Affective Commitment in Co-operative Organizations:
What Makes Members Want to Stay?

Iiro Jussila[1], Noreen Byrne[2] & Heidi Tuominen[1]

[1] Department of Management and International Business, School of Business, Lappeenranta University of Technology, Finland

[2] Centre for Co-operative Studies, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland

Correspondence: Iiro Jussila, Department of Management and International Business, School of Business, Lappeenranta University of Technology, P.O. Box 20 FIN-58351, Finland. E-mail: iiro.jussila@lut.fi

Abstract

Affective member commitment is seen as an essential ingredient for sustainable and successful co-operation. It provides co-operatives with flexibility and helps to alleviate the problems of free-riding, property rights, and horizon differences. The importance of affective commitment is highlighted as co-operatives face the challenges of an increasingly globalized business environment. Co-operatives need to promote their members' desire to remain as members and active users of the organization they own. In this paper, we review extant co-operative literature on members' affective commitment and develop proposals on the sources of this type of commitment within a co-operative context. Hence, the focus of this paper is on the sources rather than the outcomes of affective commitment. Affective commitment is explained through three theoretical frameworks, namely organizational identification, organization-based self-esteem, and psychological ownership. Linkages are identified and a theoretical model is presented. Our work creates value for future research and practice of co-operation by summarizing extant knowledge on the sources of affective commitment, specifying previously unspecified relationships, and identifying avenues for future research.

Keywords: co-operative, membership, affective commitment, organizational identification, organization-based self-esteem, psychological ownership

1. Introduction

Co-operatives have proven more resilient than other organizational forms in the international economic crisis which started in 2008 (Birchall, 2009). A major contributor to this resilience has been the unique member relationship with the co-operative as both owner and user of their organization. This creates the context for a closer fit between the organizational design and member needs and hence is a key competitive advantage (Briscoe & Ward, 2000). Even though this relational dimension is clearly a key strength of co-operatives (cf. Jussila, Goel, & P. Tuominen, 2012), much of the co-operative literature tends to primarily focus on the non-relational aspects such as efficiency (Byrne et al., 2012; Røkholt, 1999). This has created the unusual situation where, co-operative researchers will often find greater insight in conventional business literature which appears to be more open to the relational dimension (Røkholt, 1999). Byrne et al. (2012) found that the relationship marketing literature rather than that relating to co-operatives threw far more light on the credit union-member relationship. While this is useful for the development of theoretical frameworks, there is a need for more co-operative literature which puts the relational at the centre.

This is increasingly necessary, as over time the membership base of co-operatives has become less well-defined (Fulton, 1999) and in many ways members have become more distant from their co-operatives (Byrne & McCarthy, 2005). In this context, co-operatives are struggling to maintain a committed membership (Fulton & Adamowicz, 1993) and often commitment is seen as falling below a desired level (Simmons & Birchall, 2004). This is a challenge, since sustainable and successful co-operation requires high member commitment (Fulton & Adamowicz, 1993; Österberg, Hakelius, & Nilsson, 2009). Co-operatives are reliant on their members as users of their service and controllers of their operation (Byrne & McCarthy, 2005; Simmons & Birchall, 2004; Fairbairn, 2003; Le Blanc & Nguyen, 2001). Without commitment, it would be difficult for the co-operatives to even be formed and operated – let alone be efficient and beneficial to the members (Fulton, 1999). Consistently,

lack of member commitment has often been presented as the reason for the demise of co-operatives (Fulton & Adamowicz, 1993; Ilmonen, 1986, 1992).

Recognizing the centrality of member commitment in co-operation several researchers have contributed to the accumulation of knowledge in this field (e.g., Jiménez et al., 2010; Bijman, 2011; Unterrainer, Palgi, Weber, Iwanowa & Oesterreich, 2011; Byrne & McCarthy, 2005; Foreman & Whetten, 2002; Røkholt, 1999; Stryjan, 1989, 1994; Craig, 1980; Kanter, 1968, 1972). Following widely adopted conceptualizations of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991), many of these co-operative scholars have identified continuance (utilitarian), affective, and normative (ideological) dimensions of member commitment reflecting a member's need to, desire to, and/or sense of obligation to maintain membership and patronage in the co-operative (cf. Jussila, Goel, & H. Tuominen, 2012). While utilitarian commitment is seen as the basis for continued support, it is prone to 'switching vulnerabilities' (Oliver, 1997: 395) and hence by itself it is considered a vulnerable form of commitment. Thereby, if a co-operative is to remain as such, it needs more than utilitarian commitment from its members (Craig, 1980; Byrne & McCarthy, 2005).

