The Relation between Commitment Forms and Work Outcomes in Jewish and Arab Culture

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The demographic composition of Israel provided an opportunity to compare the relation between commitment forms and work/nonwork outcomes for workers from two well-established yet diverse cultures in the same geographic locale. This study examined 283 Arab and Jewish nurses in three Israeli hospitals using identical measures. As was predicted, the effects of commitment on work and nonwork outcomes were moderated by culture. Arab nurses were more committed than Jewish nurses, and their commitment had more favorable effects on their behaviors and especially on their attitudes at work. The results suggest caution when generalizing about the effects of commitment forms across different outcomes. © 1999 Academic Press

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The subject of work commitment (WC) continues to interest researchers and practitioners. The literature has tended to focus on the broader concept of WC, embracing specific objects of commitment such as organization, work group, occupation, and job (Blau, Paul, & St. John, 1993; Randall & Cote, 1991). Examination of multiple commitment foci was deemed important by Mueller, Wallace, and Price (1992), who argued that much conceptual and empirical work was still needed to elucidate how commitment forms relate to and affect work behavior. Research has indeed shown that a multivariate approach to WC could predict work outcomes such as turnover, performance, prosocial organizational behavior, absenteeism, and tardiness (Becker, 1992; Blau, 1986; Cohen, 1993; Wiener & Vardi, 1980) better than an approach to each commitment separately. Yet this research is scarce and most of it concerns people in Western societies. The international nature of business today and the increasing cultural diversity of work forces in most industrialized countries call for an understanding of workers not only of European descent. For research in this area to remain relevant, substantially more studies need to go beyond the purely domestic perspective (Adler, 1983; Kohn, 1989).

Studies on the commitment of workers in different countries have mostly compared American with Japanese employees (e.g., Cole, 1979; Luthans, Mc-
Caul, & Dodd, 1985; Near, 1989). The main conclusion is that differences between the two cultures are not as deep as expected (Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1985; Marsh & Mannari, 1971, 1972; Near, 1989). Besser (1993) after reviewing the literature comparing commitment of American and Japanese employees concluded that Americans expressed higher levels of organizational commitment yet the Japanese had lower rates of absenteeism, turnover, and tardiness. Besser offered three reasons for this contradiction: first, various aspects of the political and social contexts made turnover less likely in Japan than in the United States; second, the lower level of expressed commitment among Japanese workers may have reflected the greater duality of their economy, American workers were more likely to work for a core organization with commitment-enhancing features than Japanese workers; third, work outcomes of the Japanese work force were partially explained by the pressures of the work group, family, and community, rather than strong attitudes of commitment to the organization.

The present study of Arab and Jewish nurses in Israel had several goals. First, it aimed to shed more light on some of the unanswered questions and contradictions raised by Besser (1993) and others. Israel’s demographic composition provides an opportunity to compare the commitment foci/outcomes relationship in workers from two well-established yet diverse cultures located together geographically. Second, hypotheses on differential effects of WC forms on outcomes across the two groups were developed and tested. Third, an attempt was made to deal with several methodological and conceptual limitations of past research mentioned by Morrow (1993): (1) established measures of WC were used, not inferior and homemade measures; (2) a variety of WC forms were examined, including work involvement and occupational commitment, not only the more common forms, namely organizational commitment and job involvement; (3) outcomes additional to the conventional one (i.e., turnover) were examined, such as absenteeism, organizational citizenship behavior, and life satisfaction.

**Commitment Forms**

Organizational, job, and occupational foci. The present research included the following commitment forms: to the organization, the job, the occupation, the work, and the group. The most notable effort to construct a conceptual framework for the relationship of WC to outcome variables was by Blau and Boal (1987), who proposed using four combinations of high and low levels of job involvement and organizational commitment to predict withdrawal and absenteeism. The main limitation of Blau and Boal’s (1987) conceptualization is that it focused only on two commitment forms. The absence of others perhaps explains the modest empirical support for the model in these author’s work (1989). The main problem in their conceptualization is that it ignores occupational commitment. Morrow and McElroy (1993) argued that a limitation of WC research is that occupation/career foci are not sufficiently included in such studies. For professional employees, commitment to the occupation may have a
strong relationship to work outcomes, even stronger than job involvement, particularly in the nursing profession. For example, Gardner (1992) emphasized the importance of occupational commitment in nursing because it relates to the attractiveness of nursing as a lifelong occupational choice and valued career option. Occupational commitment was found to be an important component of the work-related commitments of nurses (Reilly & Orsak, 1991) and an important determinant of nurses’ turnover, more than other work-related commitments such as the organization and work (Mueller et al., 1992). All of this leads to the conclusion that occupational commitment should not be ignored in any conceptualization of the relationship of WC forms to outcome variables.

**Work involvement.** Work involvement represents work value and resembles to the concept of Protestant work ethic. In developing the concept of work involvement, Kanungo (1979, 1982) emphasized how this construct differs from job involvement. Job involvement is a belief about the value of the present job and of how much it can satisfy one’s present needs. In contrast, work involvement is a normative belief about the value of work in one’s life and is a function of one’s past cultural conditioning or socialization.

