



Understanding the Perception of Organizational Commitment During COVID-19 Pandemic: Senior Hotel Managers' Perspective

Nurullah Cihan AĞBAY^a , *Nurhak AKBUDAK^b 

^a Bitlis Eren University, Kanık School of Applied Sciences, Department of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts, Bitlis/Turkey

^b Akdeniz University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Tourism Management, Antalya/Turkey

Article History

Received: 21.10.2021

Accepted: 01.12.2021

Keywords

Organizational commitment

COVID-19 pandemic

Short-Time working
payment

Qualitative research

Antalya

Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate whether the commitment of senior hotel managers to their organizations has changed during COVID-19 pandemic. Designed as a case analysis, the study has collected data from 30 different senior hotel managers working in 10 different hotels in Belek, a tourism region in Antalya, Turkey. To this end, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted. The data have been assessed through descriptive analysis and the findings have shown that themes such as income, psychological ownership, self-sacrifice, equity, alternatives, experience, career, occupational commitment, global crisis perception, and empathy explain the managers' commitment to their organizations. As a result of the study, three different situations regarding the commitment of managers to their organizations during COVID-19 pandemic have been identified: The managers' level of commitment has increased, decreased, or remained the same.

Article Type

Research Article

* Corresponding Author

E-mail: nurhakakbudak@gmail.com (N. Akbudak)

DOI:10.21325/jotags.2021.898

INTRODUCTION

Having emerged at the end of 2019, COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected employment in service sectors. For example, hotels laid off their employees because of lower demand in tourism (Gössling et al., 2020). In some countries, governments have announced financial supports for employees to overcome pandemic crisis (Nicola et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2020). In Turkey, some of the private sector employees have benefited from the Short-Time Working Payment (STWP) granted by the state while some employees such as seasonal and retired workers could not receive any financial support. Some employees' labor contracts were terminated or they were forced to take unpaid leave (Demir et al., 2020). Although the hospitality sector resumed its activities with the arrival of summer season, fewer people were employed due to lower demand, international bans on travelling, and the increasing fixed costs (Ekren et al., 2020). Given these circumstances, some employees that used to work in hotels became unemployed as a result of COVID-19 and some of the employees returned back to their jobs for the new season. Considering that hospitality sector is highly susceptible to the adverse effects of economic, political, and environmental crises, it was the employees who had to suffer the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in these regards (Hall, 2010; Inkson & Minnaert, 2018; Altınay & Arici, 2021).

Aside from the layoffs and state support, the employees working in the hotels had to comply with the newly introduced hygienic standards and, to rapidly adapt to the measures that were announced by the state while also, making efforts to protect their own health (KTB, 2020), which in turn increased the tourism establishments' responsibility toward both their guests and employees during COVID-19 pandemic. This also brings along the question pertaining to the quality and diversity of the opportunities that organizations can offer to their employees and to what extent they can protect their employees in adverse circumstances. For instance, a recent research (Hamouche, 2020) reveals that organizational factors affect the mental health of employees working in different industries and sectors during the pandemic. In a similar vein, periods of crises might adversely affect the employees' level of stress, job satisfaction, and motivation (Ankudinov et al., 2015; Kapar, 2012; Chraif & Anitei, 2010).

By focusing on senior managers working in hotels, this study examines the notion of 'organizational commitment' (OC), which plays a significant role in employees' work lives. It thereby aims to investigate whether the managers' commitment to their organizations has undergone any change during the COVID-19 pandemic and to elaborate on the possible reasons for any change that is observed.

Impacts of COVID-19 on job and organizational behavior sub-themes such as turnover intention, work attitudes in hospitality and tourism sector have been researched since the beginning of the pandemic (Bajrami et al., 2020; Bucak & Yiğit, 2021; Jung et al., 2021; Vo-Thanh et al., 2020). However, how the COVID-19 pandemic affected organizational commitment in hospitality sector has not drawn adequate attention in the recent studies. In view of this scarcity, this study aims to contribute to the OC literature by conducting a qualitative study on senior managers' level of organizational commitment.

Literature

Conceptual Framework

In the early scientific works carried out on this issue, Becker (1960, p. 33-37) described commitment as "consistent lines of activity" by the employees. What determines these consistent lines of activities are actually

bureaucratic arrangements such as seniority rights, and side bets such as social relations and cultural expectations. Becker thus explained OC as employees' commitment to the organization in line with their own priorities (side bets). According to Kanter (1968), OC is the process of reconciling or merging employees' own interests with the implementation of socially arranged behaviors so that they could meet their needs and maintain their interests. For the continuance of the individual's commitment to the organization, s/he should have benefits there so as to stay and there should be a price when s/he leaves the organization (Kanter, 1968). Porter et al. (1974) defined OC as individual's integration with the organization and his/her force to maintain organizational membership.

Meyer and Allen (1991) explained OC by referring to different components. In their study in which they tested Becker's side bet theory (Meyer & Allen, 1984), they explained OC by using the concepts of "continuance commitment" (CC) and "affective commitment" (AC) (1984, p. 373-375). In their opinion, CC referred to the fact that employees were committed to their organization due to the high costs of leaving it. These costs such as seniority, individual's organizational skills and status, and the advantages provided by the organization, were based on Becker's side-bet theory (Meyer & Allen, 1984). It can be thereby stated that the employees' obligation to work in an organization plays a role in their CC (Allen & Meyer, 1990). AC refers to an individual's emotional intimacy and identification with and his/her participation in the organization. In this component of commitment, the individual is willing to work in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). More descriptions of OC can be found in the literature.

