Employee Training and Organizational Commitment in Management Consulting Firms

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Miles and Georgie Delemos.

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The completion of my dissertation was possible with the assistance of many people along the way. The input of my committee members has been invaluable. Each committee member has uniquely contributed to the success of this research. I would like to thank Dr. Carolyn Graham, who was on my initial committee, for her direction in helping me to understand mediators and moderators. A special thanks to Dr. Vijay Krishna for his willingness to join the committee part way through the journey and for the direction he provided regarding the statistical methods. I would like to express great appreciation to Dr. Shaista Khilji who was more than generous with her time, and gave me useful critiques and unwavering support throughout the process. In addition, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Andrea Casey, my dissertation chair, for her patience and encouragement in guiding my research, for her countless hours of reviewing, and for pushing me to continually improve my work.

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Abstract of the Dissertation

Employee Training and Organizational Commitment
in Management Consulting Firms

In the U.S. consulting industry, which is estimated at $80 billion, strong revenue growth is expected to continue, while one of the biggest concerns of consulting firm leaders is the retention of consultants. To explore strategies firms could consider for increasing employee commitment in order to reduce turnover, this study examined the relationship between training and organizational commitment in consulting firms. The overarching research question was: What is the relationship between employees' perception of training and their organizational commitment in management consulting firms? The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between individual employee perceptions of training opportunities (formal firm-provided internal and external learning events) and affective commitment. Further, the study sought to test the moderating influence of age as a demographic variable and the mediating influence of perceived organizational support (POS).

An online questionnaire was used to gather individual-level quantitative data on consultants' perception of training and commitment. Data were collected from 75 consultants employed in management consulting firms in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. Correlation and multiple regression were used to analyze the data.

The study found a significant relationship between training opportunities and affective commitment, and between training opportunities and organizational support. Organizational support showed a positive correlation with affective commitment. Organizational support was found to be a mediator of the relationship between training

opportunities and affective commitment. Age was not found to be a moderator; however, moderating effects of age were found for younger employees. These findings can help consulting firms understand the impacts of training opportunities on employee commitment in order to make more informed decisions regarding funding for training and firm training strategies.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Human resources play a significant role in developing an organization's sustainable competitive advantage. In recent years, people have become the most important resource, as the economy has shifted from traditional manufacturing businesses to service-oriented businesses (Barber & Strack, 2005). In the transition from the industrial age to the knowledge age, the development of human capital has become the primary focus, as well as the differentiator, for organizations (Gloet, 2006). According to Starbuck (1992), the input to production for knowledge-intensive firms is expertise. As such, in consulting and other service businesses, the critical resources are not financial or physical capital, but "the employees whom a company hires and must motivate and retain" (Barber & Strack, 2005, p. 83). For firms in the consulting industry, attracting and retaining talented professionals is critical to success.

Employee retention and turnover are increasing as significant challenges for consulting firms. For example, a study of 13,000 consultants reported, "Consulting firms should anticipate high voluntary turnover for the foreseeable future" (Scheer, 2011). With positive revenue outlooks for the consulting industry, and increased demand forecasted for consulting services (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012), this is especially problematic. According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012), the employment of consultants is expected to grow at a rate of 22% through 2020. In light of this, firms will need to develop approaches to understand and address turnover in order to minimize the negative impacts of workforce instability.

Organizational commitment, a construct that has been widely theorized and researched for years, has been found to be a reliable predictor of voluntary employee turnover and employee intention to leave the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Organizational commitment refers to the strength of an employee's identification with organizational goals and the interest in remaining with the organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Meyer and Allen (1997) described a three-component model of organizational commitment—affective, normative, and continuance—which research has shown to be negatively associated with turnover and turnover intention for all components (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). However, affective commitment, defined as the "employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1997, p. 11), is the type of commitment that has been consistently found to have the strongest negative correlation with employee turnover (Meyer et al., 2002; Jaros, 1997). For consulting firms, implementing strategies to increase employee affective commitment could be helpful in reducing turnover. However, firms investigating strategies to reduce turnover must also consider if approaches need to be tailored to the ages of employees. The commitment literature has identified age as an antecedent of commitment (Mowday et al., 1982) and indicates that age could influence the causes of turnover intent (Finegold, Mohrman, & Spreitzer, 2002). With a voluntary attrition rate of 73% for entry-level consultants expected over the next 4 years (Scheer, 2011), understanding how strategies to reduce turnover are perceived by younger employees is important.