**Group commitment.** Group commitment, defined as an individual’s identification and sense of cohesiveness with other members of the organization (Randall & Cote, 1991), is one of the new concepts in multiple-commitment research (Morrow, 1993; Reichers, 1985). Zaccaro and Dobbins (1989) focused on the differences between group and organizational commitment and concluded that there is a conceptual distinction between the two. Becker’s (1992) work is one of the few that tested group commitment in relation to outcomes, such as performance, and showed a positive relationship.

**THE SETTING**

Non-Jewish citizens account for approximately one-sixth of the population of Israel (*Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1996*). Arabs constitute a permanent, non-assimilating minority clearly distinguished from Jews in place of residence and culture, speaking their own language, and adhering to their own traditions. Arabs also comprise a separate economic class, the majority lacking the resources to compete with Jews on an equal footing (Landau, 1993). Studies of Jewish men and women in Israeli work settings suggest that their attitudes and experiences resemble to those of Western Europe and North America (e.g., Toren, 1991; Yishai & Cohen, 1997; Ronen & Shenkar, 1985). Little research has examined the experiences of Arabs in work settings. Most of the comparisons of Arabs and Jews in the Israeli work force have been at the macro level, and discrimination against Arab workers is in evidence generally, and in earnings in particular (Lewin-Epstein & Semyonov, 1992a). Studies indicate even more discrimination against Arab women who work in the general economy (Lewin-Epstein & Semyonov, 1992b; Semyonov & Lewin-Epstein, 1994). Arab women fare worse economically than Arab men and Jewish men and women. Many of them maintain a traditional way of life, and their fertility rate, among the highest in the
world (Soffer, 1988), often confines them to domestic work. The occupational and educational attainments of Arab women do not match those of Jewish women. For example, women comprise 15.7% of the Arab labor force and 41.6% of the Jewish labor force, and the median years of schooling for Arab women is 10.2 compared to 10.4 for Arab men and 11.7 for Jewish women (Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1996).

The disadvantaged position of Arabs in Israel in terms of job opportunities, and the ambiguity concerning their political future, may lead Arabs to view work in largely instrumental ways and to concentrate on basic aspects such as pay and security. One study that compared the work attitudes of Arabs and Jews at the micro level (Shamir, 1981) among employees of a Jerusalem hotel found that Arabs were less interested than Jews in intrinsic rewards and more concerned with pay and other extrinsic features of the work. Shamir attributed these findings to the relative political, social, and economic conditions of the two ethnic groups.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Levels of Commitment

Two factors lead one to expect higher commitment among Arabs than among Jews. The first is the setting outlined above. The data show quite convincingly that Arabs are a deprived minority. In terms of their occupational and organizational choices they have far fewer opportunities than the Jewish majority group. In the present case, an Arab nurse who lost her/his job in one of the few Arab-populated hospitals would have only one alternative: to work in a Jewish-populated hospital. This would be a major decision, and many would undoubtedly be loath to make it, expecting that in the other establishment they would probably be more deprived than in their current workplace. Arabs were therefore expected to be more committed to their organization, job, and occupation. They would also be more committed to their work group, knowing that this was a preferable setting for them than working as a minority in a Jewish-populated hospital.

The above explanation does not account for the expected difference between Arabs and Jews in commitment to work, but the second factor, the cultural dissimilarity between the two groups, does. The Arabs represent a more traditional society than the Jews. For Arabs, commitment is a complex attitude influenced by the norms, sanctions, and pressures of the small group, family, and community. Values among Arabs suggest particular views typical of more traditional societies, including preference for more personal ties to supervisors, acceptance of more paternalistic treatment, and a sense that power relationships should be hierarchical. These factors may influence Arabs’ attitudes, resulting in greater commitment to the organization.

The Jewish culture is thought to be more Western oriented, and so more heterogeneous and focused on different values. In the present case, even though the Jewish culture may have affected the Jewish nurses’ attitudes, the effect was
likely to be less obvious, because this culture is not as homogeneous as the Arab culture. Cultural differences, then, were expected to provide another reason for the higher levels of commitment forms in Arabs than in Jews. The above rationale should also be relevant to the outcome variable, which Besser (1993) termed indices of behavioral commitment. In keeping with the above lines of argument, Arab nurses were also expected to demonstrate high, namely more favorable outcomes than the Jewish nurses.

**HYPOTHESIS 1a.** Levels of all commitment forms are higher in Arabs than Jews.
**HYPOTHESIS 1b.** Levels of all outcome forms are higher in Arabs than Jews.

