significant role in developing or maintaining workplace commitment in employees. Although certainly not the case in all the interviews, place was specifically raised by the participants in five of the twenty-four interviews as a significant factor in their becoming committed or maintaining commitment during a contingent work experience. When asked about why she felt committed to her summer position Kim responded:

> I think the place itself just because I always went there it's like I guess I didn't even think about it anymore. It was like what I did in the summer. There is a driveway that goes forever and when you're going down it you can see the horses and the driveway just sucks me in, gets me really excited. It's like when you're going to the lake and you first see the water and oh there's the cottage for a (activity focused camp) this was almost roughing it. I remember I went to see a couple others (camps) because my mom said you should try other camps and we went to have a look and they were prim and proper and polished this was more of a cottage type camp but I loved it that way!

Jan's interview also helps to illustrate the importance of place:

> Jan: It was on a one hundred and forty acre waterfront and we had everything from the marina to beaches to everything its gorgeous.
>
> Author: Would you still want to work there if it was at a different place?
>
> Jan: Probably not. Not only was it beautiful, it was close to where I grew up. It was perfect for me.

Catherine compared her experience in two similar work experiences but in different settings.

> I worked at outdoor centre in Toronto and it was a very different experience, not something that I ever got to the point of feeling completely comfortable. I think that I love (remote area) so that that's where I am headed so... I have a connection and love the outdoor opportunities that are available there. And when I worked in Toronto, all our programs were based out of a park and it was a very different atmosphere and I think the kids, they would have got a lot more from going to (outdoor camp name), being outdoors not in a familiar area that sort of thing just being in a park and it really is a beautiful place on the water and near a (small town) and it just sort of fit my personality. I'm a small town person....so place was important. I was offered a job in Toronto basically the same program but I chose (camp name)… place was a big part of the decision.

Response to place seems to be individualized and personal. Martin even described how place was important to him the midst of an urban environment (the same one that didn't appeal to Catherine):

> ...the place, it fills you with more energy to do a better job. If you love where you are and you love what's around you, then you just spread it around with everyone who you're working with. The downtown!! It's just the water's right there, the sun's right there. Every year they're saying how Toronto is all smoggy, but I don't notice it. I don't care that

it's hot. I'm just having a great time where I am. You can see the trees, you can see the CN Tower, it's just alive.

Lynn worked at a golf course and the place to her was also really important even though she wasn't an avid golfer.

> The surroundings did play a big role; I still feel really attached to it. I don't know why…. its really pretty and beautiful landscape and in the country. I don't know. I was like younger so it let you explore more as well because it was a golf course and it was wide open and spread out. I don't know… I miss being outside everyday… it's nice having that in your job. I miss the atmosphere like the course itself. Some days it's quiet and it's I don't know… you'll see wildlife and we've had deer and foxes and every kind of animal out around the pond and at night the sunsets are beautiful… stuff like that.

Although in the case of Lynn the activity (golf) was not a source of her connection to the workplace, a number of the other interviewees did raise involvement in the activity as a significant source of their connection or commitment to their seasonal job. This topic will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Commitment to Activity

Commitment to acticity or activity involvement has a strong research tradition in the leisure literature (Havitz & Mannell, 2005; Havitz & Dimanche, 1997; Havitz & Dimanche,1999; Havitz & Howard, 1995; Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004; Kyle, Absher & Hammitt, & Cavin, 2006; Kyle & Chick, 2004). In addition to being very connected to the place, Kim also mentioned that she was extremely committed to working at an equestrian

facility. The sport has been a big part of her life and, for her, to work at something she loved was a dream come true.

"I love horses, the activity itself…Yeah it was great."

Kim spoke about her feelings toward the camp and her interest in working there if it did not have such a strong equestrian focus.

Kim: No no probably not, not at all

Author: If you could add horses but different ownership

Kim: If I didn't like the ownership I can't imagine I wouldn't have been going there for so long, but the activity first of all that's the part that is key Yeah that's first absolutely. Yes it's actually really weird I'm applying for summer jobs right now and there's some crazy adventure camps out west and in the States and I've just started sending out my resume because I was inspired because I haven't ridden horses for like ever! A lot of places are looking for equestrian coaches so I'm kind of excited about that...I think I drifted away from it because it's expensive and the commute as well. I was living overseas for a couple of years but a really good friend of the family, the daughter, has started buying and breeding horses so they just moved about four years ago now and they have an incredible horse farm so if I ever want to ride I can go there.

Activity was also important for Catherine who said that "being outdoors has also been something I've been interested in and I want to be a teacher so education, outdoor education, is a natural. In our free time we could ski and learn more about the outdoors. It was the perfect if you love that and I do!"

Misty talked about choosing between a more career-oriented position and opting instead for a summer job focusing on an activity she loved, basketball. "Oh yeah just because basketball is my life. If it was soccer or some other thing I wouldn't have done it." In response to why he took his job, Cam said that the sport

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was the big part of it. "The fact that I was running the sports camp made me more committed because I've been involved with sports my whole life so it just seemed like it was a good fit for me. It's been a pretty big part of my life." Dan offered a similar comment about his job as a life guard at a private resort area, "I love the water…been a competitive swimmer… it is me a big part of me doing that and getting paid, right!" Karen also mentioned the importance of working in an outdoor setting where she could be involved with climbing (her preferred activity). "I wanted to be outdoors ideally somewhere where I could climb and teach it." Clearly not everyone interviewed mentioned place or activity as important; however for these participants, place and/or activity were very important components or foci of their commitment.

(II) Changes in the intensity and focus of commitment

This section examines factors that influenced the type and level of employees' commitment during the course of their work experience. The creation, maintenance, or dissolution of commitment in this study was examined using a critical incident approach. Participants were asked to describe any events or incidents that may have inhibited or enhanced their commitment focus or intensity. This section documents key findings of participants' formation of commitment during their contingent work experience. The interviewees' narratives were presented in a more complete form in Chapter 4. As the narratives attest there are twenty-four different stories and each is unique. As the reader may well have noted

from the narratives some were rich in detail, some less so and the employee's impressions of their jobs varied widely. However, taken together the stories seem to suggest:

1. Commitment's development or dissipation can be evolutionary or revolutionary.

2. The supervisor plays a pivotal role in the development or dissipation of commitment.

3. Commitment is build upon a foundation of recognition, mutual trust, and respect.

4. The employee's perception of organizational support is important in the development or dissipation of commitment.

5. Continual challenge in the workplace plays a significant role in the development or dissipation of employee commitment.

These five elements will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Evolution or Revolution?

In the context of these interviews it appears that commitment can be developed or dissipated in an evolutionary way (slowly through a series of experiences that build one's connection to an element or elements of the workplace) or it may occur in more dramatic revolutionary way. This revolution might be brought on by a dramatic incident or event in the

workplace, be it a significant project or a supervisor's exceptional response to some crisis in which the employee was involved. Some examples may help clarify. Karen was a recreation therapist who grew more committed over the course of her summer employment, to the point where she strongly desired to return to work there in subsequent years. Her evolving commitment grew primarily through her relationships with her clients. Their repeated interactions and good-natured responses drew her in and helped her develop a strong connection to the workplace. As she said:

> The clients you develop a relationship with them because you've spent all summer with them and you start a bond with each one…it would be the same group of people those days, same Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and on Tuesdays and Thursday a different group and they would joke back and forth I became part of it.

Lisa also worked in therapeutic recreation but her experience hinged more on a critical turning point. Commenting on her commitment Lisa said, "It definitely goes up. First it took me a while to get into it. At first I was kind of… there wasn't great commitment like if I was only there for a month I probably wouldn't be going back." Lisa's commitment focused on the actions of her supervisor who had helped her out when she was stranded with patients even though the supervisor had gone home sick that day. That seemed to really stick with Lisa and made her feel that she was important and valued. Although relationships with clients and coworkers also seemed to be important this one event seemed to provide a focal point for Lisa. Critical incidents with co-workers could also have a deleterious effect.

James' and David's stories both centered on negative experiences with a supervisor or supervisors following which commitment levels to their supervisors fell sharply.

Cam recalled a particular incident at his sport camps were he really felt bad for his clients and recalled how it coloured his impression of the camp's management for the remainder of his term

> On rain days, if it was raining we were supposed to be outside all day and then there's the indoor facilities and if those were being used by other events then we would just have to stay under the day camp tents until it stopped raining and some kids are terrified of lightning so we'd have to sit get soaking wet under the tents because even if there wasn't things going on in indoors we couldn't go in there because they would say we would be too loud so it would disrupt the other groups there.