Some evidence has accumulated and a variety of sources of commitment have been identified to-date. In our view, future research and practice on co-operation will be well served by summarizing existing knowledge and by considering future intellectual and practical needs on the topic. It is towards these ends our paper is directed. In addition, and more importantly, we go beyond existing literature by identifying sources of commitment and variables mediating the relationship between those sources and commitment that have to our knowledge not been explicitly discussed in co-operative research published to-date. In order to secure sufficient rigour and depth, we confine our discussion to the sources of affective member commitment rather than that of utilitarian or ideological commitment.

The following sections are a result of the authors' review and analysis of extant co-operative research on affective member commitment. First, we conceptualize affective member commitment. Next we develop proposals on the sources of member's affective commitment in the co-operative context. Also meditational relationships will be discussed. Then we summarize the proposed connections and compose a model of affective member commitment. The final section will conclude with suggestions future research and practice of co-operation.

2. Co-operatives: Definitions and Scale

Co-operatives have had a long history with the first of them formed more than hundred years ago. Co-operatives are to be found in almost every country and have developed in both capitalist and socialist economic systems. They exist in many different sectors (agriculture, finance, insurance, housing, fishing, energy, social care, community development, arts, industrial etc.) and can be set up by producers, consumers, employees, and residents (Briscoe & Ward, 2000). Co-operatives have a very significant presence across the world, for example in New Zealand, 22% of GDP is generated by co-operatives and in Japan 91% of all farmers are members of Co-operatives (ICA, 2012). The UN estimated in 1994 that almost 3 billion people (nearly half the world's population) secured their livelihood from co-operative enterprise (ICA, 2012). According to Briscoe and Ward (2000), a co-operative can be defined as a *"self-help business owned and democratically controlled by the people who use its services"* (p. 7). While these authors indicate that this definition is over-simplified, they stress that it does highlight *self-help, design for use* and *democratic ownership and control* that are fundamental ideas of co-operatives. Essentially, co-operatives are people versus profit centered enterprises (Parnell, 1999; Birchall, 2010). Hence, the relational processes such as affective commitment are fundamental to co-operative functioning.

3. Sources of Affective Member Commitment

Existing literature on co-operators' commitment (e.g., Jiménez et al., 2010; Byrne & McCarthy, 2005; Foreman & Whetten, 2002) highlights that the affective dimension of commitment is based on an emotional attachment to, and bond with the co-operative society. Thereby, affective commitment is not calculative in nature nor does it reflect a sense of obligation to stay (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Instead, it reflects the member's desire to remain attached to this particular social entity – as the relationship feels good, brings a sense of belonging, and is satisfying (Byrne & McCarthy, 2005). In other words, the affective (attitudinal) dimension of member commitment can be seen as a variable reflecting the extent to which it is likely that a member will find a positive answer to the question: *"Do I want to maintain my membership in and patronage of the co-operative?"*

Several sources of affective commitment have been identified. In the following we will discuss these under three major themes arising from the co-operative literature on affective commitment: (1) identification with the co-operative, (2) co-operative-based self-esteem, and (3) psychological ownership for the co-operative.

3.1 Identification with the Co-operative

Identification with an organization occurs when an individual perceives an "overlap between their self-identity and the cognitive image they have constructed of an organization" (Scott & Lane, 2000: 47). Various researchers have carried out empirical research on organizational identification and have found that people do cognitively identify with focal organizations. This research has been carried out on alumni (Mael & Ashforth, 1992), college athletes (Adler & Adler, 1988), art museum members (Bhattacharya, Rao & Glynn, 1999), and employees (Elsback & Glynn, 1996). Various writers have equated identification with the concept of commitment (Podsakoff, Williams, & Tador, 1986; Porter et al., 1974). However, others are in disagreement with this and argue that identification and commitment are different constructs (Adler & Adler, 1987; Mael & Ashforth, 1992) where identification is organization specific and commitment is not (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). An individual may be committed to a product or brand but need not necessarily identify with the organization whereas if an individual identifies with the organization he/she will also be committed to its products and services. Whetten, Lewis, and Mischel (1992) see affective commitment as a consequence of identification.

Thus, in line with this view we propose:

Proposition 1a: There is a positive relationship between a member's identification with the co-operative and the member's affective commitment towards that co-operative.