**Work Commitment and Outcomes**

Several outcome variables were tested in this study: turnover, turnover intentions, absence frequency, absence duration, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and life satisfaction. The expectation here was that more than one commitment form would be related to these outcomes (Blau, 1986; Cohen, 1993). Becker (1992) argued that researchers should attempt to match the focus of their independent variable, e.g., commitment, with the focus of their dependent variable, e.g., outcome. Wiener and Vardi (1980) and Cohen (1993) argued that, given that the object of organizational commitment is the employing organization, the most likely behavior to be affected by this commitment would be organization-oriented behavior. Organizational commitment is therefore expected to be related to turnover, intentions to leave the organization, and OCB. Similarly, the most likely behavior to be affected by job commitment would be task-oriented behavior. Thus, job involvement is expected to be related to intention to leave the job and to absenteeism. Occupational commitment and work involvement are expected to be related to occupation/career-oriented behavior such as intention to leave the occupation. As for group commitment, it can be argued that because for many employees the work group represents the organization in daily life (Reichers, 1985), the relationship of group commitment to outcomes will be similar to that of organizational commitment to outcomes, although somewhat weaker.

**HYPOTHESIS 2a.** More than one WC form relates to outcome variables.
**HYPOTHESIS 2b.** Each WC form relates to the referent outcome variable more strongly than other WC forms.

The main expectation of this study was that commitment forms would have a more favorable effect on outcomes for Arabs than for Jews because of the cultural differences between Arabs and Jews. Hofstede (1980) described four dimensions as the most important in explaining differences between cultures: individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity/femininity. The particular setting of the Arabs in Israel emphasizes two of these as probable reasons to expect that commitment would have a more
favorable effect on outcomes for Arab than for Jews: individualism/collectivism and uncertainty avoidance. On the individualism/collectivism dimension the Arab culture emphasizes collectivism much more than the Jewish one. Collectivism is characterized by tight social framework in which people distinguish their own group from others. Studies of Arab groups in Israel generally conclude that traditional ideology continues to dominate the lives of women and to isolate them from activities outside the family (Manasra, 1993; Moghadam, 1993; Shokeid, 1993). As members of a Western-oriented society, Jewish nurses have adopted the individualist orientation which holds that each person should determine her or his beliefs and behavior. In societies oriented more to individualism, loyalty is less important than in societies oriented more to collectivism. Therefore it could be expected that commitment would have stronger and more favorable impact outcomes in the collectivist-oriented Arab culture than in the individualist-oriented Jewish one.

The second dimension, uncertainty avoidance, relates to the extent to which people in a society feel threatened by ambiguous situations and how much they try to avoid them by rejecting deviant ideas and behavior and accepting the possibility of absolute truths and the attainment of expertise. As a minority group the Arabs in Israel are more threatened by ambiguous situations. Commitment is an attitude that should be more common in high uncertainty-avoidance situations like the situation of the Arabs in Israel. It can greatly help in reducing uncertainties among the Arabs and make their behavior more predictable. The Arab nurses examined here were employed in the economic enclave of minority-owned hospitals. Their employment opportunities were limited, as indicated above, a factor that would reinforce their commitment. Commitment among Jewish nurses would be a result of the work setting and structure and the perceived exchange between the organization and its employees (Mowday et al., 1982). It would not have the role of an uncertainty-avoidance mechanism, as in the Arab culture. Commitment was expected to be related favorably to outcomes for Jewish nurses, but not as strongly as for Arab nurses.

HYPOTHESIS 3. Commitment forms relates to work and nonwork outcomes more favorably for Arabs than for Jews.

METHOD

Participants

The participants were nurses at three hospitals in northern Israel. Two of them are located in areas populated by Arabs and virtually all of their employees are Arabs. They are close geographically, so the characteristics of their work forces were assumed to be alike. The third hospital was located in a Jewish area and employed predominantly Jewish workers. Ethnicity was defined as a dichotomous variable with 0 = Arab (N = 154) and 1 = Jewish (N = 129).

Of the nurses, 85% were females. Mean age of the respondents was 33.8 years
and mean tenure in organization and occupation was 9 and 12 years respectively. University studies had been completed by 20% of the nurses, 55.5% of them were registered nurses, 67.5% were married, 72.3% worked in a full-time positions, and 28.1% were in managerial positions.

Measures

Commitment focuses. Organizational commitment was measured by the shorter nine-item version of the organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ) (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974) with Cronbach alpha of 0.90. Career commitment was measured by the eight-item measure developed by Blau (1985), and the resultant Cronbach alpha was 0.83. Job involvement (10 items) and work involvement (6 items) were measured by the scales developed by Kanungo (1979, 1982), with Cronbach alpha of 0.76 and 0.75, respectively. Group commitment was measured by the six-item measure developed by Randall and Cote (1991), with Cronbach alpha of 0.71. All WC constructs were measured on a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree). Except for the group commitment scale, all the scales applied in this research were noted by Morrow (1993) as the most commonly used and the most reliable and valid WC scales. Each was also mentioned as having a strong discriminant validity in its relationship to other WC forms. Thus, the selection of the scales fitted well with Morrow’s conceptualization. Very few scales for group commitment can be found in the literature; most of them rely on adjusting the OCQ items of Porter et al. (1974). The danger of applying the OCQ to measure group commitment is increased concept redundancy and lowered discriminant validity of the commitment scales. The Randall and Cote measure was applied here because it does not rely on the OCQ and because it demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties in Randall and Cote’s study.