Cam suggested this experience showed how little the organization cared for the kids or their employees and really influenced how he acted and felt throughout the rest of his time there. Cam turned down an opportunity to return the following season even though he didn't yet have another option in place.

One point that was clear from these stories was that revolutionary changes in commitment seemed difficult to alter. That is, it was difficult to recover from a negative experience that was handled badly and likewise, an exceptionally positive experience such as the one highlighted in Lisa's experience seemed to colour future experiences in a more positive light. Further discussion of why this may be the case and recommendations for

future research in this area are provided in the final chapter of the dissertation.

The Pivotal Role of Supervisors

One of the most significant findings from these interviews is the importance of the supervisor. In many cases, multiple supervisors were present and traditional surveys on commitment in the workplace have generally not accounted for this. Initial screening data would seem to imply that commitment to a supervisor has some importance but did not indicate the pivotal nature of this relationship for the contingent leisure service workers with whom the researcher spoke . Many of their stories, particularly those that were extremely positive, and those that deteriorated, ultimately came back to the role of the supervisor. Throughout the interviews the supervisors' ability to recognize the participants' accomplishments, to provide positive and critical feedback in a constructive way and to, as a number of participants noted, "be there for me", was critical to the overall experience.

Participants seemed to even prefer negative feedback over no feedback at all. Martin spoke of how the lack of feedback led him to think he might be doing a poor job even when that was not the case. Similar ideas were echoed in a number of interviews. In Jennifer's case, her supervisor attempted but failed to successfully resolve an issue with a co-worker but none-the-less, the overall experience was viewed as positive. It appeared that supervisors' willingness to attend to and attempt to solve problems faced by the employees was of greater importance than their actual ability to solve them. Lack of attention may lead to feeling of

uncertainty as to how they were doing, in what for most of these contingent employees were relatively new situations. Uncertainty can often increase levels of stress and impact ones own feeling of confidence and worth and turn their actual performance (Cox. 2007). Being connected with employees earlier in the work process would appear to essential for supervisors in these settings.

It seems that supervisors' caring attitudes were critical to building commitment. In another case, a supervisor displayed behaviour above and beyond her job responsibilities. In Lisa's story she indicated that her supervisor came to her aid when she was stranded with a group of clients and had no way back to the health care centre. The supervisor had already left the office and was feeling quite ill but she came back and helped to solve the issue for Lisa (with compassion and without complaint). In this incidence that particular supervisor seemed to gain some form of immunity from further negative attributions. The extreme effort leads Lisa to give her supervisor the benefit of the doubt in future interactions. The response to one major event did seem to colour or influence the entire contingent work experience. This may not be the case in more long-term work relationships but it does indicate that successfully dealing with issues by the supervisor may take on added importance in contingent employment situations.

Trisha continues to speak glowingly of her supervisor. Trisha's supervisor bent the organization's rules for her and her colleagues and helping Trisha and two other contingent employees get financial assistance to present at a youth development conference. This experience not only helped Trisha bond with her supervisor but even encouraged her to change career directions. In this case the

supervisor's actions influenced Trisha's commitment to the supervisor and also positively influenced her commitment to a future career (municipal recreation) as well as client group (youth). Essentially these life-changing decisions for Trisha stemmed from the simple action of a supervisor going above and beyond and showing concern for her employee. The importance of concern, recognition and trust are discussed in greater detail in the next section.

The need for recognition, mutual trust and respect

Given the pivotal nature of the role of the supervisor it is not surprising that the 'softer' side of management, the provision or lack of recognition, mutual trust and respect were also essential to the development, maintenance, or the dissolution of commitment. The following section provides examples through the participants' own words of the importance of trust in the workplace.

Christine explained what she felt was needed for her to be really committed in a work situation. Her words convey not only the importance of trust but also the need for respect and sincere recognition in the workplace.

> One of the key things is trust it is important to trust someone before you become committed to the place or the job. Some people say I just go in and do my job but trust in the sense that when they tell you something they mean it. Definitely the people I was closest with are ones that I did trust. I felt my GM did care about me and my work so that's definitely important.

Lisa, whose story was shared in the previous section, had this to say about the event in which her supervisor helped with a particular incident:

So when I came back I was like so stressed out. It was a nice time to have her there to fix the problem so I think that probably helped with the trusting, she was there for me so I think that's where I put more trust in her as a supervisor. I realized how helpful she is, even when she was really sick. I really miss my supervisor. She was a great mentor.

Catherine talked broadly about trust and respect and how for her it was essential in developing any sort of relationship:

I mean, I think you don't develop a friendship until you have trust and if that is part of it then yeah then if you want a family environment then relying on other people, trust pretty much is the same thing. I think that that is probably a bare minimum for commitment.

Kim spoke of how trust and responsibility interact and the importance of that for her commitment at a summer camp.

If we wanted to completely change things up they would let us, they would give us the freedom to do that. They really trust you like she (owner) would say, "Kim I have to go and run some errands. See you later." and for insurance purposes as well they're responsible for all the riders safety and when you have sixty people at the camp and you're going off into lessons you're going off into large fields and you're responsible for anywhere between three and nine kids all on horses and you're on your feet and it gets really hot. You can get dehydration and heat stroke. There's just a number of things so you know they trust you when they're letting you sort of take them out on your own because it's their responsibility.

Maggie spoke about her job on a cruise ship.

It's like you have that respect for them so they have it for you, do you know what I mean? To me that's what builds the commitment. There they treat you like a person.

Helen spoke about a boss at a not for profit organization who didn't

recognize employees or volunteers. She spoke of how that influenced her feeling

and behaviour in that workplace

> I wouldn't work for that boss (again). I might not go back to
> the same unit but I'll go to another one. If someone really
> asked me I'd go. He has a military background and I think
> the main thing about him was his goal is to make a million
> (dollars). He's inward focused on the goal. I need someone
> who recognizes the volunteers more as well as the people
> working there.

Matt also described how the feedback used by his supervisors had a

negative impact on him.

> At the very end, the recruits fill out a questionnaire with a
> rating scale like how I did. There are always comments I
> guess. After you read some of them you get some negative
> ones so it's like you know, "why did I bother doing this…
> this person thought I did a terrible job" but I guess you could
> also look at it like well what can I do better. The supervisor
> did nothing with it. It was like "Here's your comments,
> thanks for coming".

The critical contribution of supervisors speaks not only to the personal

relationship between the worker and the supervisor but it also provides the basis for

the relationship between the employee and the larger organization as such.

Consequently, the role of the supervisor can be both functional and symbolic.

Perceived organizational support is often described as employees' global beliefs

about the level at which an organization values their contributions and cares about

their wellbeing (Eisneberger, Cummings, Armeli & Lynch, 1997). It is support

from key people during critical incidents which help create these global beliefs.

From example, Sara spoke about how people in her organization supported her in

her role with a professional sport league. When asked about being equipped to do the job she told me that:

> I definitely thought I had the skills I started with her (supervisor) doing it on the Thursday, so I had a comfort level. There are some places where they give you no training or skills before you do it, and there were other senior people there to help. I felt trusted, supported.

Karen told me about the lack of support she was given to arrange an event at her outdoor camp experience. She found out the day of the event she was to do this and they handed her the instructions and told to go run this event for a corporate group. However, she had never been trained in the way the event runs and basically was left to fend for herself. She felt it was not only hard for her but also didn't make for a great client experience.

Conversely Lisa spoke of a very positive experience where she felt highly supported. Lisa said:

> There was a lot of (support) like my supervisor wasn't working with me directly on it but she gave me support like how to ask companies for donations and stuff she was pretty supportive during it like, she kind of took a side step but helped me as much as she could, it helped a lot. My recreation team was really helpful, they're really used to having co-op students every term so I think they're used to integrating a co-op student quickly so what they do is they set up a meeting with everybody in the "rec" team.

The supervisor in a sense is a conduit to the larger organization. As employees connect and disconnect through personal connection the importance of the supervisor in the development, maintenance and in some cases the dissolution of commitment cannot be over stated.

Challenge

The interviews also helped dispel the notion that temporary employees are looking for an easy way to gather a pay cheque. In the vast majority of interviews, challenge in the job itself was reported as being a positive factor for the employee or a key factor that was missing in maintaining or further enhancing their commitment. Further, the lack of challenge in the job itself negatively influenced their commitment. James spoke of how important challenge was for him.