Identification can also be seen as a mediator. Whetten, Lewis and Mischel (1992) see identification as the link between organizational identity and affective (as well as ideological) commitment where organizational identity is an expression of those goals, values and purposes which are *enduring, core* and *distinctive* (Albert & Whetten, 1985) to the organization. This is in line with Meyer and Allen's (1991) model, where the member's identification with the organization's goals and values is key to affective commitment. This connection is also found in co-operative literature (e.g., Jiménez et al., 2010). In addition, Foreman and Whetten (2002) found that identity congruence (that is, what the member perceives the identity of their co-operative to be and what they think it should be) has a significant effect on affective commitment. An important dimension of identity comparison for the co-operative member is their expectation that the co-operative is operating in their interests and is guided by fairness (Fulton & Giannakas, 2001; Fairbairn, 2003; Byrne, 2004, 2012) and what they then experience and perceive as the reality. According to Jiménez and colleagues (2010), members' perceptions of fairness and equality amongst the members of the co-operative are a source of emotional attachment to the co-operative. In other words, it seems that there is a connection between perceptions of organizational justice (i.e., procedural and distributive justice; cf. Chi & Han, 2008) and affective commitment. We believe this connection is mediated by member's identification with the co-operative. Members for whom organizational justice is important and who see it as a defining characteristic of their co-operative society will feel they belong to the collective and, thereby, want to stay.

Thus, we propose:

Proposition 1b: There is a positive relationship between a member's perception of organizational justice within the co-operative and the member's affective commitment with the co-operative.

Proposition 1c: The positive relationship between a member's perception of organizational justice within the co-operative and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative is mediated by member's identification with the co-operative.

Co-operative literature leads us to believe that particular organizational features make a difference in the development of identification and, thereby, affective commitment. More precisely, the works of Birchall and Simmons (2005) and Simmons and Birchall (2004) suggest that people typically identify with other people who live in the same area. On the other hand, the work of Tuominen and colleagues (2006) suggests that co-operators (e.g., consumers) typically inhabit the same territory. These notions can be translated into a proposition on the mediating role of identification in the relationship between geographic size of the co-operative and member's affective commitment. In other words, it can be reasoned that the smaller the area members inhabit, the higher the level of member identification with the co-operative and, thereby, the higher the level of member's affective commitment. This connection seems to be supported by the work of Byrne and McCarthy (2005, 2012) who find the increase of size (and distance) being negatively associated with commitment (see also Bijman & Verhees, 2011).

Thus, we propose:

Proposition 1d: There is a positive relationship between compactness of the geographic area the members inhabit and a member's affective commitment towards the co-operative.

Proposition 1e: The negative relationship between the wideness of the area members inhabit and the member's affective commitment with the co-operative is mediated by the member's identification with the co-operative.

In addition, extant research leads us to believe that particular managerial action serves to promote member identification and, thereby, affective commitment. Scott and Lane (2000: 49) state that an organization can influence members' identification by influencing the extent to which members' participation in the organization attracts and holds their mental attention (as compared with available alternatives). By mental attention, these writers are referring to the 'salience' and 'accessibility' the organization holds in the person's working memory. Various researchers have shown that the extent to which people identify with an organization is dependent on: the attractiveness of the organizational identity (that is the extent to which it contributes to self-esteem, self-consistency, and self-distinctiveness) (Dutton et al., 1994), the extent of contact with the organization (Scott & Lane, 2000) and the visibility of membership (Adler & Adler, 1988; Ashforth & Meal, 1989; Bhattacharya et al., 1995; Dutton et al., 1994). It could be said, that a key managerial action to influence all three of these areas is the communication of a distinct identity linked to the members' shared goals and values (i.e., shared identity) (Bijman, 2011; Verhees, 2011; Byrne & McCarthy, 2005)

Drawing on the discussion above, such communication of shared (co-operative) goals and values (identity) is likely to lead to an increase in the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative, identification of the members with the co-operative being the mediator in this relationship.

Thus, we propose:

Proposition 1f: There is a positive relationship between the co-operative's communication of the shared identity and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative.

Proposition 1g: The positive relationship between the co-operative's communication of the shared identity and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative is mediated by the member's identification with the co-operative.