Lastly, Meyer and Allen used the concept of 'normative commitment' (NC), in addition to CC and AC, to explicate OC. They explain NC as the individual's "sense of obligation" to stay in the organization. A high level of NC in an individual actually stems from his/her feeling of being compelled to do so (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Considering these three components of commitment, OC is a psychological state that determines employees' relationships with their organizations and affects their decision to stay in or leave their organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

More descriptions of OC can be found in the literature. There are studies providing a chronological classification or comparisons of these descriptions (Gül, 2002; Cohen, 2007)

The Antecedents of Organizational Commitment

There are different antecedents, classifications, and criteria with respect to OC in the literature (Steers, 1977; Mowday et al., 1982; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Dunham et al., 1994; Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). This study addresses the antecedents that Allen and Meyer (1990) developed by drawing on the literature.

Antecedents of AC: For affective commitment, Allen and Meyer (1990) drew on Mowday et al.'s (1982) antecedents such as personality traits, organizational structure, work experience, and job specifications. The antecedents that they included within this commitment were as follows: "Job challenge, Role clarity, Goal clarity, Goal Difficulty, Management Receptiveness, Peer Cohesion, Organizational Dependability, Equity, Personal Importance, Feedback, Participation" (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 17).

Antecedents of CC: Allen and Meyer (1990, p. 9-18) took Becker's (1960), Farrell and Rusbult's (1981), and Rusbult and Farrell's (1983) studies as the basis and explained the antecedents of CC as follows: "Skills, Education, Relocation, Self-investment, Pension, Community, Alternatives".

Antecedents of Normative Commitment: With reference to NC antecedents, Allen and Meyer (1990) actually drew on Wiener's (1982) study. While explaining NC, Wiener (1982) pointed to the internalized beliefs. The first one of these beliefs is the individual's tendency to believe that s/he should be attached to his/her family, country, friends, and workplace all of which explain his/her commitment and duty in every social situation. The second one is the individual's normative beliefs that are consistent with issues constituting his/her value congruence such as organizational mission, goal, and policy (Wiener, 1982). At this point, Allen and Meyer (1990) firstly cited the individual's familial or cultural experiences prior to his/her work experience so as to assess NC. For example, the children of those people who emphasized loyalty to organization or who worked in the same organization for long years have strong NC. Secondly, they maintained that the organizational values, norms, and organizational socialization, which was comprised of beliefs bringing the members of the organization together, after the individual started a job had an influence on NC (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Wiener, 1982).

In the related studies, the issues affecting OC are not just referred to as antecedents but also as variables or factors. It should also be stated that these will not be perceived in the same manner in every organization or individual, and might demonstrate differences (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

A study investigating the changes that the hospitality sector has undergone during the COVID-19 pandemic has been identified in the literature. This study uses a quantitative approach (Filimonau et al., 2020) and examines the commitment of hotel managers in Spain. It found that the organizations' corporate social responsibility practices contributed to the managers' sense of job security, and thereby increased their OC as well.

In another study (Prochazka et al., 2020) that was conducted during COVID-19 period, it was found that the employees working in different sectors in Germany, Czech Republic, Italy, and Slovakia had decreased levels of OC compared to the pre-pandemic period. There are also studies showing that employees' level of OC change not only in the tourism sector but also in various other sectors due to economic or political crises (Meyer et al., 2017; Machokoto, 2020; Markovits et al., 2014; Reade & Lee, 2012).

Methodology

Considering that only a short amount of time has passed since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, it might be a good idea to conduct qualitative interviews with employees as pointed out by Spurk and Straub (2020) in an attempt to reveal their thoughts pertaining to issues such as their commitment to work and their relationship with their coworkers. This study focuses on senior managers in five-star hotels during the COVID-19 pandemic by adopting a qualitative approach, which differentiates it from many other studies investigating different sectors and crises in connection with this subject.

Patterned in the form of case study, this article uses criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling strategies (Patton, 2018). The senior hotel managers who worked in the pre-pandemic season (in 2019) and continued to work in the same hotel during the pandemic (in 2020) with the start of the season in Belek-Antalya were identified as the unit of analysis for the study. These participants were reached through the social relationships of one of the authors of the article who is also an executive manager in a five-star hotel chain in addition to being a PhD student. All the interviews took place in September 2020 by the first author of the article in the workplaces of the participants (in their offices, hotel lobbies, hotel gardens). Since most of the hotels were closed in Belek tourism region in Antalya

when the research was conducted, data have been collected from some of five-star hotel establishments' senior managers. Prior to the interviews, the participants were informed about the subject of the study, its details, and its goals. They were given a voluntary participation form to read and then they were asked to sign the participation consent form. Two participants who did not want to be recorded during the interview were not included in the study. A total of 30 people were interviewed from 10 different five-star hotels and 12 different departments. Interviews lasted between 14 to 26 minutes. All the interviews were carried out in Turkish. In the beginning, 46 managers willing to participate in the interviews were identified. However, due to the fact that the participants presented similar views, in other words the data they provided repeated themselves, the data were found to be satisfactory and no further interview was carried out (Saunders et al., 2018) after the 30th interview. Names of the hotels and managers were not detailed in any part of the study (See Appendix).

The data were collected through semi-structured interviewing technique that helps explore the “perceptions and opinions of respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive issues” (Barriball & While, 1994, p. 330). In order to encourage participants to “speak freely about their perceptions”, the first two structured questions were developed after the literature review that covered the main content of the research subject (Kallio et al., 2016, p. 2960). The ethics committee permission to collect data for this study was obtained from Bitlis Eren University Ethics Committee with approval code 2020/07-V dated September 9th, 2020.