> Challenge is key. Challenge seems to be part of commitment too for me. I want to try to push it and set new challenges that can be achieved so as a whole the program is being improved the end goal is always what can I do that makes it better because I see myself as competing against every other person who has held this job before me so it's like okay they did some great stuff. What can I do to make it better to leave my lasting legacy to say I was the best?

Matt also felt that the lack of challenge in the role diminished his commitment.

> I liked it (job) at times but sometimes it was like well what should I be doing now because the tasks they set out for me, I could do very quickly. Then I'd have nothing else at times like that it was hard so I'd try to find little projects to work on. They say the best way to manage somebody is to give them the task and let them do it which I guess they did that but there were times where I'd have everything done that I needed to have done and then I'm like what do I now? I have a week's worth of work done and it's only Tuesday morning. What do I do now?

Jan talked about how the job commitment dropped as the challenge decreased.

> It was almost easier you know what I mean? It wasn't as difficult so you didn't have to put as much effort as you

would have in the beginning. So the challenge maybe drops off a bit.

For Kim the lack of challenge ultimately lead her to move on.

For the last couple of years that I was working there I was riding with a coach outside of camp and by the time I went back the next year I had become far better than I had realized and I felt that the teaching like, I wasn't learning anything there even from the top dogs. That's when I went "I'm done, it's time to move on".

Lynn offered a similar sentiment.

And challenge is a big part over the last couple of years. I found I'm kind of bored with it because it's day in and day out but having that attachment and not wanting to leave it as well, but the job has reached a limit. I emailed my boss and said I was staying in (different city) and not coming back this year. It is hard because I loved that place so much.

For Catherine the challenge was the essence of what she wanted out of a work

experience.

I miss that constant challenge that Jimmy would give you. As a supervisor I think how am I going to do this and then you would find a way to do it and that's a really those opportunities that happened often at (camp name) but then in regular life they don't seem to happen enough. You know emotionally I say regular life, I guess the life that you lead there is very much in a little bubble…ummm so I guess those people (supervisors) and the challenges they give you is what I miss most.

Jennifer added that:

It made you feel better about what you were doing, it showed you when you're committed to a project 100% it's that much better than if you give 50 or 60%. You go over and beyond. You can see the difference.

(III)   The impact of commitment

Although the relationship between the various forms of commitment holds inherent academic interest, this interest is often based on the assumption that committed employees are more likely to ensure favourable outcomes either for the organization, for the worker, for clients, or some combination of those three. This study offers some insights that largely support the large body of literature on workplace commitment outcomes and offers some new insight for commitment relevant to recreation and leisure context and a contingent workforce. This section addresses commitment outcomes for the organization, the client and/or broader community and for the employees themselves.

Organizational Outcomes

Retention and absenteeism are two of the most studied outcome variables in the commitment literature (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnytsky, 2002). In some cases, diminished commitment through the experience did lead the employee to rule out that organization for future employment. For example, Tina spoke of how the treatment of her supervisor by the organization ruled out any chance of her wanting to work for that organization, even though it is a significant employer who offers jobs in areas she wishes to pursue after graduation.

Although these results suggest that a negative experience could result in workers' desire to leave an employer, they do not suggest that a positive experience will necessarily lead to retention. The relationship between good or bad experiences

and retention/discontinuance is complex. This is even more the case given that those being interviewed were contingent workers. They were engaged in summer or co-op positions to gain experience and they had never planned to be retained by the employer.

Although it has received less empirical attention, job performance did appear to be a significant outcome variable in this study. It is important to distinguish between in-role job performance, which is expected from one's work and extra-role performance, the actions one performs that go above and beyond the call of one's regular perceived job requirements. For these individuals in-role performance seems to be a given regardless of their commitment level, except under extreme work conditions. It should be noted here that many contingent recreation and leisure positions involve extreme conditions, be it working outside in the heat and humidity or the cold and damp of winter, or working long hours in often isolated locations. The line between in role and extra role behaviours may be somewhat more blurred under these contexts than under more pedestrian/traditional work conditions. This suggests that an considerable commitment may be a prerequisite for these positions so that employees will perform their in-role behaviour let alone extra role behaviours. Misty's story offers a case in point.

Misty's job involved working at a summer sport camp during a particularly oppressive summer with record heat and humidity levels. As the summer wore on she observed that "The attitude I felt and the attitude people saw was two totally different things but as the summer progressed I was finding out more what I wanted to do and this wasn't it." She spoke further of how her energy levels were lower as

the summer went on. Misty's commitment declined as the summer went on and performing even in-role tasks became increasingly difficult..

However, those individuals who expressed strong levels of affective commitment (desire or passion) toward some element of their work also talked extensively about willingly undertaking extra role activities throughout their tenure with their respective organizations. A few even reveled in meeting extreme in role expectations. Kim, who worked at an equestrian camp, offers a vivid example:.

Author: Any examples of you being committed?

Kim: Oh yeah! Mucking out the stalls, that's when we have
to go in and shovel up all the horse manure!

Author: How does that job get distributed?

Kim: Oh it's strictly voluntary.

Author: Oh…and people actually volunteer?

Kim: Well they can hire people, they (owner/supervisors)
offered to, but people just do it like I did it every so often
like it's good exercise it's pretty gross but if you're into it
well it's kind of nice, part of what we do there, you know…
help out.

Kim also talked about loving her job and putting in long days. This was echoed by others as the participants spoke of how they got up early and stayed up late and did so happily. Many of the jobs people performed as seasonal employees involved round the clock work under what some may describe as "spartan" working conditions. Kristen, an in home therapeutic recreation worker, discussed how she was bitten and physically hurt by some of her clients. Misty described repeated ten hour days outside in thirty plus degree (Celsius) weather with high

humidity and intense air pollution. Sara talked about having fun during two straight weeks (14 days in a row) of sixteen-hour days leading up to a major event and noted it was one of the best experiences of her life. Catherine talked of working in a winter camp outside, in often extreme cold, and without a day off, for weeks on end. Yet many described these experiences fondly, as extremely positive jobs; jobs they were passionate about. Such willingness to undertake difficult and demanding job responsibilities is perhaps the most important of the results of commitment.

This willingness to serve the organization was discussed in Riketta's (2000) meta-analysis of commitment outcomes. He found a much stronger relationship between affective commitment and extra role behaviour than commitment and in role behaviour. In simple terms, for these individuals being affectively committed does not necessarily mean they performed the duties of their jobs better but it did mean they were often more likely to go above and beyond the requirements of their respective jobs; that is to perform what is commonly called organizational citizenship behaviours (Organ, 1983). In the context of these contingent employees though, that connection seemed to be less directed to the organization and more directed to a commitment to serve their clients (regardless of the conditions or whether or not that task was a formal part of their job). In a sense they did not perform organizational citizenship behaviours but client service oriented behaviours. Future research might consider exploring this phenomenon as well as the relationship between commitment and employee behaviour under extreme conditions.

Client Outcomes

Clients were a key focus of the persons interviewed for this study. This is good news for those employing a seasonal or temporary workforce, as is the case with many recreation and leisure agencies. While some literature (Chang & Chelladurai, 2002) suggests that seasonal workers may be less committed and client focused than more permanent staff, this assumption received little support from those interviewed for this study. It became evident early in the interviews that service levels to clients were considered an important success factor by nearly all those with whom The researcher spoke. Unlike the connection to supervisors which tended to be influenced more by the work situation and incidents and actions within the workplace, the notion of service seemed to more a part of something the participants brought with them to the experience, and something that was often reinforced throughout the experience.

Even within negatively perceived work experiences, participants commented on their concern for the clients. Cam said that "The kids were the big part of it. I felt committed more to the kids than I did the organization I felt like an obligation to be there for the kids to teach them more than I did to be there for the organization." Cam later told of how he came in conflict with his employer by trying to make the rain days better for the kids he worked with.

On a positive note Martin shared how important his clients were in his summer camp position.

> I also love developing skills in kids, they don't just want the
> kids to be dropped off and you baby-sit the kid all day, they

really appreciate the staff being involved in developing a program that expands the kids' horizons.

This study did not speak directly with any clients so it is inappropriate to describe the outcomes they garnered from more committed employees. However it would be fair to say that more committed employees did report concern for clients. That same concern seemed lacking among those who described lower commitment levels. Future research would benefit from discussions with clients and staff to assess the impact of employee commitment on client outcomes.