Turnover intention. This variable was measured by three items based on Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, and Meglino’s (1979) definition and following similar measures applied in the literature (Miller, Katerberg, & Hulin, 1979; Michaels & Spector, 1982). Accordingly, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the following three items on a five-point scale: (1) “I think a lot about leaving the organization”; (2) “I am actively searching for an alternative to the organization”; (3) “As soon as it is possible, I will leave the organization.” There has been a tendency in recent literature to view turnover as a multidimensional construct (Cohen, 1993). Therefore, data on three dimensions of turnover intentions were collected in this study: from the organization, the job, and the occupation. This was done by using the same items, but replacing the term “organization” with “job” or “occupation.” The scale ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), which indicates that a higher score meant weaker turnover intentions. The resultant Cronbach’s alpha was 0.94 for intentions to leave the organization, 0.89 for intentions to leave the job, and 0.92 for intentions to leave the occupation.
Turnover. The hospitals provided the employment status of each nurse one year after the questionnaires had been completed. A score of 0 was assigned to nurses who continued to be employed and a score of 1 to those who were no longer employed at the hospital.

Absenteeism. The hospitals also provided absenteeism records for the following year. From this information, both absence frequency (the number of events of absenteeism over the year regardless of their duration) and absence duration (the total number of days absent from the job in one year) were determined for each nurse. Because the indices typically are examined together in the literature (e.g., Rousseau, 1978; Youngblood, 1984), both were included in the analysis.

Organizational citizenship behavior. According to Organ, “. . . OCB represents individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization” (Organ, 1988:4). Smith, Organ, and Near (1983) developed a list of 16 items inspired by interviews conducted with supervisory personnel in two organizations. Becker and Vance (1993) as well as a recent meta-analysis on OCB (Organ & Ryan, 1995) showed that most research uses the 16-item scale of Smith et al. (1983). Here 12 of the 16 items were applied. The resultant Cronbach alpha was 0.73.

Life satisfaction. This variable was measured by five items based on Vreendenburgh and Sheridan (1979). The respondents were asked to indicate on a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 7 (very satisfied) how satisfied they were with the following five aspects of their life: residence, nonwork activities, family life, friendship, and health. The resultant Cronbach alpha was 0.70.

Procedures

Initial contact with both Arab hospitals was through the Director of the Nursing Service, who agreed to participate in our project in exchange for feedback. With the researcher being Jewish, and respondents having to write their employee numbers on the questionnaires in order to determine actual absenteeism and turnover over the following year, several approaches were taken to win the trust of the nurses and thereby encourage them to respond. First, meetings with all department heads were held to explain the purpose of the study and to assure them that the identities of participants would be protected. Second, a small gift was given to each nurse who competed and returned the questionnaire. At the same time, the directors took an active role in encouraging nurses to participate. The questionnaire itself had been translated into Arabic, and both directors reviewed the translation. Response rates of 52% \((N = 85)\) and 73% \((N = 69)\) were achieved in the two hospitals, decent rates considering the potential for mistrust that had existed. Data collection in the Jewish hospital was relatively simple. With the help of the Director of the Nursing Service, questionnaires in Hebrew were distributed to all nurses. A response rate of 61% \((N = 129)\) was achieved. A total of 283 usable questionnaires were returned, a
response rate of 62%; this was reasonable considering the respondents’ initial hesitation.

Data Analysis

To test Hypotheses 1a and 1b, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used; multiple regression analysis was used to test the others. To test specifically for interaction effects with ethnicity, moderated regression analysis was employed. The five commitment forms were entered in step 1, and then ethnicity, or the moderator in this case, was entered in step 2, thus partialing out the main effects first. In step 3, cross products of the predictor variables with ethnicity were entered. However, rather than enter five interaction terms simultaneously, step 3 was repeated five times to accommodate the separate entry of each term in order to circumvent the problem of multicollinearity associated with multiple interaction terms. Each of the significant interactions was plotted following Aiken and West (1991) to allow better interpretation of it. While linear regressions were performed for most of the outcome variables, logistic regression was performed for turnover. Logistic regression is preferable to linear probability models (multiple regressions with a dichotomous dependent variable) for revealing the relationship between a dummy variable and several independent variables because it constrains estimated probabilities to between 0 and 1, while multiple regression does not. Logistic models are not interpreted in the same way as linear models. Interpretation of the beta coefficient for the different categories in the categorical independent variables is based on their relation to the comparison group. The continuous variables are interpreted in a similar way to the linear regression. Several measures for assessing the predictive efficacy of logistic regression were applied here (Demaris, 1992). First, in logistic regression the analogue of the global $F$ test is a likelihood ratio chi-square test statistic, often referred to as a model chi-square. Second, classification results of the dependent variables present the percentage of the cases correctly predicted.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents basic statistics of the variables and correlations between them. The findings revealed acceptable psychometric properties of research variables in terms of their distribution and reliabilities. All the correlations among the five commitment forms were significant. The sizes of the coefficients did not exceed 0.70, and therefore suggested no problem of multicollinearity.