3.2 Co-operative-based Self-esteem

Further, Jiménez et al. (2010) found in their qualitative study that there is a connection between the sense of personal importance evoked by the experiences as a member of co-operative and affective commitment towards the co-operative. Our reading of organization-based self-esteem literature (e.g., Pierce & Gardner, 2004) leads us to believe that it is actually the relationship between organization-based self-esteem and affective commitment that is found by Jiménez et al. (2010). Organization-based self-esteem is a conceptualization of the self that is domain specific (e.g., a conceptualization based on membership in a particular co-operative) and generally known to be associated with commitment (Pierce & Gardner, 2004) and identification (Scott & Lane, 2000). In the context of co-operatives, positive self-defining experiences could be expressed for example in a member's evaluation: "I make a difference in this co-operative" or "I am an important member of this co-operative". It is such perception of personal importance that is seen as being positively associated with the desire to stay in the co-operative (Jiménez et al., 2010).

Thus, we propose:

Proposition 2a: There is a positive relationship between a member's co-operative-based self-esteem and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative.

Byrne and McCarthy (2005) see a positive relationship between the extent the co-operative provides the member with a helping hand in times of trouble (i.e., organizational support) and affective commitment (cf. Craig, 1980). We believe that such a relationship will be mediated by organization-based self-esteem. More precisely, as the co-operative demonstrates support for the member, s/he is likely to come to a deep-seated belief that "I do count in this organization" and "In this organization I am important". This is consistent with the findings of Lee (2003) on the connection of perceived organizational support and organization-based self-esteem.

Thus, we propose:

Proposition 2b: There is a positive relationship between a member's perception of organizational support and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative.

Proposition 2c: The positive relationship between a member's perception of organizational support and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative is mediated by co-operative-based self-esteem.

3.3 Psychological Ownership towards the Co-operative

In research on housing co-operatives it has been found that the resident's affective commitment is promoted by the resident's feelings of ownership for the co-operative (VandeWalle et al., 1995). Jussila and Tuominen (2010)

argue that feelings of ownership are likely to manifest also in the context of consumer co-operatives and possibly lead to a variety of attitudinal consequences, including affective commitment. This connection can be explained by the fact that the target of affective commitment (in this case the co-operative) has become important to the member *per se* (and not for utilitarian reasons) as the member has come to feel the co-operative (or part of it) as part of the self. Importantly, it is not necessarily the co-operative as a social entity that is the target of psychological ownership. Instead, it may be the co-operative organization as a whole or any material and immaterial dimensions or parts of the organization that is the target of a sense of possession, leading to a desire to maintain a relationship with the co-operative.

Thus, we propose:

Proposition 3a: There is a positive relationship between a member's psychological ownership for the co-operative organization and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative.

Co-operative literature (e.g., Byrne & McCarthy, 2005; Simmons & Birchall, 2004; Fulton, 1999) positions control over the co-operative (i.e., having an influence through the use of voice) as another source of affective commitment. Importantly, it is acknowledged that formal right to participate in governance or even the use of voice per se may not be sufficient to create emotional attachment. Instead, it is seen that the member must perceive to have changed something through the use of voice for this particular attitude to develop (Fulton, 1999; Jiménez et al., 2010). In other words, members can quickly become less committed if they sense that they are not being really listened to (Simmons & Birchall, 2004; Fulton, 1999). Similarly, the role of governing bodies and member's indirect control is recognized as important. According to Jiménez et al. (2010), affective commitment increases as a member sees the governing body truly representing her/his interests. It is under these conditions that the member will perceive as having control over the co-operative, even if the sense of being in control is likely to be weaker in the case of indirect influence than in the case of direct influence.

This connection between perceived control and affective commitment can be explained using the psychological ownership framework. That is, a member's control over the co-operative organization is seen as leading to feelings of ownership and a fusion between the member and the organization (Jussila & Tuominen, 2010), which in turn leads to affective commitment towards the co-operative (VandeWalle et al., 1995).

Thus, we propose:

Proposition 3b: There is a positive relationship between a member's perceived control over the co-operative organization and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative.

Proposition 3c: The positive relationship between a member's perceived control over the co-operative organization and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative is mediated by member's psychological ownership for the co-operative.

Jiménez et al., (2010) see affective commitment partly resulting from knowledge provided by the co-operative to the members. This connection between knowledge of the co-operative and affective commitment can also be explained using the psychological framework. According to Jussila and Tuominen (2010), a sense of ownership can only develop if the members recognize the co-operative as their own, come to know it intimately, and realize its meaning. In other words, the connection between member's knowledge of the co-operative organization and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative is mediated by the member's psychological ownership for the co-operative.