Employee Outcomes

Commitment and employee outcomes have received little attention in the literature. A small number of studies have examined the impact of high levels of affective commitment on employee well-being. Generally they have found a negative correlation between psychological, physical and work related stress and high levels of affective commitment (Riketta, 2000). Employees who are passionate about their work, as opposed to doing it solely for the pay cheque or out of some form of obligation, seem to experience less negative stress and fewer of its corresponding physical and psychological symptoms. The results offered here, at least partially, support these earlier findings. In particular, a number of students in therapeutic recreation reported that having a strong support network through both their coworkers (high work group commitment) and especially through their supervisors did seem to act as a buffer for extremely stressful positions.

Jeff also talked about the importance of his coworkers (in a camp setting) as a way to deal with some of the stress in the workplace. He very much enjoyed opportunities to share "war stories" and lament unpleasant events of the workday. His coworkers helped him get through troubling times and were a memorable and enjoyable part of the work experience. He continues to socialize with some of the people despite being in different cities during the school year. "It was great. We would eat, go to the bar have some drinks… just hang out. We had lots to talk about!" The work group appeared to play a significant role in making a difficult situation bearable for Jeff. As earlier discussed the commitment to work group did not seem to have an impact on positive work performance it may be indirectly important by providing a buffer for employees and in generally creating a more positive work environment.

On a similar note, the more committed employees seemed to have a more enjoyable work experience. They seemed more likely to report having fun and to feel happy with their work For a few of these students the summer or co-op jobs, were considered as life changing experiences, leading some to change their focus of their education. Others just had the time of their lives. Future research on this particular work outcome is needed.

Multiple dimensions, multiple foci and commitment outcomes

The interviews reported here seem to support the work of Bentein, Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe (2002) who found that commitment to local

entities, as opposed to organizational commitment, are most relevant for predicting behavioural responses at work. This supports a theoretical perspective based on the field theory of Lewin (1951) suggesting that behaviour is a result of not only personal characteristics but also of the social setting in which one finds oneself. For example, proximity to the target of commitment matters and therefore commitment to an entity will likely result in behaviour directed toward that entity (Bentein, Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe, 2002). In other words, front line providers might become attached to clients (like children) which in turn encourages staff to aid those clients whenever possible.

Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) also found that commitment to a specific target was a better predicator of behaviour relevant to that target than more general organizational commitment. In this study the commitment to one's supervisor is more proximal than say commitment to an organization. Likewise commitment to a career may be more abstract and distant than a focus on commitment to a client, a place, or a particular activity. However, it also seems that strong commitment to one entity may enhance the chances of being committed to other related entitles. For example, a commitment to a supervisor may enhance the chances of also being committed to the organization or conversely lack of it may also see a similar decline in one's connect to the organization. This concept requires further research to develop a more complete understanding.

The evidence to date does suggests that a multi focus of commitments approach, especially the affective dimension of those commitments, will provide the richest source of information relating to job performance. This finding is

important in that it suggests that organizational commitment is but one of several foci of commitment and does not appear to hold any greater weight in dictating behaviour than other entities. In this particular context, it appears to be of little importance. It also suggests that context matters and that fully understanding the relevant targets of one's commitment in different contexts are important for both theory and practice.

Throughout the interviews, various commitment foci were identified including traditional notions such as organization, career, work group, supervisor and clients and new foci including commitment to place and commitment to activity. However, it was not clear that the employees viewed these commitment foci as distinct. Rather, they often had a difficult time separating the various foci to which they were committed. Much of the positive behavior reported seemed to be directed toward the clients but in turn would also serve to benefit the organization (such as going out of one's way to satisfy client needs or working long hours to plan off an event).

Summary

One should note that regardless of the outcome of the experience, most of these workers expressed an initial commitment to some aspect of the job they were about to undertake. The focus of this commitment was often a passion for working with a client group or a passion to service in a more general sense. However, this commitment seemed only temporary and a combination of critical incidents related

to the work experience, workplace relationships, and the workplace environment shaped the direction and intensity of that commitment.

While many of the students' classified their experience as being either positive or negative, none of the experiences seemed uniformly so. For example, not all experiences described as being very positive started that way. Indeed, many of those reporting positive work experiences also indicated that they experienced negative or challenging incidents while on the job. It seems that negative incidents on their own were insufficient to spoil a work experience however. Instead, the overall character of the experience was determined by subsequent events and actions (typically by key staff members). When staff members, especially supervisors but also co-workers, stepped in to help this young worker through difficult events, such actions made a positive and lasting impression on the young worker. It is important to note that the supervisor's action need not completely rectify a problem in order to be effective. The benefit seemed to lie in that individual's willingness to assist.

Seven of the participants' narratives ended badly in the eyes of the participant. Like the positive stories profiled above, they often revealed a very high level of desire or passion at the outset of the experience. That is, the employees had high initial expectations regarding some element of the job, place, or people in that work setting. At some point(s) during their work period their actual experiences failed in some way to meet those expectations. Often, as was the case in the positive group, a critical incident occurred at work, and the way in which it was handled by a key individual(s), usually a supervisor, was perceived by the worker

as being inadequate or disingenuous. Considerable dissatisfaction with the entire work experience resulted.

There were also experiences best described as "neutral". As this descriptor suggests, these stories are mixed, with some positive and some negative experiences. Some participants suggested that little happened and it was simply "just a job" for the participant. In large part, the commitment in these stories is often driven by what Allen and Meyer (1997) might refer to as continuance and/or normative commitment. These employees were connected to their jobs and workplace primarily as a result of obligation or need. Within the neutral stories the desire and passion of the other sections of narratives appears less evident. The commitment of these participants seemed to be about doing what was required or what was expected. With lower initial expectations, critical events seemed to be more muted both positively and negatively, and as such, the participants characterized their work experience as uneventful.

The Critical Incidents

Participants were asked to relate critical incidents which helped shape their commitment to some facet of their respective workplaces. The critical incidents themselves were events that the employees perceived as significant. As suggested above, these events often represented a stage for supervisors to demonstrate their care and concern for the employee. When care and concern was demonstrated, commitment and satisfaction resulted.

When care and concern were lacking, initial commitment levels suffered. These events were critical in that employees viewed them as statements of the supervisor's care and concern for them or for the clients or coworkers they supervised.

Within the neutral experiences, critical incidents seemed to take on less significance. Perhaps workers initial expectations for the experience were initially lower. Perhaps too the commitment these workers brought to the new job were driven less by passion (affective commitment) and more by obligation (normative commitment) or need (continuance commitment).

Regardless of how the work experience was perceived, strong workplace relationships seemed important to the participants in all groups. This was an expected finding and one that was confirmed through the interviews. However, this social relationship with coworkers did not seem to be as connected to positive behaviours or behaviours beneficial to clients, organizations or the employee when compared to the other forms of commitment. Participants in general were neutral about organizational commitment but tended to have much stronger feelings toward supervisors. It was the supervisor employee relationship that appeared to be at the centre of most of the critical events described in the narratives.

The relationship between employee and supervisor was often not straight forward as seventeen participants had multiple supervisors and there was no clear pattern of multiple or single supervisors having more or less impact on a situation. The vast majority of critical incidents focused on

the behaviour of a specific supervisor or the relationship the participants had with that particular supervisor. The presence or lack of a multiple supervisor relationships did not play a prominent role in the plot of any of the narratives. Rather it was the one on one relationship and interactions with a supervisor that seemed to be most significant. However, the overwhelming number of participants reporting multiple supervisors suggests that this issue may well be worth future investigation.

The work environment was also a key topic of conversation. A caring, trusting respectful environment was strongly desired by all participants, even those who had an overall neutral work experience. The difference being in that particular group was that they did not expect to have that type of caring experience so they were not surprised when it did not materialize in their workplace. In the case of the positive and negative experiences initial expectations were high and the conformation of those expectations lead to a positive experience while the lack of those elements lead to the opposite impression.

As the interviews progressed it became clear that the initial high levels of employee affective commitment could lead to either the best or the worst work experiences. Initial expectations, be they from the employees' own prior experience or perceptions, or from an intentional or unintentional effort on behalf of the employer to set the stage for the position, were exceptionally important in the final outcome of the position.