Hypothesis 1a expected levels of commitment to be higher for Arab nurses than for Jewish nurses. Table 2 shows the results of $t$ tests comparing commitment levels between the groups. As can be seen, levels of all commitment forms other than group commitment were higher for Arabs than for Jews: organizational commitment (4.01 versus 3.55), career commitment (4.03 versus 3.77), job involvement (3.63 versus 3.40), and work involvement (3.51 versus 2.96). Level of group commitment was also higher for Arab nurses than for Jewish nurses (3.64 versus 3.51), but the difference in this case was not significant. This finding
### TABLE 1
Basic Statistics and Correlation Matrix $^{a,b}$

| Variables                        | Mean | SD   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|----------------------------------|------|------|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Organizational commitment     | 3.81 | 0.66 | (0.90) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. Occupational commitment      | 3.91 | 0.67 | .47*** (0.83) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. Job involvement              | 3.52 | 0.59 | .49*** .57** (0.76) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. Group commitment             | 3.58 | 0.63 | .37*** .25** .34** (0.71) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. Work involvement             | 3.26 | 0.74 | .42*** .36** .67** .18** (0.75) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. Ethnicity                    | 0.46 | 0.50 | -34*** -20** -19*** -10 -38** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. Turnover $^d$                 | 0.01 | 0.26 | -0.07 -13* -02 -10 -02 -0.05 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. Intentions to leave the job   | 1.97 | 1.08 | -47*** -45** -31*** -26*** -26*** 24*** .05 (0.89) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9. Intentions to leave the occupation | 1.64 | 0.91 | -32*** -70** -34*** -13* -14* 10 10 .57*** (0.92) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10. Intentions to leave the organization | 1.97 | 1.14 | -54*** -44** -26*** -22*** -22*** 03 16* .51*** .56*** (0.94) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11. Absence frequency            | 1.41 | 1.94 | .02 .02 .02 .02 .15* -25*** -0.06 -0.02 .04 .02 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12. Absence duration             | 7.41 | 17.94 | -19** -13* -11 -10 -0.07 .18** .10 .18** .13* .14* .17** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13. Organizational citizenship behavior | 4.13 | 0.46 | .47*** .15* .37*** .27*** .20*** .01 -0.04 -17* -10 -11 .07 -0.06 (0.73) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14. Life satisfaction            | 3.93 | 0.56 | .22*** .20*** .05 .26*** .07 .08 -13* -14* -18** -22*** .01 -0.02 .10 (0.70) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

$^a$ N = 283.

$^b$ Internal reliabilities are shown on the diagonals in parentheses.

$^c$ 0 = Arab, 1 = Jew.

$^d$ 0 = stayed, 1 = left.

* $p \leq .05$.

** $p \leq .01$.

*** $p \leq .001$. 

380 AARON COHEN
supports Hypothesis 1a. Hypothesis 1b, which expected more favorable outcomes for the Arab nurses, was not supported. As can be seen in Table 2, in five out of the eight outcomes there were no significant differences between the groups. Expectations were matched with two of the three significant differences. Arabs had less intentions to leave their jobs and lower absence duration. However, they were higher than the Jewish nurses on absence frequency, a finding opposite to the expected one.

Tables 3 and 4 provide the results of moderated regression analysis. The findings clearly showed that commitment forms better predicted attitudinal outcomes, such as turnover intentions, OCB, and life satisfaction, than the behavioral ones, such as turnover and absenteeism. The amount of variance explained by the commitment forms was quite high in some cases. For example, it was .50 in intentions to leave the occupation and .35 in intentions to leave the organization. Hypothesis 2a expected that more than one WC form would be related to outcome variables. The results in Tables 3 and 4 showed that in the case of the attitudinal outcomes more than one commitment form predicted each of these attitudes. For example, organizational commitment and career commitment related to intentions to leave the organization and the job. Four commitment forms related to life satisfaction and OCB. This finding provided partial support for Hypothesis 2a, considering that only one commitment form was significantly related to each of the behavioral outcomes.