The employment relationship between the employee and the firm is a reciprocal process of social exchange (Blau, 1964). If employees perceive that the organization is

committed to them and cares about their well-being, they will feel a sense of obligation towards the organization and will be less likely to leave (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990). Perceived organizational support (POS) measures employees' response to the organization's actions and their individual perception of the organization's commitment to them. High levels of affective commitment and intentions to remain with the organization are associated with high levels of POS (Tsui, Pearce, Porter, & Tripoli, 1997; Meyer et al., 2002).

Firm-provided training—defined as formal mechanisms employed by organizations to increase employees' skills, prepare them for new job requirements, or develop them for future career needs (Nadler & Wiggs, 1986; Vandenberg, Richardson, & Eastman, 1999)—is viewed by employees as an investment in the employment relationship and can contribute to the formation of positive beliefs regarding organizational support. Because training is believed to be discretionary, it is highly valued (Gavino, Wayne, & Erdogan, 2012; Wayne, Shore, & Linden, 1997). Studies have indicated that an organization's investments in training have a positive effect on employee commitment (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003; Bartlett, 2001; Bartlett & Kang, 2004).

Additionally, POS has been found to help clarify the relationship between human resource practices and commitment. Meyer and Smith (2000) demonstrated that POS mediated the relationship between human resource practices and affective commitment. Research by Allen, Shore, and Griffeth (2003) confirmed this result and found that human resource practices were more strongly correlated with POS than with organizational commitment, suggesting that human resource practices increase POS and "lead to affective attachment to the organization" (Allen et al., 2003, p. 114).

Review of the literature indicated that only a few studies (Meyer & Smith, 2000; Chambel & Sobral, 2011; Gavino et al., 2012) have looked at the mediating impact of organizational support, or the moderating influences of age (Finegold et al., 2002; Conway, 2004), on the relationship between training and commitment. Additionally, according to Adams and Zanzi (2012), more research in the consulting industry is needed. This study addressed these research gaps.

In this study, it was hypothesized that firms can enhance employee perceptions of organizational support and improve organizational commitment through the provision of training. Building upon previous research, this study examined the relationship between training and organizational commitment in the context of U.S. management consulting firms. It also investigated whether age altered—strengthened or mitigated—the relationship between training and commitment.

This chapter provides an overview of the study through the presentation of a statement of the problem, the research questions, and the hypotheses. This is followed by a discussion of the significance of the research and an overview of the literature and theoretical framework that serves as the foundation for the study. A summary of the methodology is presented, followed by the limitations of the study and definitions of key terms.

Statement of the Problem

Some scholars have challenged researchers to address the gap between business and academia and to make their work relevant to managerial practice (Starkey & Madan, 2001; Burke, Drascow, & Edwards, 2004). In addition to theoretical contributions, research generates new knowledge that can have implications for improving critical

problems of practice. Kaufman (2012) noted that the findings from strategic human resource research should be actionable and relevant to practicing managers. According to Bartlett and Kang (2004), human resource development researchers have the potential to make significant contributions to understanding the nature of organizational commitment and the variables that influence it. As such, this study attempted to contribute to both research and practice.

Problem of Practice

The environment of the consulting industry has been described as tumultuous (Hartz, 2002) and troublesome (Graubner & Richter, 2003). The market for consulting services is dynamic and defined by constant change and by firm mergers and consolidations. Changes in accounting regulations have broken the linkage between management consulting organizations and accounting firms and created a change in consulting firm structure from partnerships to publicly held corporations.