Main research question in this article is “whether there is any change in senior hotel managers' commitment to their organization during COVID-19 pandemic”. At the beginning of the interview, the participants were asked the following questions: ‘Do you feel any commitment to your organization?’, ‘Do you think your commitment to the organization has changed during the pandemic?’ With regard to the answers that came to a deadlock and in order to receive “optimal responses” (Turner, 2010, p. 758) and further details, probing questions were posed (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The thematic coding of the data were assessed by two independent academics and its reliability was measured. In order to increase the trustworthiness of this case study (Çakar and Aykol, 2020) Cohen's Kappa analysis method was used and the harmony (Kappa=0,92) between the two independent coders turned out to be perfect (Landis & Koch, 1977).

Findings and Discussion

The findings of the research have been categorized into ten sub-themes. The literature on OC was used while these themes were determined. The themes that were identified in order to assess the commitment of the managers to their organizations are as follows: *Income*, *Self-sacrifice*, *Equity*, *Psychological Ownership*, *Alternatives*, *Experience*, *Global Crisis Perception*, *Empathy*, *Occupational Commitment*, *Career*.

Income

Income is an essential criterion for an employee's choice of workplace and it has emerged as an integral part of evaluating one's OC. The views of the participants on this issue are as follows:

‘There is nothing keeping me here right now. I just come here because I need to live on, because I have to work... The personnel were not given a raise; their salaries were not arranged accordingly; the overtime hours were not paid. For example, last year we were paid for working overtime including me; however, there is no progress at all for the time being, nothing...’ (P26)

‘I was not able to make ends meet with the money I received from the state and as a manager, I had to work somewhere else. I had to work at a construction site that is outside the hotel, do I make myself clear?’(P24)

‘Of course it unsettled us... The organization didn’t pay anything at all. I had to make ends meet with the money that the state gave. The organization paid nothing to me, did nothing for me.’(P20)

‘We were treated unjustly for 3 months... These 3 months financially perturbed me...’(P17)

‘It changed Sir, it changed. During the pandemic, our company didn’t look after us. We were paid STWP for 3 months; we were treated unjustly... We work in a large group, in a large firm. This firm could have looked after us for 2-3 months.’(P16)

‘...Unavoidably, our loyalty has somehow weakened... Financially, it could have at least paid us our full salaries...’(P3)

One could say that the managers have negative thoughts regarding their organizations compared to the pre-pandemic period especially due to the fact that their income decreased during this time period. It is possible for employees who earn a higher income to become more committed to their organization (Ogba, 2008). In this context, the result can be explained with the significant relationship between income and OC (Tang & Chiu, 2003; Aytaç et al., 2019). As there are employees who were adversely affected by the decrease in their income, there are also managers who feel satisfied with their income.

‘No, on the contrary... The decisions that our bosses, our general manager have taken, the fact that we received an early raise and that we weren’t laid off... it is because they did what needed to be done...’(P11)

‘Yes, it changed. It changed in a positive way... We are actually more committed to our organization, so we didn’t leave it. Our workload has doubled with the decrease in the personnel... Our boss paid our salaries as if we received the STWP.’(P9)

‘I think positively... Even the fact that the hotel is closed means a huge cost and it requires manpower. During this process, my company gave me this opportunity (to work full-time).’ (P6)

‘...Our salaries, insurance premiums were paid on time without doing injustice to anyone involved. This is what matters to me the most... I didn’t work but I wasn’t treated unjustly. They completed the rest of the money given by the state... I can say that they were 100% supportive during those dark days... This is loyalty, I mean I might die and I still wouldn’t leave this place because it didn’t leave me high and dry.’(P25)

As has been expressed in the abovementioned quotations, the reason as to why the OC level of these employees increased even though their income remained the same can be explained through their concern for being laid off and finding themselves in a financially more precarious position.

Psychological Ownership

As there are people who think that their OC has increased even though their income has remained the same, there are also people who act on the basis of psychological ownership in relation to their organization during a challenging period. However, the number of these people is limited. The views of the participants on this issue are as follows:

‘The hotel has become my home... I made them dishes as if I was making them in my own home; I made çiğ köfte [raw meatballs], whatever you may think of...’(P11)

‘I think because we found ourselves in a difficult position and due to a familial instinct, my commitment to this place has increased a little... I can say that this is an instinct, an instinct to protect one’s family...’(P7)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the managers began to care about their organization as if it were their own family and it contributed to their OC. This situation can be explained through the significant relationship established between psychological ownership and OC (Dyne & Pierce, 2004; Mayhew, 2007).

Self-Sacrifice

Another important theme that has emerged during the analysis of the data is self-sacrifice. The managers relate the self-sacrifices that they think they made in their work lives to their commitment to the organization. The views of the participants regarding the issue of self-sacrifice, which is interpreted in two different ways, are as follows:

‘...In a sense, we worked more considering what we received in return; however, we didn’t receive any extra support during the pandemic. Is this how they pay us in return for our long years in the organization? Don’t any of our overtime count?’(P30)

‘... It should be the rich people who make sacrifices for the poor. Why should I make sacrifices for my boss for making him richer? Do you know how stupid it sounds? Is he not able to take bread to his house?’(P24)

‘We understood that our company didn’t stand by us in such a difficult time, that so much work for such a long time didn’t amount to anything... We didn’t receive what we deserved during this time either... Let’s say that I was working 12-13-15 hours a day before. I didn’t receive any payment for working overtime then. I didn’t receive anything; I didn’t demand it. I worked voluntarily and readily... For now, I don’t...’(P17)

It can be said that the self-sacrifices that the participants made during the pre-pandemic period were not recognized during the pandemic period, and this in return had a negative effect on their commitment to the organization. As a matter of fact, the existence of a significant relationship between employees’ self-sacrifices and their level of OC supports this view (Zorlu et al., 2016; Mete, 2019).