Co-operative literature suggests that technological developments may interfere with the development and maintenance of an intimate connection between the member and the co-operative. That is, according to Byrne and McCarthy (2005), carrying out transactions electronically can lead to a sense of distance between the member and the co-operative and, thereby, to the decrease of commitment. It is our belief that the decrease of commitment associated with electronic transactions relates to the fewer opportunities the member has to come to intimately know the co-operative organization as a whole (including its physical and social dimensions). In other words, the more transactions take place face-to-face, the more knowledge and understanding of the co-operative, the stronger psychological ownership, and the stronger affective commitment.

It has also been noted (see Craig, 1980; in Byrne & McCarthy, 2005) that there is a positive relationship between the extent to which the co-operative educates the members and their affective commitment (see also Trechter et al., 2002). Building on the above discussion and assuming that the content of education relates to the co-operative and its operation, this relationship can be explained by placing knowledge of the co-operative and psychological ownership over the co-operative as mediators of the connection.

Thus, we propose:

Proposition 3d: There is a positive relationship between a member's intimate knowledge of the co-operative organization and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative.

Proposition 3e: The positive relationship between a member's intimate knowledge of the co-operative organization and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative is mediated by member's psychological ownership towards the co-operative.

Proposition 3f: There is a positive relationship between the extent to which a member transacts face-to-face with the co-operative and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative.

Proposition 3g: The positive relationship between the extent to which a member transacts face-to-face with the co-operative and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative is mediated by the member's intimate knowledge of and psychological ownership for the co-operative.

Proposition 3h: There is a positive relationship between the co-operative's education activity and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative.

Proposition 3i: The positive relationship between the co-operative's education activity and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative is mediated by the member's intimate knowledge of and psychological ownership for the co-operative.

Following Craig (1980), Byrne and McCarthy (2005) also report a positive relationship between member's investment of their selves (identity, skills, and intellect) in the co-operative organization and affective commitment. Again, the psychological ownership framework is useful for explanation. It is argued by Jussila and Tuominen (2010) that a member's proprietary attachment for the co-operative develops in part through the investment of personal resources (time, intellect, creative juices) into the co-operative. In other words, there is a connection between member's investment (of the self) into to co-operative organization and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative, which is mediated by the member's psychological ownership for the co-operative.

Thus, we propose:

Proposition 3j: There is a positive relationship between a member's investment of the self into the co-operative organization and the member's affective commitment towards the organization.

Proposition 3k: The positive relationship between a member's investment of the self into the co-operative organization and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative is mediated by member's psychological ownership towards the co-operative.

Further, according to Fulton and Adamowicz (1993) there is a connection between age and commitment. That is, older members may want to stay in the co-operative organization due to a sense of and pride in ownership as they have (over time) either participated in the original organization and development or in major restructuring activities of the co-operative. Using the psychological ownership framework it can be reasoned that the willingness to stay stems from the member's sense of control over the co-operative, her/his intimate knowledge of the co-operative organization, and her/his investment of the self into it (i.e., the routes to psychological ownership), and is mediated by the member's psychological ownership for the co-operative.

Thus, we propose:

Proposition 3l: There is a positive relationship between a member's age and the member's affective commitment towards the co-operative organization.

Proposition 3m: The positive relationship between a member's age and the member's affective commitment towards the organization is mediated by control, knowledge, and investment and psychological ownership.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper we have focused on the affective component of member's commitment to their co-operative treating it as a variable reflecting the extent to which the member wants to maintain his/her relationship with the co-operative both as a member and a user. We have explained affective member commitment through three major frameworks, namely organizational identification, organization-based self-esteem, and psychological ownership and presented the key linkages. On this basis, we produce a model of affective member commitment within the co-operative context, which is diagrammatically presented in Figure 1 below.

Our work provides additional rigour to the literature on affective member commitment within the co-operative organizational context. It specifies some of the relationships that have not been explicitly pointed out in extant literature. For example, we name sources of affective commitment and their antecedents such as