Hypothesis 2b, which predicted that each WC form would be related to the
### TABLE 3
Results of Moderated Regression Analysis (Standardized Coefficients) for Turnover and Turnover Intentions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Outcomes:</th>
<th>Turnover&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Intentions to leave the organization</th>
<th>Intentions to leave the job</th>
<th>Intentions to leave the occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1: Commitment foci</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational commitment</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.46***</td>
<td>-0.31***</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work involvement</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.15*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group commitment</td>
<td>-0.52</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job involvement</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational commitment</td>
<td>-0.85*</td>
<td>-0.29***</td>
<td>-0.31***</td>
<td>-0.73***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R&lt;sup&gt;2</strong></td>
<td>92.8%&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.35**</td>
<td>0.30***</td>
<td>0.50***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong></td>
<td>7.42&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>25.28***</td>
<td>19.06***</td>
<td>48.62***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2: Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td>-0.75</td>
<td>-0.21***</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ΔR&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F for ΔR&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</strong></td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>13.72***</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3: Interactions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity × Organizational commitment (ΔR&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>0.05 (0.00)</td>
<td>-0.87** (0.02**)</td>
<td>-0.85** (0.02**)</td>
<td>-0.99*** (0.03***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity × Work involvement (ΔR&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>0.54 (0.00)</td>
<td>-0.14 (0.00)</td>
<td>-0.34 (0.00)</td>
<td>-0.60** (0.01**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity × Group commitment (ΔR&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>0.82 (0.00)</td>
<td>-1.15*** (0.04***</td>
<td>-1.29*** (0.05***</td>
<td>-0.98*** (0.03***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity × Job involvement (ΔR&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>0.09 (0.00)</td>
<td>-0.47 (0.00)</td>
<td>-0.74* (0.02*)</td>
<td>-0.66* (0.01*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity × Occupational commitment (ΔR&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>0.29 (0.00)</td>
<td>-0.87** (0.02**)</td>
<td>-0.49 (0.00)</td>
<td>-1.14*** (0.04***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Logistic regression was performed for actual turnover.

<sup>b</sup> Percentage of cases correctly predicted.

<sup>c</sup> Chi-square.

<sup>d</sup> Step 3 was repeated five times to accommodate the separate entry of each cross product.

*<sup>p</sup> ≤ .05.

**<sup>p</sup> ≤ .01.

***<sup>p</sup> ≤ .001.
### TABLE 4
Results of Moderated Regression Analysis (Standardized Coefficients) for Absenteeism, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, and Life Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Absence frequency</th>
<th>Absence duration</th>
<th>Organizational citizenship behavior</th>
<th>Life satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Commitment foci</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational commitment</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.17*</td>
<td>0.44***</td>
<td>0.14*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work involvement</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-0.16*</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group commitment</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.34***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job involvement</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.37***</td>
<td>-0.25**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational commitment</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.22***</td>
<td>0.19***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( R^2 )</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.29***</td>
<td>0.12***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( F )</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>22.29***</td>
<td>7.27***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Ethnicity</td>
<td>-0.23***</td>
<td>0.15*</td>
<td>0.16**</td>
<td>0.22***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \Delta R^2 )</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( F ) for ( \Delta R^2 )</td>
<td>10.81***</td>
<td>4.90*</td>
<td>7.91**</td>
<td>11.59***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Interactions(^a)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity ( \times ) Org. commitment ( (\Delta R^2) )</td>
<td>0.05 (0.00)</td>
<td>-0.77* (0.02*)</td>
<td>-0.71* (0.01*)</td>
<td>-0.25 (0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity ( \times ) Work involvement ( (\Delta R^2) )</td>
<td>0.21 (0.00)</td>
<td>0.11 (0.00)</td>
<td>0.11 (0.00)</td>
<td>-0.06 (0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity ( \times ) Group commitment ( (\Delta R^2) )</td>
<td>0.04 (0.00)</td>
<td>-0.34 (0.00)</td>
<td>-0.18 (0.00)</td>
<td>0.18 (0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity ( \times ) Job involvement ( (\Delta R^2) )</td>
<td>0.02 (0.00)</td>
<td>-0.41 (0.00)</td>
<td>-0.10 (0.00)</td>
<td>0.23 (0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity ( \times ) Org. commitment ( (\Delta R^2) )</td>
<td>0.45 (0.00)</td>
<td>-0.74* (0.02*)</td>
<td>0.19 (0.00)</td>
<td>0.30 (0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Step 3 was repeated 5 times to accommodate the separate entry of each cross product.

\(* p \leq .05.\)

\(** p \leq .01.\)

\(*** p \leq .001.\)
relevant outcome variable, was partially supported by the data. Organizational commitment had a strong and negative relationship to intention to leave the organization, and occupational commitment had a strong and negative relationship to intention to leave the occupation (see Table 3). The logic of this hypothesis was supported by the negative relationship of organizational commitment to absence duration and its strong positive relationship to citizenship behavior (see Table 4). Note the pattern of the relationship between the outcomes and work involvement. Work involvement increased absence frequency and intentions to leave the occupation, and decreased OCB. This finding contradicted the expected favorable relationship between commitment forms and outcomes.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that commitment forms would be related to outcomes more favorably for Arabs than for Jews. Once the effects of the commitment forms were controlled, ethnicity contributed significantly in the cases of absence frequency, absence duration, OCB, and life satisfaction at step 2. Being Arab meant higher absence frequency, lower absence duration, lower OCB, and lower life satisfaction. The effect of ethnicity was not significant for actual turnover and the three forms of turnover intentions. At step 3, 14 of the 40 interaction effects proved to be significant. The interaction term with organizational commitment contributed to intentions to leave the organization, intentions to leave the job, intentions to leave the occupation, absence duration, and OCB. As predicted by Hypothesis 3, organizational commitment had a more favorable effect on absence duration for Arabs. The plot showed than increase in organizational commitment resulted in a strong increase in absence duration for Jewish nurses. No such increase was found for Arab nurses. Organizational commitment meant more OCB for both ethnic groups, although it was less marked for Jews. Organizational commitment had a more favorable effect on the 3 turnover intention variables for Arabs than for Jews. More organizational commitment decreased turnover intentions more for the Arab nurses than for the Jewish nurses. The interaction term with work involvement contributed only to intentions to leave the occupation. The pattern of this interaction contradicted Hypothesis 3 because it showed that work involvement had a more adverse effect on intentions to leave the occupation for the Arab nurses. That is, more work involvement increased intentions to leave the occupation more for the Arab nurses than for the Jewish ones.