‘Everyone was in their home during the pandemic. I came to the hotel so that the hotel would not be empty. I came here and I was here every day voluntarily...’(P13)

‘We assume responsibility here... I come here at 8 am or 9 am and leave at 11 or 12 pm. I mean my commitment has not changed...’(P5)

‘Thinking that this was a period in which everyone had to take responsibility...’(P2)

‘...everyone had to take responsibility, therefore I did not demand extra money from my employer...’(P10)

In addition to those people who feel that their sacrifices were not acknowledged some of the participants think that they should make sacrifices for their organization during a time of crisis.

Equity

The use of concepts such as rights and justice by different participants demonstrates the significance of equity for OC. In this context, equity, which is also one of the antecedents of AC, has been considered as one of the factors explaining the change in individuals' degree of OC. Some of the comments that emphasize the sense of equity are as follows:

'Since I witnessed that there were injustices in the treatment of people, this affected me negatively...' (P27)

'Giving things to some people and not to others unavoidably leads to injustice of the sort that I have just described in reference to a father and his kids... and we are the operations department... So I think that this is how they see me, this is the value they attach to me. I think that we are worthless in the eyes of the organization...' (P21)

'The General Manager did not call me to ask how I was, whether I had a job or not. But they asked other people... I mean if it is a right, then it is a right for everybody. But some people were favored.' (P20)

'Here, the animation and the mini club are closed. There are no children in the hotel and while seven animators work in the mini club, I don't work... I would have understood if what I did was unnecessary to the functioning of the hotel...' (P19)

The participants thought that the sense of equity changed during the pandemic and this has emerged as one of the reasons why the OC of the employees decreased. This can be explained through the significant relationship between the perception of equity and justice, and OC (Roberts et al., 1999; Quirin et al., 2001; Meyer et al., 2002; Loi et al., 2006).

Alternatives

Another important finding that stands out among the participants' views is the theme of 'alternatives'. This can explain why participants' commitment to their organization remained the same. The theme of alternatives is one of the antecedents of CC and the comments of the participants on this issue are as follows:

'Personally, I don't think it has changed for me...', '...If I go somewhere else, the salary that I will receive will not be different than my current one....' (P28)

'I mean we got angry and so on but there was no better alternative...that's why...' (P12)

'...I provide for my family and I have to work. Since we work in the tourism sector, even if we leave here because of the adverse circumstances, it is really difficult to find a job in a different place; alternatives are hard to find right now...' (P4)

The fact that managers feel that they might not be able to find another job somewhere else, that they think that there is no alternative to their current job may explain why their OC remained the same. This finding is consistent with the other studies in the literature showing that the employees keep working in their workplaces due to a lack of alternatives (Yousef, 2002; Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Experience

Even though they are few in number, there are participants who think that the policies of the organization are understandable given the current crisis.

‘No, it didn’t affect me personally because I worked in commerce for long years and I know more or less how the bosses think.’(P22)

‘We didn’t experience any problem with regard to commitment. We received the STWP from the state so I didn’t experience a financial fall. I mean given my age and experience I took this term normally....’(P1)

The fact that some managers interpret the negative experiences they encounter in their organizations by referring to their previous experiences can be seen as one of the reasons as to why their commitment to their organization remained the same. As a matter of fact, it can be explained with the significant relationship between experience and AC in particular (Meyer et al., 2002).

Career

Despite a decrease in income, career has emerged as an important concept during the pandemic. There are participants who deem the current situation as normal by thinking about their careers and future. And there are also people who do not have any goals regarding their careers. In other words, there are two different situations explaining the OC by linking it to one’s career. The participants’ answers in reference to this issue are as follows:

‘It is the same; there are no changes... I can continue as long as I see my career goal... I view it as a step...’(P15)

‘As the hotel is part of an international chain, I think it will be good for my career. It harbors more than one career alternatives, opportunities...’(P12)

‘I see this place as offering me opportunities.’(P13)

‘No, it didn’t lead to any change...’, ‘My goal is to make a career...’(P23)

‘Since I don’t have a career goal, I don’t have any resentment at the moment.’(P18)

The emergence of career as an important factor can be explained with the positive relationship between career prospects or its phases and OC (Almıçık et al., 2012; Allen & Meyer, 1993).

Occupational Commitment

Occupational commitment, which has been researched comprehensively in the literature in respect to its relationship to OC, has also emerged in this study. Although, occupational commitment is “different from OC” (Uçar et al., 2020, p. 42), the commitment of the managers to their jobs can be seen as an important finding for the continuance of their OC. The participants’ views on the subject are as follows:

‘It didn’t. I love working, I love the organization, I love being in this job...’(P14)

‘...I am committed to my job. It is about the job, not about the organization...’(P15)

‘...I can say that it is like the self-actualization phase in Maslow’s pyramid.’(P12)

Just like career prospects, it can be seen that occupational commitment is also a concept that can explain why OC of the employees remained the same. The views of the participants illustrate that occupational commitment can have an influence on OC (Figueira et al., 2015; Chang et al., 2007; Meyer et al., 1993). It can be argued that the managers’ thoughts regarding their commitment to their jobs are more important than their OC. For this reason, one could say that their level of OC remained the same.