organization-based self-esteem, organizational justice, and organizational support. Each of these are generally known constructs that have not previously been introduced to the analysis of affective commitment in this particular context although they have less specifically been seen (particularly in the work of Jiménez et al., 2010) as providing some explanation to the attitudinal state under investigation. We use organizational identification construct to provide additional understanding of how organizational justice perceptions, geographic compactness of the co-operative (the area inhabited by the membership), and communication of shared identity are related to affective commitment. Further, we use the psychological ownership framework previously introduced in the study of consumer co-operation (Jussila & Tuominen, 2010) to advance understanding on the mechanisms through which previously proposed antecedents such as control (e.g., Jiménez et al., 2010; Byrne & McCarthy, 2005; Simmons & Birchall, 2004; Fulton, 1999), knowledge (e.g., Byrne & McCarthy, 2005; Craig, 1980), and self-investment (e.g., Byrne & McCarthy, 2005; Craig, 1980) are connected to affective commitment.
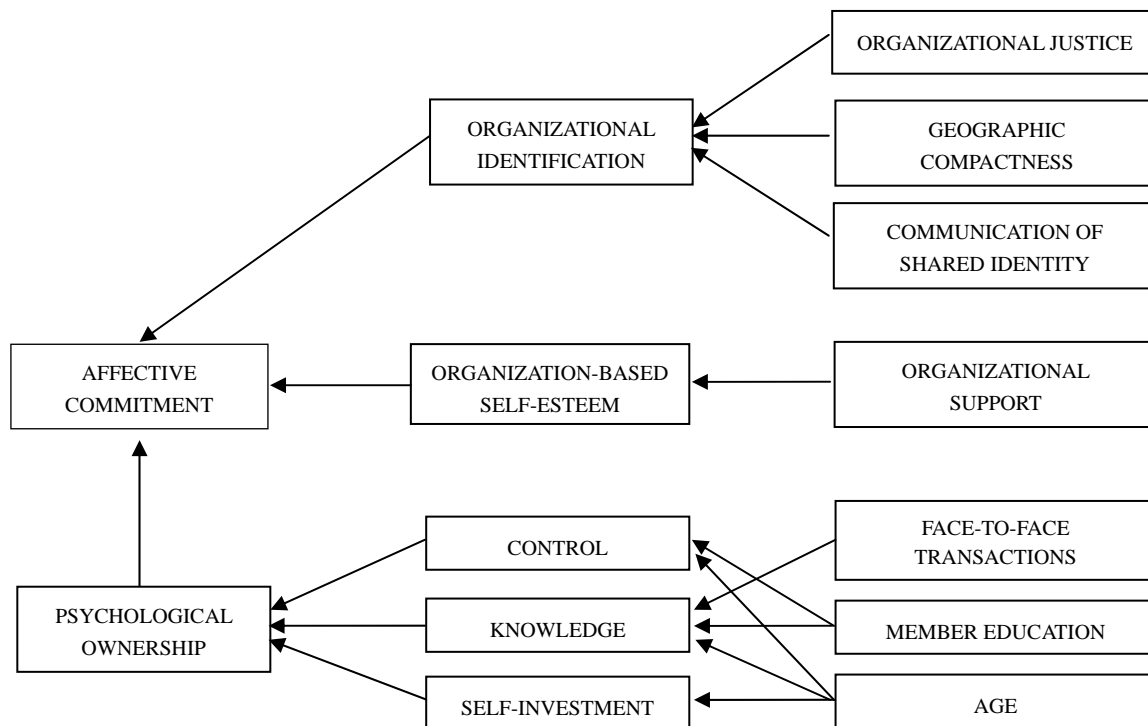
4.1 Future Research

A variety of avenues for future research can be identified based on our work. First, there is relatively little empirical research on the relationships identified and proposed in the model (in some cases no empirical research). There is a need to fill this gap using a variety of approaches. Qualitative studies can be found to identify additional variables (including mediators, moderators), while quantitative analyses can be conducted for example in the search for the best predictor of affective commitment. The authors are particularly interested in exploring in great depth the relationship between *geographic compactness* and affective commitment. Second, differences across co-operatives operating in different industries with different member interest should be studied. For example Fulton (1999) notes that affective commitment will be harder to build in agricultural co-operatives than in consumer co-operatives. Is this true (somewhere) and why so? Mixed methods case studies will most likely prove credible in answering this question. Third, action research could be conducted to describe managerial attempts to promote affective commitment in co-operatives and to understand what works over time and what does not. What is for example the role of co-operative education, one of the basic principles of co-operation? Finally, ideological (normative) member commitment needs to be studied carefully too. Based on our review for this paper, enough research has been conducted on this dimension to come up with valuable work on the topic.

4.2 Practical Implications

Co-operative managers may want to engage themselves in promoting affective commitment following the model above. It seems that the member's desire to stay can be promoted through increasing member identification with

the co-operative, co-operative-based self-esteem, and psychological ownership for the co-operative, which again have their own antecedents that can be managed (e.g., organizational justice, communication of shared identity, organizational support, control, knowledge, and self-investment as well as face-to-face transaction, and member education). Noteworthy, our research advises managers to carefully consider re-organization of co-operatives into overly large units, which may indirectly have impact on the members' willingness to maintain an active membership.