In the midst of these changes, challenges exist. Because management consultancy is not a profession where individuals are licensed and certified like accountants and attorneys, firms depend on corporate branding to legitimize the consulting industry (McKenna, 2003). According to Czerniawska (2003), this lack of accountability and professional liability by consultants for the outcome of their advice and work contributes to the likelihood that an Enron-like scandal could affect the management consulting industry. Additionally, clients view poor-quality consultants as representative of the firms that supply them (Czerniawska, 2006). This environment has created pressure on all consulting firms to retain and develop the best people in an industry where there is a very competitive job market and voluntary turnover rates in excess of 25% (Bureau of Labor

Statistics, 2006). Training for all levels of consultants is critical to developing expertise, though the type of skill-building needed (e.g., industry knowledge, client relationships, decision making, team management) may vary (Adams & Zanzi, 2004). Without continuous learning for consultants, the level of professionalism needed for client success could be negatively impacted (Adams & Zanzi, 2005). According to Hartz (2002, p. 6), "There is absolutely nothing more important for the future well-being of consulting than a highly developed, motivated and renewable intellectual capital base."

With this critical need for talented, skilled workers, managing workforce supply and demand has become a serious issue for many management consulting firms. In addition to the financial impacts of personnel loss, voluntary turnover can also be disruptive to the business because, along with content expertise, individuals who depart the firm often possess knowledge of the client industry and organization and have established relationships with key client leaders.

One way firms can reduce voluntary turnover is by increasing affective commitment in employees. Affective commitment correlates negatively with turnover intention and turnover (Meyer et al., 2002) and has been found to be positively associated with desirable work behaviors (i.e., attendance, job performance) (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). While training can build skills in employees, research suggests that it can also positively influence affective commitment (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003; Bartlett, 2001; Al-Emadi & Marquardt, 2007; Bartlett & Kang, 2004) and that investments in training strengthen commitment because training is regarded as an expression of the organization's support of the employee (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986). Organizational support has also been shown to have a positive association with

affective commitment (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Accordingly, employees are more likely to remain with firms that offer training and provide a supportive work environment.

The problem of practice to be addressed in this study is that, although significant positive revenue growth is forecasted for the management consulting industry, voluntary turnover of employees is a critical concern. Understanding the factors (e.g., training) that contribute to creating a supportive work environment can help firms develop strategies to increase organizational commitment and reduce turnover intention. Therefore, as noted by Gavino et al. (2012), it is important to identify the contributions and impact of human resource practices on commitment so that firms can decide how to invest resources allocated to human resources.

Problem of Research

In recent years, training as an antecedent of organizational commitment has received considerable attention in research. Although results of studies have provided some evidence to suggest that training influences organizational commitment (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003; Al-Emadi & Marquardt, 2007; Bartlett & Kang, 2004), the investigation of the relationship is in its early stages (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003; Bartlett, 2001; Conway & Monks, 2009). According to researchers (Al-Emadi & Marquardt, 2007; Ehrhardt, Miller, Freeman, & Hom, 2011), the exact nature of the relationship between training and organizational commitment is still unclear. Fornes, Rocco, and Wollard (2008) indicated that there is a gap in the research for human resource development practitioners in understanding how to influence employee commitment.

Though human resource management practices (e.g., training) have been found to be related to organizational commitment (Conway & Monks, 2009; Kinicki, Carson, & Bohlander, 1992), some scholars have suggested that the relationship is not direct. For example, in a meta-analysis of the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of organizational commitment, Meyer and Smith (2000) found that employee perceptions of organizational support played an important role in mediating the link between human resource management practices and commitment. Meyer et al. (2002) echoed the importance of understanding POS as a mediator and suggested that these variables (human resource management policies and practices) work through organizational support to influence affective commitment. The authors noted from a theoretical perspective that understanding mediating mechanisms puts us "in a better position to explain *why* known relations exist and to search more systematically for influencing factors in future research" (Meyer et al., 2002, p. 39). However, a "gap . . . exists in understanding the role of POS in the relationship between HR practices and employee behaviors that benefit the organization" (Gavino et al., 2012, p. 667).