Global Crisis Perception

In addition to the other themes that are found in the OC literature, the concept of global crisis draws attention in this study. In fact, global crisis has emerged not as a phenomenon that directly changes one's OC but as something that the participants perceive. The views of the participants explaining their thoughts regarding OC by linking it to global crisis are as follows:

'I didn't feel anything negative about this because this is a global crisis. I mean it is not directly up to the hotel itself... Every organization takes its own measures...' (P29)

'No, it didn't lead to any changes... We need to think in general terms. This did not only affect the organizations; it affects the whole world and all countries and all republics since it is a crisis...' (P23)

'...These days will pass... Global crisis...' (P14)

'...our country and the world have been going through a difficult period. It is a crisis experienced by both our country and the world.' (P13)

'Personally, there were no changes because I was aware that the organization did not lead to the COVID-19 outbreak or this psychological difficulty had no connection with the organization, that it was a global problem...' (P8)

'This is not a crisis that is caused by the bosses...' (P22)

The fact that the COVID-19 pandemic is a global health crisis, which was not caused by the employers, can explain why the employees' OC remained the same. No studies have been found in the literature addressing how such a global crisis perception can affect one's commitment to the organization.

Empathy

Another important finding of the study is that the managers explain their OC by empathizing. In this context, the participants consider the decisions taken by the organization as legitimate practices. Some of the views regarding this issue are as follows:

'Let me be clear I have never felt something like that during the pandemic because this period harbors a great uncertainty. We need to sit down and talk as reasonable individuals. If I were running a place, I wouldn't deem it right to spend every penny in my pocket during an uncertain period...' (P18)

'...So, the boss doesn't have to do this. No, s/he has no such obligation whatsoever but we cannot judge him/her because s/he didn't do so...' (P5)

'... depending on the fullness of the hotel, the boss could have continued with fewer personnel, with fewer managers but at some point, they made us work...' (P2)

'When I put myself in their shoes, I can understand. So I really didn't have any problem...' (P1)

One can say that the participants thought that the owners of their organizations were in a worse condition compared to them. They evaluated this from the owners' perspective by empathizing with them through the pandemic process. No studies that address how empathizing with the employer can be linked to OC have been found in the literature.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Designed as a qualitative case study, this study aims to investigate whether there was any change in senior hotel managers' commitment to their organization during COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of the study have been assessed and classified into ten subthemes: *Income, Psychological Ownership, Self-sacrifice, Equity, Alternatives, Experience, Career, Occupational Commitment, Global Crisis Perception, and Empathy*. Three different results that came into view from this study regarding managers' OC were interpreted by using these themes.

Firstly, it can be stated that the managers' commitment to their organizations decreased during the pandemic. The fact that the managers' *income* decreased compared to the pre-pandemic period can be shown as the most important reason for the decrease in their OC. In association with income, some managers' *self-sacrifices* for the workplace in the past were unrecognized by the employers and this was another reason why their level of OC was on the decrease. The managers' belief that the organizational policies were not implemented *equitably* in the organization also contributed to the decrease in their commitment to the organization.

Secondly, even though few in numbers, some managers' OC increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some managers regard their organization as their family or home and they thereby present *psychological ownership* regarding the organization. This can be seen as the underlying reason of the increase in their OC. Besides, one can argue that for those people who received their full salary or who received Short-Time Working Payment (STWP) from the state and the rest of whose salary was completed by their employers showed increased level of OC. It is interesting that even though their commitment to the organization increased, there was no nominal increase in their income. It means that they either kept receiving their previous salaries or the organization completed the salaries of those who received the STWP from the state. The reason of this could be the fear of losing one's income or becoming unemployed that led to this. The finding that job security increases the managers' OC (Filimonau et al., 2020) supports this result.

Thirdly, no change was observed in the OC level of the employees during COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike the first two results, it is possible to explain this result by referring to more themes. When the managers had no *alternatives* and they considered the organizational policies during the pandemic as normal on the basis of their *experiences*, their commitment to their organization remained the same.

For some participants, their *career* prospects and *occupational commitment* came to the fore and this led to no change in their commitment. *Empathy* in favor of the employers, the perception that it was not their employer who led to the pandemic and that it was a global crisis, and their thoughts for making *sacrifices* in this regard can be shown among the reasons as to why their commitment to their organizations did not change. As in the article in which the effect of economic crisis on OC is investigated (Markovits et al., 2014), observing no change in the OC is consistent with the findings of this article. However, in this study, the findings that the OC did not change due to the global crisis perception, that the employers' policies were accepted by empathizing with the employer, and sacrifices that were made for the sake of the employer during the COVID-19 pandemic are different results that warrant further examination.

The findings of the study have been interpreted from three different angles. In this context, it is suggested that the results of this study should be supported with both qualitative and quantitative studies that will be conducted at

different times by considering the different components of OC in other tourism regions, hotel chains and with other managers and employees.

The following suggestions could be taken into consideration by the organizations in the hospitality sector:

- If the organizations take decisions justly without making any discrimination among their employees, this could help increase the employees' OC.

- According to the study, the people who work overtime are not paid more than their regular salaries in some hotels but it is clear that they expect their efforts to be recognized. In this regard, the organization's protection of its employees' rights at any period will protect the organization legally and might also contribute to the increase in employees' OC.

- The support provided by the employers during crises, especially with regard to income might increase employees' OC.