The interaction term with group commitment contributed to intentions to leave the organization, intentions to leave the job, and intentions to leave the occupation. Group commitment had a more favorable effect on intentions to leave the job for Arabs than for Jews. That is, it decreased intentions to leave the job more for the Arab nurses than for the Jewish nurses. But in the two other interactions the effect of group commitment was not as expected. Group commitment had a more favorable effect on intentions to leave the organization and the occupation for Jewish than for Arab nurses.

The interaction term with job involvement contributed to intentions to leave the job and intentions to leave the occupation. The pattern of the interaction
differed between the two turnover intention variables. Job commitment had a more favorable effect on intentions to leave the job for Jewish nurses and a more favorable effect on intentions to leave the occupation for Arab nurses. That is, increased job involvement decreased intentions to leave the job for the Jewish nurses and decreased intentions to leave the occupation for the Arab nurses. The interaction term with career commitment contributed to absenteeism duration, intentions to leave the organization, and intentions to leave the occupation. In all three interactions career commitment had a more favorable effect on Arab than on Jewish nurses. For the Jewish nurses career commitment increased absenteeism duration more than for the Arab nurses. It also increased the Jewish nurses’ intentions to leave their organization and occupation.

In short, the data provide partial support for Hypothesis 3. Most of the interactions showed more favorable effects of commitment forms on Arab nurses, as expected in Hypothesis 3. The 5 interaction terms with organizational commitment and the 3 interaction terms with career commitment were consistent in that regard. In these 2 commitment forms all the interactions that were found supported Hypothesis 3. Results were mixed for the interaction terms with group commitment and job involvement, and the only interaction term with work involvement contradicted Hypothesis 3. Another pattern that should be mentioned is that the two and only significant interactions found for the behavioral outcomes, namely the interactions for absence duration, supported Hypothesis 3; that is, organizational commitment and career commitment had a more favorable effect on absence duration for Arab nurses than for Jewish nurses. Altogether, 10 of the 14 significant interactions supported Hypothesis 3.

DISCUSSION

The research examined and compared the relation of WC to work outcomes in Jewish and Arab hospital nurses in Israel, with an attempt to overcome several conceptual and methodological limitations of previous studies. The findings showed that the relation between WC and outcomes clearly differed across the two ethnic groups, indicating culture to be an important moderator of the effects of WC on work- and nonwork-related outcomes. The findings showed in general that Arab nurses were more committed than Jewish nurses, and that their commitment had more favorable effects on their behavior and their attitudes at work. Therefore, social scientists must remain cautious about generalizing research findings on WC in one culture to other cultural settings. The findings of this study also suggest care when generalizing about the effects of WC across different outcomes, particularly generalizing the effects on perceptual outcomes to those on behavioral outcomes.

All five interactions with organizational commitment indicated a more favorable effect on Arabs than on Jews. Both groups reported occupational commitment as the form they were very highly committed to. Here too, Arab nurses were more committed than Jewish nurses, and the three significant interactions showed more favorable effects of this commitment on outcomes on Arab than on Jews.
This consistency in the findings for the Arab/Jewish data, compared with the ambiguity of the American/Japanese data, is an important issue that should be the concern of future cross-cultural research on WC. Several tentative explanations can be offered here that should be tested in future research. One is that the theory applied to the American/Japanese data was not appropriate for that setting. The main expectation in that context was that the Japanese culture was more traditional than the American, so Japanese employees would be more committed than American employees, and this commitment would lead to more favorable outcomes. Besser (1993), on the other hand, argued that Japanese employees behaved more favorably at work because the Japanese core organizations had evolved effective mechanisms to encourage employees to meet the organizations’ expectation rather than because of strong attitudes of commitment to the organization. Workers’ cooperation in Japan is won through effective but subtle psychological and social pressures rather than the personal commitment of employees.

The cultural explanation received stronger support in this study. The more traditional culture of the Arab nurses, together with their setting as a minority group, made them more committed employees than the Jewish nurses. Moreover, their commitment affected their behavior more favorably than that of the Jewish nurses did theirs. This finding showed that the theory applied in the Japanese/American case was not appropriate for this setting. Japanese culture is exposed intensively to the American one and does not differ significantly from it. It cannot be defined as a traditional society. The same applies to the culture of the Jewish nurses, who are part of a more Westernized society. Commitment is a more valuable attitude in more traditional societies, and the Arabs are a group who adhere to their traditional way of life, more than the Americans, the Japanese, and the Jewish nurses in Israel. The Arab setting as a minority group, no doubt a deprived one, operates only to increase the importance of commitment as a mechanism that will assist them in coping with what some of them perceive as a hostile environment. In the case of Japanese employees it is the organization that enhances commitment of their employees by offering permanent employment, internal labor markets, quality circles, and company welfare programs. In the Arab case it is their particular setting as a minority group that magnifies the importance of commitment and its effect on outcomes. Future research should seek data whereby the above explanation may be tested. It should also attempt to find a context that will allow some separation between culture and setting, namely a cultural group that does not face the structural environmental constraints that the Arabs in Israel face. Arabs in some other Middle East countries may provide a good target population.