According to Mowday et al. (1982), individuals' priorities change as they grow older, and corresponding changes in antecedents of commitment are also likely to occur. Brousseau, Driver, Eneroth, and Larsson (1996) suggested that the beliefs of older employees regarding the employment relationship may differ from those of younger employees. Understanding what moderates the association between antecedent variables and commitment, and specifically the effects of age on commitment, is of interest to practitioners and scholars alike. However, there is limited research on age as a moderating variable and its influence on the link between commitment and other factors.

The problem to be addressed by this study is that although research indicates a link between training and organizational commitment, the nature of the relationship is unclear. There is a lack of knowledge on how to improve commitment, and there has been little research examining the influence of organizational support and age on the relationship between training and affective commitment. Additionally, this researcher is not aware of any studies that consider the variables of training and affective commitment in the management consulting industry. Thus, the outcomes of this study offer a foundation for other researchers interested in understanding the impact of training in management consulting firms. This study also furthers the understanding of POS as a mediator in the commitment relationship as well as the moderating effects of age.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between individual employee perceptions of training (formal firm-provided internal and external learning events) and organizational commitment. Specifically, it contributes to the understanding of training as an antecedent of affective commitment through the investigation of the relationship between these two variables in a population of management consultants. Further, the study sought to test the potential moderating influence of age as a demographic variable and the mediating influence of POS.

Research Question

This study examined one overarching research question: What is the relationship between employees' perception of training and their organizational commitment in management consulting firms? The following research hypotheses were tested:

1. Employee perception of training opportunities is positively associated with affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.
2. Age moderates the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.
   2a. The younger the employee, the stronger the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment.
3. Employee perception of training opportunities is positively associated with POS among management consultants.
4. POS is positively associated with affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.
5. POS partially mediates the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.

Statement of Potential Significance

This study is significant for three reasons. First, it contributes to the discourse concerning training and its relationship to commitment. Though a number of studies on training and commitment have been conducted, most have taken place outside of North America, and few have been conducted in the United States. Research in the United States has focused on tuition reimbursement (Guffey, West, & Wite, 1997); training comprehensiveness (Ehrhardt et al., 2011); benefits of training, support for training, and access to training (Bartlett, 2001); and training fulfillment, reaction to training, and training performance (Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 1991). Thus, this study contributes to the North American research on training and commitment.

Second, this study contributes to the organizational commitment literature and human resource management literature by providing empirical findings on the effects of moderating and mediating variables on commitment. It offers insights into potential age effects in the employee-organization relationship with regard to the perception of training and tests whether or not training is viewed as a benefit and leads to commitment regardless of age. The findings may help managers understand whether training offered to younger workers and older workers result in the same level of commitment to the organization. In addition, this study contributes to organizational support theory literature by investigating how employee perceptions of human resource practices (e.g., training) are influenced by POS.

Finally, the findings from this research have practical implications and could help managers in consulting firms understand the impacts of training investments so as to make more informed decisions regarding training strategies. This study helps to close a gap in the commitment literature by researching an industry that has not been widely studied. Given the cost of high employee turnover, the results of this study may provide insight to human resource professionals in the consulting industry so that they can better understand the nature of employee commitment and reduce voluntary departures.

Theoretical Foundation

Social exchange theories, organizational commitment theories, and training as a human resource management practice provide the theoretical foundation for this study. The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1.1. This framework is based on empirical work on organizational commitment by Meyer and Allen (1991) and Mowday et al. (1982) and work on organizational support by Eisenberger et al. (1986), who

suggested a social exchange view that employees hold beliefs and expectations of the organization and that work experiences such as organizational support are antecedents of commitment and strengthen the affective attachment to the organization. The model posits that employee perceptions of firm-provided training have an effect on the individual level of organizational commitment. This model also proposes that these perceptions are moderated by the age of the employee and mediated by the employee's beliefs about organizational support.