The participants' narratives demonstrated that each individual brought to the job a set of expectations formed by his/her own experience, values and dreams. The job setting helped shape those expectations through the actions of key players, primarily clients and supervisor(s), often in response to a critical event or events that occurred during their tenure. The challenge or demands of the job also played an important role in shaping how participants viewed their experience in an organization. To a lesser extent the type of job, the job environment and one's coworkers, career focus and connection to the organization also shaped the overall job impression and in turn the employee's view of their own commitment.

Chapter 6 Discussion

Introduction

The preceding chapter highlighted the key findings based upon discussions with twenty-four contingent workers. This chapter follows up by reexamining the conceptual model of commitment originally presented in Chapter 2 and found here in figure 2. This model will be used to focus the discussion on the antecedents of commitment, the types of commitment found and some preliminary insight into possible outcomes of commitment. A discussion of the limitations of this research and suggestions for future research on commitment and contingent service leisure employees will also be presented.

Figure 2: ReConceptualized Model of Workplace Commitment

A model of commitment

Although the intent of this study was not to test the conceptual model of Meyer & Herscovitch (2001), the information collected did seem to fit well within the conceptual framework the model represents. In addition, insight from the twenty-four interviews added texture, richness and depth to the model. The model presented here in figure 2, adds two key features that one may wish to consider in future research focused on testing this conceptualization. First binding agents, those things or people to which workers direct their commitment may well be context specific. For example, participants in this study supervisors, committed to both place and activity within their respective workplaces. The relative importance of such binding agents may vary from one setting to the next.

These data also suggest that it may be appropriate to add a feedback loop to the model. The loop would extend from the outcomes of commitment back to bases of commitment. Essentially this suggests that when one engages in a particular behaviour that engagement will then influence future decisions regarding the strength, intensity and focus of their future commitment. For example, if an employee assists clients and this behaviour is positively reinforced, say through a letter of thanks or positive comments, the employee's sense of commitment to those clients may be strengthened. The employee may bring this strengthened sense of commitment to future encounters with clients in the workplace. The remainder of this chapter explores these and other issues raised in chapter 4 and 5 in more detail.

By far the most prevalent attitude expressed in the interviews related to the importance of the positions in which the participants worked. They wanted to be committed and, in some cases, this desire was fulfilled. In other cases, the experiences were disappointing and positive expectations remained unfulfilled. When participants had high expectations and those expectations were met or exceeded the experience was viewed as positive and commitment intensity was high. Conversely, if high expectation were not met, the opposite occurred.

Although commitment intensity was relatively high in many of the participants, the focus of that commitment was much more idiosyncratic. The focus of the participants' commitment was varied and, in all cases, was connected to more than one foci within the workplace. It was clear that the multiple commitment perspective highlighted in the model was supported by these participants' experiences but the focus of those commitments were varied and went beyond the traditional foci highlighted in the model. Despite the participants having a wide variety of commitment foci some general patterns were apparent. There was a strong commitment to clients expressed throughout the interviews. Many of these clients were children and this trend may have enhanced this particular focus. The researcher heard repeatedly throughout the interviews how the participants didn't want to 'let the kids down' or how great it was to see the kids develop a skill or confidence through taking part in some activity. Interestingly this commitment focus was less likely to develop through the experience but rather was something that the employees brought with them. In terms of the model, it was a personal characteristic they brought to the job.

This characteristic was either reinforced or diminished by incidents primarily the attitude and action of co-workers and particularly their supervisor(s), in the workplace.

Commitment to work group and supervisor were also prevalent. These two commitment forms seemed to develop within in the workplace (they were not brought to the job as was the case above) and revolved around personal relationships. They grew or were diminished in response to a variety of events significant to the respective employees. These two forms of commitment are relevant when one discusses outcomes and will be raised a little later in this chapter. Interestingly, two new foci of commitment also emerged in some of the interviews. The attachment to place and attachment to activity appeared to work in a very similar fashion as the other forms of commitment did. However, it seemed to be something more internal to the employee than something that was consciously generated by employers.

Commitment to place developed more during the work experience; however, it was a very individualized process. For example, Martin and Catherine had distinctly opposite opinions of the same urban setting. While one was very much committed to that setting, the other was upset by the prospect of living and working there. It appears that connection to place goes back to one's expectations and personal preferences as to work setting. Martin looked forward to the high energy and excitement that a large urban area can bring while Catherine sought a more serene and peaceful environment, both cared strongly about place but their ideal for place was quite different.

Setting was not the only context-based variable to emerge from these interviews. Commitment to various leisure activities (in this case sport or physical activity) seemed very tangible to many of the interviewees. Similar to the commitment to service/clients the commitment to activity seemed to be resident in the employee prior to the work experience and again the experience itself then helped to shape the overall intensity and importance of that commitment foci to the employee. In these cases, their devotion to a favourite activity influenced the ways in which they thought about their employment. This finding raises an interesting conceptual question. Is it the case that someone who loves the outdoors and aspires to work in outdoor recreation may have a challenge distinguishing career commitment from commitment to an activity? Pittisky and Shih (2004) seem to think so. They found that contingent technology workers who loved the activity in which they were involved found that their commitment to the activity was indistinguishable from their commitment to their career (which also revolved around programming and technology). A similar process may be at work here but in a leisure context. Future studies may wish to investigate this relationship in greater detail.

The importance of place and of activity may be more prevalent within the recreation and leisure work environment than within more traditional work settings. Further research is required to assess their prevalence and importance as a focus of commitment in a variety of settings.

The formation, maintenance and dissolution of commitment

This project used a critical incident approach asking participants to highlight incidents that occurred during their tenure with an organization. In particular they were asked about incidents, which influenced the intensity and or focus of their commitment. Most participants could easily and vividly recall an incident or series of incidents that had some influence over their commitment. In some cases there was a series of minor events, in others a major event that left an indelible impression. In still other cases, no major incidents were reported. In the majority of interviews it was the experience itself and how issues and incidents played out in the workplace that seemed to have the biggest influence on overall composition and intensity of employee commitment. The following section reflects on the importance of these incidents in more detail. It is important to note here that the incidents were deemed critical by the employee. It was the employee's perception of an event and the response to that event that influenced their overall feeling of commitment.

Negative experiences were often the result of a key incident and that incident coloured the participants' perceptions for the rest of their experience. Likewise, a significant positive experience seemed to be a touchstone to which participants returned as they reaffirmed their positive feelings when times became difficult. As discussed in the previous chapter, the evolutionary versus revolution nature of commitment formation and dissolution holds important future research potential. It is impossible to generalize why this may have

occurred based on the few examples in this study. It may be that commitment develops in an evolutionary way unless a major or revolutionary incident occurs. The research on psychological contracts may help one understand this area in more detail.

The psychological contract represents a set of expectations regarding the relationship between the employee and the organization (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2003). It is a relational contract between the employer and employee based on mutual trust, perceived fairness, and mutual respect. This psychological contract would seem to be similar in concept to affective commitment. As discussed earlier it seems that commitment is most impacted upon by those who have a passion or have passionate expectations of the job. A violation of this relationship would then impact the commitment of an employee. Research by McDonald and Makin (2000) may have hinted at his concept as they found contingent employees actually had higher, rather than lower, levels of job satisfaction and affective commitment to the organization. The authors suggest that contingent employees noted fewer violations of their perceived psychological contract with the organization and that a shorter work relationship may reduce opportunities for management to violate the psychological contract. In a sense you may be more likely to see an evolutionary development in contingent workers.

The way in which critical incidents are managed seems to be of great importance in determining the direction of an employee's commitment. Rather than being an antecedent of commitment, the action and support (or lack of it)

from an organization or manager may be a moderator of the intensity of one's commitment. Regardless of the role played by such actions, it appears that recovering from a significantly negative incident is difficult. Supervisors who fail to deal adequately with a particular situation viewed as critical by their employee may face an insurmountable change in getting that employee back on side. This is particularly the case in shorter contingent work arrangements.

This challenge may be further exacerbated when dealing with relatively inexperience and new employees who may view the importance of particular incidence in a different way than more seasoned employees. Managers must understand that in such cases perceptions of the employee are critical to the development and maintenance of commitment. Understanding these incidents and how they play out in a leisure service workplace offers an important and interesting future avenue of research.

None of the participants interviewed entered a position thinking it was going to offer anything less than a positive experience. As they began their employment, they were generally committed and the focus of their commitment appeared to be external, directed to commitment to a career, a client group, an activity or a strong attachment to a particular place. For example, for one worker in the health care or therapeutic recreation stream, the appeal of a facility's reputation combined with her career focus to create a strong sense of initial commitment. In such cases, workers brought with them a positive predisposition to commit to some entity, be it career, clients, place, or activity.