One finding, albeit not related directly to commitment, deserves further attention; this is that the Arabs had a higher absence frequency and the Jews had a higher absence duration. Youngblood’s (1984) theory of absenteeism can help to interpret these findings. He viewed absenteeism as a complex behavior involving both a reaction to an unfavorable work situation and a proactive means to
restructure work, and he considered the relative importance of each component to be dependent on work and nonwork attachments. The different absence results suggest that absenteeism in the two groups may result from different underlying processes. For Arabs, whose self-identities are assumed to be tied more to family and less to work roles, absence from work may be proactive in nature and represent another coping practice to manage their multiple domains. If so, with increasing family demands, Arabs may be expected to practice it more frequently; but with increasing time pressures and responsibilities at work, such a practice could grow less effective for them by creating even more time pressures at work, so absenteeism should become less prevalent. By contrast, for Jews, whose self-identities are assumed to be tied less to family and more to work roles, taking absences from work may be reactive in nature. If so, with increasing work demands, Jews could experience more unfavorable situations from which to withdraw, and therefore, absenteeism should become more prevalent.

The findings of this research showed the usefulness and the potential of WC in predicting valuable outcomes. Yet one of the findings that emerges is that WC forms are more effective in predicting attitudes than behaviors. The findings clearly show that in all the attitudinal outcomes examined here several forms of WC were firmly related to outcome variables rather than to one form of commitment. This argument is based on the cumulative relationship of more than one commitment to organization and job withdrawal intention, and to job-induced tension. Thus, it is useful to examine the relationship of a variety of WC forms instead of concentrating on only one. Based on the findings, the main value of WC lies in predicting turnover intentions. It is more limited in predicting other work outcomes such as actual turnover performance and absenteeism. The probable reason is the distinct evidence showing that the relationship between attitudes—commitment foci in our case—and behaviors—turnover and absenteeism in our case—is not direct. Research has generally supported the view that employees engage in a hierarchically ordered sequence of withdrawal, where declining attitudes (e.g., commitment, turnover intentions) precede temporary withdrawal (absenteeism), and these episodes foreshadow permanent withdrawal (actual turnover) (Parasuraman, 1982; Farrell & Petersen, 1984; Rosse, 1988).

The present findings accord with earlier research (Gardner, 1992; Reilly & Orsak, 1991) that occupational commitment is an important form of WC in the nursing profession and should be included in future research. Note the strong relationship between occupational commitment and intention to leave the organization, the occupation, and the job, and the fact the occupational commitment was the only predictor of actual turnover. From this study, for professional employees, such as nurses, the key WC forms in terms of relating to their attitudes and behaviors seem to be the occupational and the organizational foci. This finding is consistent with previous conceptualizations by Gouldner (1958); it also supports Gardner’s (1992) conclusion, based on the strong relationship between occupational commitment and outcomes, that enhancing occupational commitment in nursing will produce benefits for both individuals and their
employing organizations. Nurses should be encouraged through incentives to participate in professional activities and to be involved in career planning. Inasmuch as the findings emphasize the importance of occupational commitment as an important predictor of work outcome among nurses, they raise many questions about the usefulness of job involvement. Job involvement had no relationship to withdrawal intentions and had negative effects on the other outcome variables to which it was related. It increased absenteeism and job-induced tension.

This study supports the usefulness of distinguishing different types of turnover in the nursing profession, based on the finding that WC foci have differential relationship with various forms of withdrawal intentions. Krausz, Koslowsky, Shalom, and Elyakim (1995) argued that traditional research focusing on turnover intentions out of the organization has ignored two additional turnover criteria: within-organizational turnover from one unit to another and turnover from the employee’s profession. However, it is possible for employees to want to continue in their present organization, albeit in a different job (Wiener & Vardi, 1980). Employees may also consider leaving their existing occupation to begin a second (new) career in a different occupation. This type of consideration is no doubt affected by the attachment the employees have developed to their occupation during their career. The findings here, together with Krausz et al.’s (1995) findings, support the usefulness of distinguishing the three types of turnover intentions in the nursing profession, and probably in other professional settings too; this was found by Cohen (1993), who examined engineers and technicians in private manufacturing firms. However, one should note that the WC forms tested here explained much more variance of each of the turnover intentions than did Krausz et al.’s model, which used different determinants such as age, rank, education, burnout, and job scope. Future research should further examine this diversity of effects on different kinds of turnover.

REFERENCES


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