A word of caution is also in place. Strong member commitment is seen as coming with some disadvantages (Fulton, 1999; Simmons & Birchall, 2004). For example, strong affective ties to the co-operative may lead to reluctance to exit even if the co-operative does not deliver economic benefits. In fact, it may even lead to member's willingness to pay more. This may result in complacency in the co-operative, which over time would anyway erode the members' affective commitment. Thereby, a balance between different types of commitment should be sought for.

References

Adler, D. A., & Adler, P. (1988). Intense loyalty in organizations: A case study of college athletes. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 33*, 401-417. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2392716

Albert, S., & Whetten, D. A. (1985). Organizational identity. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 7*, 263-295.

Becker, T. E. (1992). Foci and Bases of Commitment: Are they distinctions worth making? *Academy of Management Journal*, *35*, 232-244. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/256481

Bhattacharya, C. B., Hayagreeva, R., & Glynn, M. A. (1995). Understanding the bond of identification: an Investigation of its correlates among art museum members. *Journal of Marketing*, *59*, 46-57. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1252327

Bijman, J., & Verhees, F. (2011). Member or customer? Farmer commitment to supply cooperatives. Paper presented at the *International conference on the Economics and Management of Networks* (EMNet), 1-3 December, Limassol, Cyprus.

Birchall, J. (2010). *People-Centred Businesses: Co-operatives, Mutuals and the Idea of Membership*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Birchall, J., & Simmons, R. (2004). What motivates members to participate in co-operative and mutual businesses? A Theoretical Model and Some Findings. *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics, 75*, 465-495. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8292.2004.00259.x

Briscoe, R., & Ward, M. (2000). *The competitive advantage of co-operatives*. Centre for Co-operative Studies, UCC, Cork.

Byrne, N., & McCarthy, O. (2004). An exploratory analysis of credit union organizational identity. A paper presented to *the 15th International Co-operatives Forum*, *Competitive Advantage of Co-operative Networks, 7th-9th* September, 2004, Muenster.

Byrne, N., & McCarthy, O. (2005). An analysis of the credit union's use of Craig's commitment building measures. *Journal of Co-operative Studies*, *38*, 20-27.

Byrne, N., McCarthy, O., Ward, M., & McMurtry, J. J. (2012). Credit union restructuring: Don't forget the member! *International Journal of Co-operative Management, 6*, 31-39.

Chi, N-W., & Han, T-S. (2008). Exploring the linkages between formal ownership and psychological ownership for the organization: the mediating role of organizational justice. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 81*, 691-711. http://dx.doi.org/10.1348/096317907X262314

Craig, J. G. (1980). Member commitment: a thing of the past or a possibility for the future. Co-operative Future Directions Project. *Working paper number 11*. The Co-operative College of Canada, Saskatchewan.

Dutton, J. E., Dukerick, J. M., & Harquail, C. V. (1994). Organizational images and member identification. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 39*, 239-263. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2393235

Elsbach, K. D., & Glynn, M. A. (1996). Believing in your own 'PR': Embedding identification in strategic reputation. In D. A Whetten and P. Godfrey (Eds.), *Identity in Organizations: Developing Theory Through Conversations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Foreman, P., & Whetten, D. A. (2002). Members' identification with multiple-identity organizations. *Organization Science, 13*, 618-635. http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/orsc.13.6.618.493

Fulton, J. R., & Adamowicz, W. L. (1993). Factors that influence the commitment of members to their cooperative organization. *Journal of Agricultural Cooperation, 8*, 39-53.

Fulton, M. (1999). Cooperatives and member commitment. *The Finnish Journal of Business Economics, 4*, 418-437.

Fulton, M., & Giannakas, K. (2001). Organizational commitment in a mixed oligopoly: Agricultural cooperatives and investor-owned firms. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics, 83*, 1258-1265. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/0002-9092.00276

Ilmonen, K. (1986). *The enigma of membership: a sociological study of membership in a Finnish consumer co-operative*. Finland: Painokaari Oy.

International Co-operative Alliance Website (2012). Retrieved from http://2012.coop/en/ica/co-operative-facts-figures. Accessed on 6th August, 2012.

Jiménez, M. C. R., Martí, E. G., & Ortiz, M. J. H. (2010). Member commitment in olive oil co-operatives: Cause and consequences. *Journal of Co-operative Studies, 43*, 24-35.