Work related factors unique to that particular work experience was by far the most frequently mentioned incident type that helped develop a higher intensity of commitment. These were personal encounters with co-workers, usually a supervisor. Recognition or the lack of it was the overriding factor in creating positive and negative experiences. Similarly, the idea of being trusted and feeling that same sense of trust for your supervisor and coworkers seemed important. Finally, job challenge also was raised as a critical issue. If challenge was present and was well matched with organizational support and encouragement, employee commitment appeared to increase. Whereas if the challenge was out of proportion to the participant's ability or if that challenge diminished, employee commitment dwindled or was neutral at best. This finding would find support in the commitment literature where leadership, job involvement and perceived organizational support have been identified as potential antecedents to commitment development (Cohen, 2003; Riketta, 2000).

The leisure literature might offer some additional insight in this case. The concept of flow suggests the importance of the balance between challenge and skill level (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 2003). Csikszentmihalyi found that the individual seeks to engage in activities that offer considerable challenge but remain manageable. When such balance is achieved, the individual tends to find the experience both rewarding and worthwhile. Feelings of considerable well being and satisfaction can result. For this reason, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) refers to these as optimal experiences. Future study of the relationship between

flow and workplace commitment may prove to be fruitful. It could focus on the relative importance of the ways in which employees "experience" work within the larger workplace and monitor its effect on commitment levels.

Commitment and Outcomes

Commitment among these individuals seemed to influence behaviour toward the organization, co-workers, clients, and supervisor. Of even greater interest, participants in this study whose commitment levels were reinforced became more committed to other foci of commitment as time went on. A possible explanation for this behaviour may be found in the notion of cognitive dissonance. As cognitive dissonance suggests, when one has competing beliefs one searches for a new belief that can accommodate both beliefs. It may be incongruent, then, for an individual to feel commitment to some elements within the workplace but not others (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959). For example, in this study we saw that commitment to one's supervisor may enhance one's feeling toward an organization. Others might be committed to youthful clients but not to coworkers or to the organization at large. It may be incompatible to care about the kids you serve and at the same time feel strongly that your employer does not hold the same values. Consequently, commitment levels may have a tendency to remain constant from one entity to the next.

From a manager's perspective this may be important as some forms of commitment may be easier to develop and sustain in particular contexts than in others. Building a strong commitment to some foci of the workplace, be it

activity or one's supervisor or clients, may make the job of building broader commitment easier. Conversely if an organization that does not hold similar values to those of its employees it may have a difficult time maintaining or developing commitment with these employees. Future research into this concept may be important not only in the context of leisure service organizations but also in the broader commitment literature.

These results also suggest that different foci of commitment may be more important in different stages of an employee's tenure in an organization. Although one cannot generalize from twenty-four interviews there does appear to a difference between the foci of commitment related to the attraction of an employee, the retention of an employee, and the performance of that employee. In case of this particular group, what attracted the employees or created their initial commitment was often external, a strong connection to a particular activity, a strong connection to a client group, a strong connection to place, or a strong connection to the professional opportunity a position will present to an employee. Future studies would benefit from a longitudinal approach to better address this particular issue.

Relationships with people were a constant focus of the interviews but rather than the workgroup being the key driver of behaviour it appeared that commitment to supervisors and clients was much more important to the outcomes of commitment. It was thought that the social network would be particularly significant here. Recall that this group was primarily in their early 20's and many were working away from home, so it was thought that

developing a work-based social network was extremely important to them. Workgroup was raised and did seem important personally and to a lesser extent as a support system to buffer the stresses of the workplace, however, this seemed to have little to do with their performance or their overall perceptions of the work experience. Great social relationships on the job were mentioned in positive experiences as well as negative ones. No one mentioned incidents or events where they went out their way to help fellow employees. Neither did they mention the importance of the team in getting the job done. Rather the importance of the workgroup was that of helping them stick it out, to stay in the position.

Cohen (2003) suggests that we are all committed to something and in the absence of other strong work connection the workgroup may take on greater significance. He also notes that work group commitment can also be seen in as a subculture that may work to subvert or work against the series of the employing organization. The data did not lend itself to make any concrete conclusions on this issue but this area could provide further insight into the role of workgroup commitment.

Finally, these results offer some insight in terms of in-role and extra-role job performance. Both are of considerable importance to organizations and their clients. For these individuals, commitment appeared to play a much larger role in extra-role performance than in-role performance. This observation is supported by the limited work done on commitment and performance (Riketta, 2002). Participants described how they did the job, fulfilled their

responsibilities, even when they weren't really involved in the position. It was those who were highly affectively committed that were more likely to have a willingness to go above and beyond the "call of duty". In some leisure contexts where extreme work conditions are present, in-role and extra role behaviours may become commonplace. Staff members may regularly be expected to perform above and beyond traditional workplace expectations. For example, an employer may expect staff members to instruct at a sport camp in high heat and humidity for eight or more hours or to function in an isolated outdoor environment during a damp and cold winter camping experience but such expectations may well exceed those of most employees. Future study of leisure service setting should delineate between extreme and more conventional work environments as commitment levels are monitored and work experiences assessed.

In terms of extra role behaviour, as well as in role behaviour in extreme conditions, the foci of this commitment were primarily commitment to the supervisor and commitment to the clients. This too should receive some attention in future research efforts. This suggests the power of interpersonal dynamics in the development and maintenance of commitment. The importance of the supervisor offers a case in point. Swartz (1999) suggests that employees may see the supervisor as a conduit for the larger organization and that may help explain why commitment to organization was relatively low in both positive and negative experiences.

In the first interview for this project Martin told me of how he was committed to people and not things. Essentially this was retold in different voices throughout the interviews. The clients and one's supervisor seemed much more profound in their impact than any other form of commitment. These commitments are to the people they saw day in day, the people they felt strongly about, and in turn their actions reflected this. Essentially commitment is about relationships, interpersonal connections are much less nebulous than a connection to an organization a career or some other ideal. These particular interviews highlighted the importance of relationships even in a situation where the vast majority did not expect to be part of that group for a long period of time nor was there an expectation of returning to that particular setting. In the future

The Importance of the Supervisor

As suggested above, these workers expressed considerable commitment to both supervisors and to clients. However, without supervisor support it appears that client commitment may not be enough to drive strong performance. Despite commitment to the clients, when a strong supervisor relationship was not present, the participants spoke of how the clients suffered. For example, in Cam's case he had spoke of little support from the organization or his direct supervisor and how that had a negative impact on the camp's clients despite his own desire to provide them with a great experience. Throughout the interviews it was supervisor commitment that was pivotal to the employees' overall

perceptions of the position and it also appeared to influence their extra-role job performance.

The supervisor was also very much present in negative experiences. When the experience deteriorated it was generally attributed to the supervisor. It is also important to note that seventeen of the twenty-four participants interviewed had multiple supervisors and in some cases the experiences with these supervisors were distinctly different. The use of interviews or more qualitative methods would seem to be important here, as traditional survey methods in commitment studies have assessed commitment to a single supervisor, not multiple supervisors. The following section discusses an issue seldom raised in commitment research, what happens when a highly committed employee becomes disenfranchised while still on the job.

The Dark Side -Commitment and Employee Retribution

Just as passion may encourage support for the organization, client, or employee it appears as if passion may also be directed toward destructive behaviours. A spurned employee can be very harmful to an organization. James' interview offered the most vivid description of what a highly committed employee can do if he or she feels slighted by an employer or supervisor. There is increasing attention in the popular press and in the academic literature on issues of employee retribution and workplace violence (Kidder, 2005). This may not always come from an employee who isn't committed to the some facet of the workplace, but rather may come from one who enters a position with

high expectations and a very strong commitment but becomes disenchanted with the employer. In James' case he felt hurt and frustrated by the lack of attention to what he viewed as his very positive contribution to the organization. He described the situation in which he found himself:

> I will never work for them again and anyone who asks me about Nina (supervisor) I don't have a single kind word to say about her. I was so angry and so filled up with rage but it got to a point where I was like I don't care. I'm going to get through this and I'm not going to be stuck in this dead end job. I'm going to make it a goal that I won't end up where these people are in some sense to summarize if you treat me well I will go to war but if you spite me or scorn me you don't want me on the other side of the battlefield because I will bring you down. Watch your back!