This study was conducted in the hospitality sector during COVID-19 pandemic, which differentiates it from other studies. The fact that pandemic was ongoing in 2020 and that there were a few open hotels in Belek tourism area in Antalya presents the most important limitations of the study. The increase and decrease in organizational commitment and its components along with no observed change in the degree of organizational commitment during different crises such as political and economic crises are results that can be observed in the literature (Reade & Lee, 2012; Meyer et al., 2017; Markovits et al., 2014). However, the 'global crisis perception' and 'empathy' for the employers can be seen as new dimensions that appeared in this study, which was conducted by adopting with a qualitative approach, and these dimensions represent the contribution of this study to the organizational commitment literature.

Declaration

The contribution of all authors to the article is equal. The authors have no relevant conflict of interest to disclose. The ethics committee permission to collect data for this study was obtained from Bitlis Eren University Ethics Committee with approval code 2020/07-V dated September 9th, 2020.

REFERENCES

- Almıçık, Ü., Almıçık, E., Akçin, K., & Erat S. (2012). Relationships between career motivation, affective commitment and job satisfaction, *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Science*, 58, 355-362. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.09.1011>
- Allen, N. J., & Meyer, J. P. (1990). The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 63(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.1990.tb00506.x>
- Allen, N. J., & Meyer, J. P. (1993). Organizational commitment: Evidence of career stage effects?, *Journal of Business Research*, 26(1), 49-61. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0148-2963\(93\)90042-N](https://doi.org/10.1016/0148-2963(93)90042-N)
- Altınay, L., & Arici, H.E. (2021). Transformation of the hospitality services marketing structure: A chaos theory perspective, *Journal of Services Marketing*, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-01-2021-0017>

- Ankudinov, A., Lebedev, O., & Sachenkov, A. (2015). Empirical analysis of job satisfaction determinants in Russia, *Asian Social Science*, 11(4), 111-125 <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ass.v11n4p117>
- Aytaç, S., Işığışok, Ö., Başol, O., & Saygılı, E. (Aralık, 2019). Ücret düzensizliğinin örgütsel bağlılık ve işten ayrılma niyetine etkisi: Bir araştırma örneği. *Karatahta/İş Yazıları Dergisi*, 15, 75-96.
- Bajrami, D. D., Terzić, A., Petrović, M. D., Radovanović, M., Tretiakova, T. N., & Hadoud, A. (2020). Will we have the same employees in hospitality after all? The impact of COVID19 on employees' work attitudes and turnover intentions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 94, 102754, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102754>
- Barriball, L. K., & While, A. (1994). Collecting data using a semi-structured interview: a discussion paper. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 19(2), 328–335. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.1994.tb01088.x>
- Becker, H. S. (1960). Notes on the concept of commitment, *American Journal of Sociology*, 66(1), 32–40. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/222820>
- Bucak, T., & Yiğit, S. (2021). The future of the chef occupation and the food and beverage sector after the COVID-19 outbreak: Opinions of Turkish chefs, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 92, 102682, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102682>
- Chang, H.-T., Chi, N.W., & Miao, M. C. (2007). Testing the relationship between three-component organizational / occupational commitment and organizational / occupational turnover intention using a non-recursive model, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 70(2), 352–368. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2006.10.001>
- Chraif, M., & Aniței, M. (2011). The impact of economic crisis on occupational stress and counterproductive behavior in a food and beverage restaurant chain from Romania, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 30, 2644–2650. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.10.517>
- Cohen, A. (2007). Commitment Before and After: An Evaluation and Reconceptualization of Organizational Commitment, *Human Resource Management Review*, 17, 336–354. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2007.05.001>
- Çakar, K., & Aykol, Ş. (2020). Case study as a research method in hospitality and tourism research: A systematic literature review (1974–2020). 62(1), 21–31. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1938965520971281>
- Demir, M., Günaydın, Y., & Demir, Ş., (2020). Koronavirüs (Covid-19) salgınının Türkiye'de turizm üzerindeki öncülleri, etkileri ve sonuçlarının değerlendirilmesi, *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education Research*, 6(1), 80-107. <https://doi.org/10.24289/ijsser.734263>
- Dunham, R. B., Grube, J. A., & Castañeda, M. B. (1994). Organizational commitment: The utility of an integrative definition. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79(3), 370-380. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.79.3.370>
- Dyne, L. V., & Pierce J. L. (2004). Psychological ownership and feelings of possession: Three field studies predicting employee attitudes and organizational citizenship behavior, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25, 439-459. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.249>