Johnson, R. E., Chang, C-H., & Yang, L-Q. (2010). Commitment and motivation at work: the relevance of employee identity and regulatory focus. *Academy of Management Review, 35*, 226-245. http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/AMR.2010.48463332

Jussila, I., & Tuominen, P. (2010). Exploring the consumer co-operative relationship with their members: an individual psychological perspective on ownership. *International Journal of Co-operative Management, 5*, 23-33.

Jussila, I., Goel, S., & Tuominen, P. (2012). Governance of co-operatives: A social exchange perspective. *Business and Management Research, 1*, 14-25. http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/bmr.v1n2p14

Jussila, I., Goel, S., & Tuominen, H. (2012). Member commitment in co-operatives: The utilitarian approach. *Business and Management Research*, *3*, 9-16. http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/bmr.v1n3p9

Kanter, R. M. (1968). Community and social organization: a study of commitment mechanisms in utopian communities. *American Sociological Review, 33,* 499-517. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2092438

Kanter, R. M. (1972). *Community and community: communes and utopias in sociological perspective*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Lee, J. (2003). An analysis of the antecedents of organization-based self-esteem in two Korean banks. *International Journal of Human Resource Management, 14*, 1046-1066. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0958519032000106207

Mael, F. A., & Ashforth, B. E. (1992). Alumni and their alma mater: A partial test of the reformulated model of organizational identification. *Journal of Occupational Behavior, 13*, 103-123. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/job.4030130202

Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1991). A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment. *Human Resource Management, 1*, 61-89. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/1053-4822(91)90011-Z

Oliver, R. L. (1997). *Satisfaction: A behavioural perspective on the consumer*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Österberg, P., Hakelius, K., & Nilsson, J. (2009). *Members' perception of their participation in the governance of cooperatives: the key to trust and commitment in agricultural cooperatives*. Department of Economics, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden.

Parnell, E. (1999). *Reinventing Co-operation: the challenge of the 21st century.* Plunkett Foundation, Oxfordshire, UK.

Podsakoff, P. M., Willais, L. J., & Todor, W. D. (1986). Effects of organizational formalization on alienation among professionals and non-professionals. *Academy of Management Journal*, *29*, 820-31. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/255948

Porter, L. W., Steers, R. M., Mowday, R. T., & Boullian, P. V. (1974). Organizational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover among psychiatric technicians. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 59*, 603-609. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0037335

Røkholt, P. O. (1999). Strengths and weaknesses of the co-operative form: A matter of perspective and opinion. Paper presented at the *International Co-operative Alliance Research Committee Conference,* Quebec City, Canada.

Scott, S. G., & Lane, V. R. (2000). A stakeholder approach to organizational identity. *Academy of Management Review, 58*, 43-62. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/259262

Simmons, R., & Birchall, J. (2004). Creating and supporting co-operative members in the West Midlands. *Journal of Co-operative Studies, 37*, 22-37.

Staatz, J. M. (1989). *Farmer Cooperative Theory: Recent Developments*. Washington, D.C.: USDAACS.

Stephenson, T. E. (1967). Member commitment in a democratic organization. *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics, 38*, 325-341. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8292.1967.tb00707.x

Stryjan, Y. (1989). *Impossible organizations: self management and organizational reproduction*. Contributions in Sociology, No. 83, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Stryjan, Y. (1994). Making ends meet: cooperative reproduction in a changing environment. *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics, 65*, 51-80.

Trechter, D. D., King, R. P., & Walsh, L. (2002). Using communications to influence member commitment in co-operatives. *Journal of Co-operative Studies, 17,* 14-32.

Tuominen, P., Jussila, I., & Saksa, J-M. (2006). Locality and Regionality in Management of Finnish Customer Owned Co-operatives. *International Journal of Co-operative Management*, *3,* 9-19.

Unterrainer, C., Palgi, M., Weber, W. G., Iwanowa, A., & Oesterreich, R. (2011). Structurally Anchored organizational democracy: does it reach the employee? *Journal of Personnel Psychology, 10*, 118-132. http://dx.doi.org/10.1027/1866-5888/a000038

VandeWalle, D., Van Dyne, L., & Kostova, T. (1995). Psychological ownership: an empirical examination of its consequences. *Group and Organization Management, 20*, 210-226. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1059601195202008

Whetten, D. A., Lewis, D., & Mischel, L. J. (1992). Towards an integrated model of organizational identity and member commitment. *Paper presented at the Annual Academy of Management Convention,* Las Vegas.