This experience clearly had lasting ramifications for James. He no longer intends to work in a municipal recreation environment and even questions whether the public or not for profit sectors are really places for him. His anger and frustration with this situation remain, many months after the experience. James mentioned that he was also happy to tell his story to anyone who listened and would never recommend that particular employer to anyone.

David's comments also reflected the darker side of commitment. He had been asked to participate in some unethical sales behaviour, such as fabricating names for a sales list and creating fictitious winners of free memberships. David's situation worsened, when a client questioned the tactic and his boss took no responsibility instead putting the blame on a rogue employee (David). Eventually the truth surfaced and the manager was removed. However that person remained with the company in new location. David knows what he did

was wrong and seems troubled by the fact that he not only did what he was asked but also he implied that he was still somewhat ashamed of the entire experience. It was evident that it still troubled him and created a negative impression of both the company and the fitness industry that may be hard to alter. More importantly he may also continue to question his own values and decision-making skills. Although these are only two cases, future study of this area of commitment needs attention. This dark side of commitment has not been studied and certainly presents an important area of future study.

Implications for practice

Much of the insight gathered here seems intuitive. In order to build and maintain commitment, organizations should treat employees well, create a challenging work environment, and recognize effort, while building a caring trusting environment. Yet while it may be common sense it seems these are not common practices. Why might this be?

Even the most committed participants interviewed mentioned some critical events that challenged their commitment during the short work arrangements that were the focus of this study. One negative experience can override many positive gestures, but there does seem to be some recourse for managers of contingent workers. What seemed to make a significant difference was the ability of management or supervisors to address and at least attempt to resolve the issue in question. When this happens it appears as if the relationship between the employee and supervisor can be strengthened. A less positive

experience results when a supervisor fails to act or acts in an arbitrary or insincere way. It would be interesting to investigate what is more important, the attempt to resolve the issue or the actual outcome of that action. For example, in Jennifer's case her supervisor did step in to help out in a workplace conflict but it was never really resolved. Yet Jennifer felt very positively about the experience and had a glowing impression of her supervisor and valued her attempt to help out in the situation.

This example suggests that a manager who spends the time up front understanding what is important to a new employee, even if that employee is only there for a few weeks, will be much more likely to see benefits from that employee. In particular, a supervisor enhances the likelihood that employees will be more likely to go above and beyond basic job descriptions (or stick with extreme work conditions), that they will be more caring with clients, and that they will not be a negative influence on other employees. Equally important, it seems that when they leave the job they will be more likely to say good things about an organization and may be more likely to recommend that employer to friends and colleagues.

Limitations

As with any study this effort has limitations. The study involved interviewing twenty-four university students who had had a contingent leisure service work experience. While these conversations did provide significant

insight into the dynamics of commitment among these contingent employees, generalization beyond this group is not the intent of this study. The participants do however represent a wide range of contingent leisure service experiences, a mix of both young men and women, and a variety of positive to negative experiences.

A second limitation is the issue of recollection. For some, this experience was very recent, while for others it was nearly a year since they had worked (several years in one case). The study relied on the recollection of the participants. This can be problematic given that the participants' perspective was the only data source used in the study.

Several tools were employed to help the employee recall the work experience. A critical incident line was used and participants were also requested to bring an item or items that reminded them of their work experience to bring to "life" their stories. These tools are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. The success in using these tools was mixed. The critical incident line was useful in some cases to help the author understand the chronology of events. However in the vast majority of interviews there were only a few or in many cases a single incident that guided their story. In hindsight this is not unusual given the short term nature of the work term.

Recall that the students were asked to bring in any items that reminded them of their work experience. The results of this request proved a disappointment.

Only three of the twenty-four participants brought something in. All were from camp situations and they wore or brought in camp clothing. The failure of this technique might be attributed to several related conditions. First, the author was flexible in scheduling the interviews, in order to enhance convenience for the interviewees, so many of the participants simply dropped by when they found time and often did so without much preplanning. Perhaps more importantly many of the participants had stored memorabilia at their parent's homes, which in many cases are not in the same city as their present home. Also a number of participants didn't know what to bring. For example, participants from health care setting didn't have things like pictures and so on due to the confidential nature of their relationships with their clients. There was no mandatory request to bring anything in and most of the arrangements for conducting the interviews were done by email. This request could have been emphasized more but it is the opinion of the author that it did not significantly impact the richness of the data collected. The vast majority of participants freely shared the details of their work experience in vivid detail. However, this does not mean that the use of visual or audio aids could not improve on future data collection efforts.

Suggestions for Future Research

In addition to adding to our understanding of the contingent leisure service work experience, this research project also highlights some areas that would benefit from future research. One of the most significant findings in this study was the discovery of two non-traditional foci that may help generate and maintain

commitment. Future commitment research in a leisure service context might benefit from considering place and activity involvement when assessing commitment. These constructs are well known in the leisure literature and would seem to be important foci for commitment research in a leisure context. Future research should also clearly differentiate between commitment to clients and a broader commitment to service to more fully understand the nature of the relationship. The commitment to service may also provide insight into the notion of community commitment as many of the participants in this study were focused a particular groups of clients, for example children. It would seem that this form of commitment may be a common bond to the diverse areas of professional focus that fall under the umbrella of leisure service.

Although certainly not conclusive, this study did provide an indication of the validity of Meyer and Herscotivitch's (2002) conceptualization of commitment and outcomes. They suggest that commitment may result in target specific behaviour and outcomes. That is, someone strongly committed to the organization would behave in a way that benefits the organization directly. A future quantitative effort may help delineate which commitment foci are more strongly associated with particular behaviours.

Another interesting topic for further research is that different foci of commitment may be more important in different stages of an employee's tenure in an organization. The dearth of longitudinal and qualitative work in this area has not allowed for much study of how commitment may develop. Although one can not generalize from twenty-four interviews there does appear to a difference between

the foci of commitment related to the attraction of an employee, the retention of an employee, and the performance of that employee. In the case of this particular group, what attracted the employees or created their first commitment impression was often external; a strong connection to the activity (for example, a love of basketball leads one to instruct at a basketball camp), a strong connection to a client group, a strong connection to place, or a strong connection to the opportunity a position will present to employee (career or occupational commitment). Keeping an employee (retention) may be related to other issues (for example, the workgroup). Even those who felt little commitment to any other part the work experience, mentioned that they may return or stuck it out because it fun to socialize with coworkers. The social network was particularly significant here, although it had little bearing on performance. The type of commitment (affective, continuance or normative) may also be an important factor here as individuals without a direct commitment to a relevant work entity may tend to have stronger relationships with co-worker. Future explorations of this topic might consider both the positive outcomes of workgroup commitment as well as the conditions under which more negative outcomes occur such as efforts to block organizational achievement.

As noted, the workgroup seemed to have little to do with employee performance. The role of the group was social rather than functional. No one mentioned incidents or events where they went out their way to help fellow employees or how important the team was to getting the job done. The work group, when mentioned at all, was cited more of means of helping them stick it out, to stay in the position even though it held little other appeal for them. Workgroup did,

however, seem relevant to employee outcomes such as reducing or buffering stress. Future research examining the various forms and foci of commitment in relation to employee's physical and psychological health may fit well with many current research agenda in leisure studies.

Conversely, job performance was more related to organizational support and leadership issues. The role of supervisor and their initial contact with a new employee and contact early in the work term as well as in their ability to deal with critical events seem to be important future study areas. Understanding the employee's starting point or expectations coming into a position seems important for both managers and researchers in this area. A longitudinal study that assess expectations and tracks that employee throughout their work term could prove to be very insightful.

The dark side of commitment has not been studied and certainly presents an important area of future study. Those most highly committed may create the most demanding social contract with their employers. They are willing to commit considerable energy to fulfilling their job requirements but they may expect the employer to match this commitment. If and when the expected support fails to materialize, the employee's energies may be devoted to punishing the organization for failing to fulfill its part of the social contract. How might the formally committed employee act toward the organization, supervisor, work mates or clients?

Perhaps one of the most interesting and fruitful areas for future research might be to examine the evolutionary and revolutionary nature of the development

of commitment. As discussed earlier in this chapter the literature on psychological contracts may be a useful framework from which to base future study in this area. The longitudinal approach discussed earlier would also prove fruitful in addressing this issue.

Future commitment studies could benefit from dyadic or triadic interviews gathering perspectives of the supervisor, employee, and client to get a much more complete view of the group dynamic, rather than relying strictly on employee perceptions. This approach could allow for a stronger understanding of the outcomes of particular commitment levels and foci.