- Ekren, N., Aykaç A. E., & Güner, Y. (2020), *Covid 19 salgın dönemi ekonomi anketi: İşletmelerde karşılaşılan sorunlar ve çözüm önerileri*, İstanbul: Plusone Basım Matbaa.
- Farrell, D., & Rusbult, C. E. (1981). Exchange variables as predictors of job satisfaction, job commitment, and turnover: The impact of rewards, costs, alternatives, and investments. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 28(1), 78–95. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073\(81\)90016-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073(81)90016-7)
- Figueira, D. J. G., Nascimento, J. L. R. P., & Almeida, M. H. R. G. (2015). Relation between Organizational Commitment and Professional Commitments: An Exploratory Study Conducted with Teachers. *Universitas Psychologica*, 14-1:43-56, <http://dx.doi.org/10.11144/Javeriana.upsy14-1.rboc>
- Filimonau, V., Derqui, B., & Matute, J. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic and organisational commitment of senior hotel managers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 91, 102659, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102659>
- Gössling, S., Scott, D., & Hall, C. M. (2020). Pandemics, tourism and global change: A rapid assessment of COVID-19, 29(1), 1-20, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1758708>
- Gül, H. (2002). Örgütsel bağlılık yaklaşımlarının mukayesesi ve değerlendirilmesi, *Ege Üniversitesi Akademik Bakış Dergisi*, 2(1), ss.37- 55.
- Hall, C. M. (2010). Crisis events in tourism: Subjects of crisis in tourism, *Current Issues in Tourism*, 13(5), 401-417, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2010.491900>
- Hamouche S. (2020). COVID-19 and employees' mental health: stressors, moderators and agenda for organizational actions [version 1; peer review: awaiting peer review], *Emerald Open Res* 2020, 2(15), <https://doi.org/10.35241/emeraldopenres.13550.1>
- Huang, A., Makridis, C., Baker, M., Medeiros, M., & Guo, Z. (2020). Understanding the impact of COVID-19 intervention policies on the hospitality labor market. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 91, 102660. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102660>
- Inkson, C., & Minnaert, L. (2018), *Tourism management: An introduction*, Second Edition, Sage Publications.
- Jung, H. S., Jung, Y. S., & Yoon, H. H. (2021). COVID-19: The effects of job insecurity on the job engagement and turnover intent of deluxe hotel employees and the moderating role of generational characteristics. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 92, 102703. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102703>
- Kallio, H., Pietilä, A.-M., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological review: developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 72(12), 2954–2965. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13031>
- Kanter, R.M. (1968). Commitment and social organizations: A study of commitment mechanisms in utopian communities. *American Sociological Review*, 33, 499-518. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2092438>
- Kapar, R. (2012). Ekonomik krizlerin çalışanların sağlığı ve güvenliği üzerindeki etkileri, *Çalışma ve Toplum*, 3, 73-100.

- KTB. (2020). Konaklama tesislerinde kontrollü normalleşme süreci genelgesi, *Republic Of Turkey Ministry Of Culture and Tourism*, Retrieved August 14, 2020 from https://tga.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Genelge_2020_6.pdf
- Landis, R. J., & Koch, G. G. (March, 1977). The measurement of observer agreement for categorical data. *Biometrics*, 33(1), 159–174. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2529310>
- Loi, R., Hang-Yue, N., & Foley, S. (2006). Linking employees' justice perceptions to organizational commitment and intention to leave: The mediating role of perceived organizational support. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 79(1), 101–120. <https://doi.org/10.1348/096317905X39657>
- Machokoto, W., (2020). A commitment under challenging circumstances: analysing employee commitment during the fight against covid-19 in the UK, *Int. J. Adv. Res.* 8(04), 516-522. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/10803>
- Markovits, Y., Boer, D., & Van Dick, R., (2014). Economic crisis and the employee: The effects of economic crisis on employee job satisfaction, commitment, and self-regulation. *European Management Journal*, 32(3), 413–422. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2013.09.005>
- Mathieu, J. E., & Zajac, D. M. (1990). A review and meta-analysis of the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of organizational commitment. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108(2), 171-194. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.108.2.171>
- Mayhew, M. G., Ashkanasy, N. M., Bramble, T., & Gardner, J. (2007). A study of the antecedents and consequences of psychological ownership in organizational settings, *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 147(5), 477-500. <https://doi.org/10.3200/SOCP.147.5.477-500>
- Mete, E. S. (2019). The relationship among Altruism, Affective Commitment, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intention: A Research on Boundary Spanning Positions in Hotel Enterprises, *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies*, 7(1), 310-327. <https://doi.org/10.21325/jotags.2019.364>
- Meyer, J. P., Morin, A. J., & Wasti, S. A. (2017). Employee commitment before and after an economic crisis: A stringent test of profile similarity. *Human Relations*, 71(9), 1204–1233. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726717739097>
- Meyer, J. P., Stanley, D. J., Herscovitch, L., & Topolnysky, L. (2002). Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization: A meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates, and consequences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 61(1), 20–52. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.2001.1842>
- Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1997). *Commitment in the workplace: Theory, research, and application*. SAGE Publications.
- Meyer, J. P., Allen, N. J., & Smith, C. A. (1993). Commitment to organizations and occupations: Extension and test of a three-component conceptualization. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78(4), 538–551. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.78.4.538>
- Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1991). A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment. *Human Resource Management Review*, 1(1), 61–89. [https://doi.org/10.1016/1053-4822\(91\)90011-Z](https://doi.org/10.1016/1053-4822(91)90011-Z)

- Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1984). Testing the “side-bet theory” of organizational commitment: Some methodological considerations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 69(3), 372–378. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.69.3.372>
- Meyer, J. P., & Parfyonova, N. M. (2010). Normative commitment in the workplace: A theoretical analysis and re-conceptualization. *Human Resource Management Review*, 20(4), 283–294. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2009.09.001>
- Mowday, R. T., Porter, L. W., & Steers, R. M. (1982). *Nature of Organizational Commitment*. Editor(s): R.T. Mowday, L.W. Porter, R. M. Steers, Employee–Organization Linkages, 19–43, Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-509370-5.50006-X>
- Nicola, M., Z. Alsafi, Sohrabi, C., Kerwan, A., Al-Jabir, A., Iosifidis, C., Agha, M., & Agha, R. (2020). The socio-economic implications of the coronavirus and COVID-19 pandemic: A review. *International Journal of Surgery*, 78, 185-193. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijssu.2020.04.018>
- Ogba, I. (2008). Commitment in the workplace: The impact of income and age on employee commitment in Nigerian banking sector, *Management Research News*, 31(11), 867-878. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01409170810913051>
- Quirin, J.J., Donnelly, D.P., & O'Bryan, D. (2001). Antecedents of organizational commitment: The role of perception of equity, *Advances in Accounting Behavioral Research*, 4, 261-280. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1474-7979\(01\)04076-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1474-7979(01)04076-5)
- Patton, M. Q. (2018). *Nitel araştırma ve değerlendirme yöntemleri* (2 b.). M. Bütün & S. B. Demir (Ed.), (Çev.), Ankara: Pegem Akademi.
- Porter, L. W., Steers, R. M., Mowday, R. T., & Boulian, P. V., (1974). Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Among Psychiatric Technicians, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 59(5), 603–609. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0037335>
- Prochazka, J., Scheel, T., Pirozek, P., Kratochvil, T., Civilotti, C., Bollo, M. & Maran, D.A. (2020), Data on work-related consequences of COVID-19 pandemic for employees across Europe, *Data in Brief*, Vol. 32, p. 106174, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dib.2020.106174>
- Reade, C., & Lee, H.-J. (2012). Organizational commitment in time of war: Assessing the impact and attenuation of employee sensitivity to ethno-political conflict. *Journal of International Management*, 18(1), 85–101. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intman.2011.09.002>
- Roberts, J. A., Coulson, K. R., & Chonko L. B. (1999). Salesperson perceptions of equity and justice and their impact on organizational commitment and intent to turnover, *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 7(1), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10696679.1999.11501815>
- Rusbult, C. E., & Farrell, D. (1983). A longitudinal test of the investment model: The impact on job satisfaction, job commitment, and turnover of variations in rewards, costs, alternatives, and investments. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 68(3), 429–438. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.68.3.429>

- Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., Burroughs, H., & Jinks, C. (2017). Saturation in Qualitative Research: Exploring Its Conceptualization and Operationalization. *Quality & Quantity*, 52(4), 1893–1907. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8>
- Spurk, D., & Straub, C. (2020). Flexible employment relationships and careers in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 119, 103435, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103435>
- Steers R. M., (Mar., 1977). Antecedents and outcomes of organizational commitment source. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 22(1), 46-56. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2391745>
- Tang, T.L., & Chiu, R.K. (2003). Income, money ethic, pay satisfaction, commitment, and unethical behavior: Is the love of money the root of evil for Hong Kong employees? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 46, 13–30. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1024731611490>
- Turner, D.W. (2010) Qualitative interview design: a practical guide for novice researcher. *The Qualitative Report* 15(3), 754–760. Retrieved January 28, 2021 from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol15/iss3/19>
- Uçar, O., Ersoy, A., Aksu, A., & Ehtiyar, V. R. (2020). A field study on the relationship between personality and professional commitment. *International Journal of Business*, 3(1), 39-50.
- Vo-Thanh, T., Thinh-Van V., Nguyen, P. N., Nguyen, D. V., Zaman, M., & Hsinkinguang, C. (2020). How does hotel employees' satisfaction with the organization's COVID-19 responses affect job insecurity and job performance?, 29(6), 907-925. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1850750>
- Wiener, Y. (1982). Commitment in organizations: A normative view. *Academy of Management Review*, 7, 418-428, <https://doi.org/10.2307/257334>
- Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2016). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri*, (10th Ed.). Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.
- Yousef, D. A. (2002). Job satisfaction as a mediator of the relationship between role stressors and organizational commitment: A study from an arabic cultural perspective. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 17(4), 250-266. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940210428074>
- Zorlu, Ö., Avan, A., & Bulut, Ş. (2016). Otel İşletmelerinde İşe Bağlılık Düzeyinin Arttırılması: İşgören fedakârlık tutumunun rolü, *Çatalhöyük Uluslararası Turizm ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 16, 1-16.

Appendix

Table 1. List of Participants

	Experience in Tourism (Year)*	Experience as a Department Manager (Year)	Age	Sex	Education	Income During COVID-19 Pandemic
P1	4	4	52	M	Master Degree	Regular Salary
P2	27	12	45	M	Bachelor	Short-Time Work Payment (STWP)
P3	18	8	38	M	Master Degree	(STWP)
P4	21	3	37	M	Associate's Degree	(STWP)
P5	20	3	34	M	Bachelor	(STWP)
P6	20	10	40	M	Bachelor	Regular Salary
P7	8	2	43	M	High School	(STWP)
P8	15	4	38	F	Bachelor	Salary
P9	33	24	50	F	High School	Retired + Employer's Support
P10	13	4	33	M	Bachelor	(STWP)
P11	24	11	44	F	Associate's Degree	Regular Salary
P12	22	8	43	M	Master Degree	(STWP)
P13	20	5	37	M	Bachelor	Only Employer's Support
P14	18	6	38	M	Bachelor	Only Employer's Support
P15	20	8	39	M	Bachelor	(STWP)
P16	24	12	38	M	Bachelor	(STWP)
P17	16	15	50	M	High School	Retired
P18	27	16	48	F	Bachelor	Retired
P19	16	8	52	M	Bachelor	Retired
P20	24	8	43	M	High School	(STWP)
P21	36	10	44	M	High School	(STWP)
P22	27	2,5	50	M	Bachelor	(STWP)
P23	17	5	35	M	Bachelor	(STWP)
P24	30	12	46	M	High School	(STWP)
P25	32	20	47	M	Primary School	(STWP) + Employer's Support
P26	25	11	44	M	Master Degree	Only Employer's Support
P27	20	8	36	M	Master Degree	Regular Salary
P28	27	15	46	M	High School	(STWP)
P29	32	19	48	M	High School	(STWP)
P30	27	18	47	M	High School	(STWP)

*It shows when the participants began to work in tourism industry.

Participants' departments: Front Office, House Keeping, Accounting, Security, Technical, Sales and Marketing, Guest Relations, Operation, Information Technology, Purchasing, F&B, Revenue.