Conclusion

Making the most of an organization's human resources has proven to be both challenging and complex. This research project was developed to address two major issues, to reexamine the commitment construct given the significant changes in the workplace over the past decade and to extend the work on commitment by examining its relevance to a leisure service context. This particular context is especially important to leisure management research as a contingent workforce plays a key role in the delivery of a broad range of leisure services..

Several interesting findings emerged from this study. Overall support was found for a multi-foci perspective of commitment. Commitment existed toward the organization, supervisor, workgroup, occupation, and clients. Further, commitment was also focused on place and commitment to activity. Several key themes

emerged as interviewees discussed the formation of commitment. Specifically, the interviews highlighted the pivotal role of the supervisor (the supervisor was critical to employee recognition, for creating an atmosphere of trust and respect, and for providing necessary organizational support) and of the importance of continual challenge in the workplace. The employee needed to feel that (s)he was pursuing a worthwhile challenge and that the organization appreciated and supported this effort.

In addition, commitment to the client or a commitment to service seemed to be a pre-existing value or condition for many of the employees interviewed. This particular form of commitment has not received extensive research focus and would appear to be very important for further understanding in leisure service organizations.

This particular study is exploratory in regard to contingent employees in leisure settings. It provides an indication that commitment can encourage positive behaviour toward an organization, clients, and fellow employees. For example there was an indication that high commitment lead to an increased likelihood of saying good things about an organization, going above and beyond one's job role, and in the some cases provide a buffer against the stress of the workplace.

Appendix A General Interview Guide

Appendix A

General Interview Guide

I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate. I will be audio taping our conversation and want to confirm that will be ok with you.

I was hoping to talk with you for approximately 60 minutes, and I will be investigating a number of areas related to commitment in the workplace. It is important to realize that I am looking for your opinion and that there are no right or wrong answers; this study is all about your experience and perspective on this topic. I'm really interested in your feelings and experiences .

Any questions before we begin?

TURN TAPE ON!!!

Topics to address

Tell me a little about your last leisure related work experience? Where? When? Responsibilities?

I see you brought along (pictures shirt etc). Tell a little bit about this? Probe relating to importance connection to workplace etc..

Some people talk about commitment as being really engaged with their organization, profession, coworker, supervisor, clients or even the community but I'm really interested in your ideas

In your own words what does commitment mean to you*? Probe related to foci of commitment*

Can you give me an example of what commitment might look like? How might someone demonstrate commitment? Probe for example of employees demonstrating commitment…not necessarily the interviewee.

How committed did you feel? Probe for intensity

Where/who where your feelings directed toward? Give example if needed

Did anyone or anything impact your level of commitment either positively or negatively? (Looking for critical events.. have them describe in detail and mark on sheet) focus back on the different objects of commitment discussed.

Did who or what you felt committed to change throughout the term? If so when? What might have triggered the change?

When you are done school would you want to work for this organization/ with coworkers for clients etc? Probe for depth of feelings?

If anything/anyone…... who or what do you miss most from your workplace?

Who or what do you miss least?

If you were your own boss/manager/supervisor what could would you do to enhance your commitment in this setting?

That concludes the formal areas I hoped to cover thank you!

Is there any question you would have liked me to that I didn't?

Any further comments you would like to add?

Thank you again. If you think of anything else you would like to add or have any questions please drop by (add drop in times) or you can e-mail me at a confidential email (jtmeldru@uwaterloo.ca).

Appendix B Participant Agreement Letter

Appendix B

I agree to participate in an interview conducted by John Meldrum of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies under the supervision of Dr. Ron McCarville. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional detail I wanted about the study. As a participant in this study I will be asked to participate in an interview that will last approximately 60 minutes. I understand that I may decline answering any question(s) at any time during the interview. I understand that anonymous quotes may be used, but I will not be identified in the dissertation or any reports, publications or presentation associated with this research. I also understand that this research has received approval through the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo and that I may contact that office if I have any questions or concerns about my participation in this study.

I have read and fully understand the information above.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's signature; _____

Name of Witness _____

Signature of Witness _____

Date: _____

Appendix C Initial Selection Tool

Appendix C

Please circle the answer that best describes your answer to each question

1.   Have you ever had a recreation/leisure-related work experience?

Yes   No

If **yes** proceed to question 2 **if no** you are complete. Thank you!

Please answer the following questions thinking about your _MOST RECENT_ recreation/leisure work experience

2.   Approximately how much of your time during the work experience involved direct contact with the organization's clients?

0-20%   21-40%   41-60%   61-80%   81-100%

3.   How long did you work for this organization (in months and weeks i.e. 3 months and 2 week)_____

4.   On average how many hours a week did you work?_____

5.   How many years/seasons have you returned to this same employer? (including the most recent experience) _____

6.   Your Age (in years) _____

7.   In my degree my focus area is:_____

8.   In the space provided please briefly describe the organization you worked for and your role there. (e.g. I was a swim instructor for a municipal recreation agency) Please print Thanks!

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Please circle the response that best describes your feeling about each statement

9.   Recreation/leisure as an occupation means a lot to me

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

10.   I am proud to be pursuing a career in recreation/leisure

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

11.   I am enthusiastic about a future career in recreation/leisure

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

12.   I do not identify myself with my recreation and leisure as an occupation

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

Please answer the following questions thinking about the work experience you referred to above.

13.   I really felt that I belonged in this organization

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

14.   This organization had a great deal of personal meaning for me

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

15.   I was proud to belong to this organization

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

16.   I did not feel emotionally attached to this organization

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

17.   I really felt as if this organization's problems were my own.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

18.   My work group meant a lot to me

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

19.   I really felt a sense of belonging to my work group

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

20.   I felt proud to be a member of my work group

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

21.   I did not feel a strong sense of belonging to my work group

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

22.   I did not feel like part of a family in my work group

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

23.   I did not feel emotionally attached to my work group

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

24.   I respected my supervisor

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

25.   I appreciated my supervisor

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

26.   I had little admiration for my supervisor

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

27.   I felt proud to work with my supervisor

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

28.   My supervisor meant a lot to me

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

29.   I did not really feel attached to my supervisor

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

30.   I felt close to my clients

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

31.   I felt emotionally attached to my clients

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

32.   My clients meant a lot to me

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

33.   I did not feel especially attached to my clients

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

34.   In general, I liked my clients

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

35.   I identified little with the expectations of my clients

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

36.   Given the opportunity, I would work for this employer again.

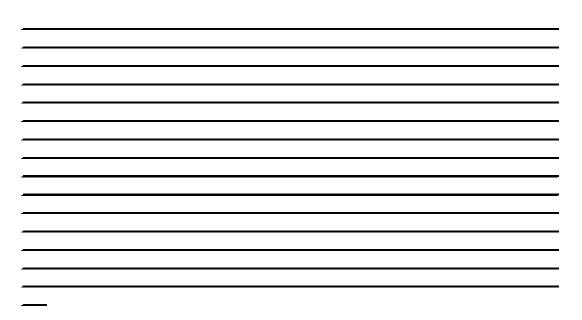| 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

37.   Overall this was an outstanding work experience.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

38.   ***Did anything else impact your feeling of attachment or identification with your las work experience? If so please describe below.***

_____
_____
_____
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Please see next page!!

__Please read and complete the following page__

As part of this study I am also conducting interviews to discuss perceptions of your most recent leisure related work experience. The interview will last approximately one hour and will be arranged at your convenience on campus. You are under no obligation to participate. If you choose to be a part of the interviews please sign below and provide me with the best way to contact you. As a token of appreciation for participation anyone who volunteers for the interview portion of the study will be entered into a draw for one of three $20.00 gift certificates to a the University of Waterloo's bookstore. If you agree please read and sign below.

I agree to participate in an interview conducted by John Meldrum of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies and held on campus. I understand I will be asked to participate in an interview that last approximately 60 minutes and that I may decline answering any question(s) at any time during the interview. I understand that anonymous quotes may be used, but I will not be identified in the dissertation or any reports, publications or presentation associated with this research. I also understand that this research has received approval through the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo and that I may contact that office if I have any questions or concerns about my participation in this study.

I have read and fully understand the information above.

Participant's Name (please print)　＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

Participant's signature;　　　　　＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

Date:　　　　　　　　　　　　＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

⇒　　　**Preferred contact method**

Email: ＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

Phone: ＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿Best time/days to call?＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

Other: _____

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