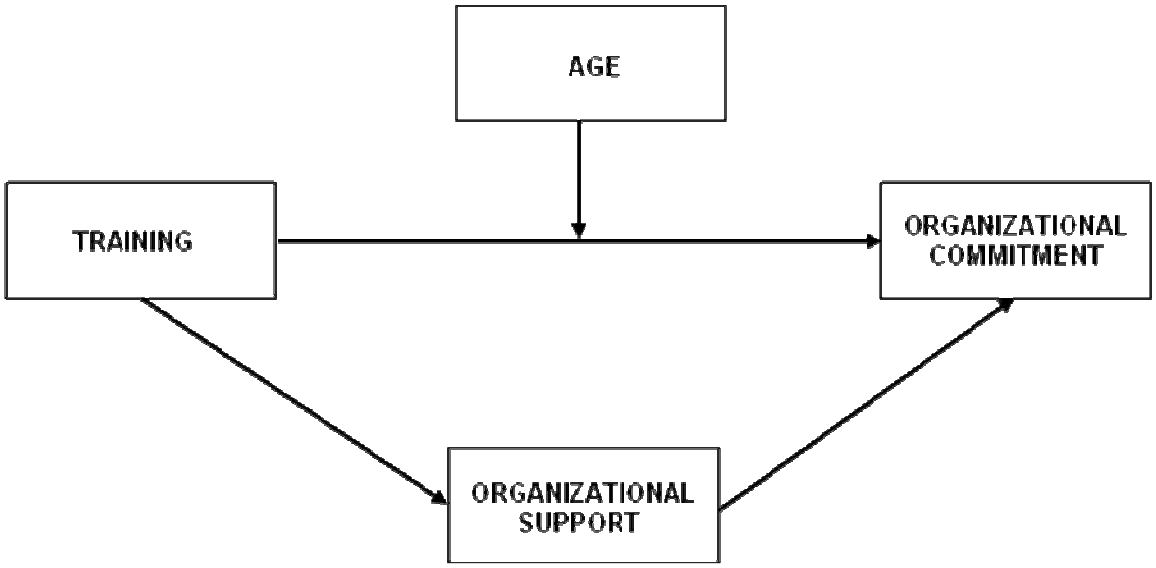

Figure 1.1. Conceptual framework.

Social Exchange Theories

Based on the concept of reciprocity, social exchange is defined as mutual investment and cooperation in a relationship for mutual benefit (Blau, 1964). Social exchange theory suggests that individuals enter into relationships with managers and other members of the organization, and the interactions and exchanges involve

reciprocity and expectations of benefits (Blau, 1964). Social exchange transactions differ from economic transactions in that the social exchange transaction includes some intrinsic significance and individuals establish the relationship seeking to maximize their benefits (Blau, 1964). One specific social exchange theory, psychological contract theory, suggests that a psychological contract exists between the employee and the organization that defines what employees believe are the obligations they are to provide to the organization and what they can expect from the organization in return (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Rousseau, 1995). Because it is a reciprocal relationship, these exchanges, if favorable, can increase the commitment of the employee to the organization (Rousseau, 2004).

In an employee-organization relationship, social exchange includes an interest and investment in the well-being of the employee in exchange for job-related contributions and investments by the employee (Tsui et al., 1997). Theorists suggest that this cooperation will continue as long as both parties perceive they are receiving favorable treatment and deriving benefits (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Employer-provided training and skill development is one example of a resource viewed by some employees as a benefit (Tsui et al., 1997). According to Aselage and Eisenberger (2003), employees receiving resources that are highly valued, such as developmental training opportunities, "would feel obligated, based on the reciprocity norm, to help the organization reach its objectives" (p. 492).

Another social exchange theory, organizational support theory, refers to employees' beliefs regarding the extent to which the organization cares about their well-being and values their contribution (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). These beliefs,

referred to as POS, are likely to result in efforts by employees to help the organization achieve its goals (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003). Employees who are treated favorably and who perceive the organization to be supportive are more likely to exhibit affective commitment to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Therefore, it follows that if employees perceive that the employer is not adequately investing in their well-being, they may not be willing to continue employment with the organization. Organizational rewards such as training and employee development have been found to be positively related to POS and organizational commitment (Tansky & Cohen, 2001). Although psychological contract theory and organizational support theory are contemporary theories that are both concerned with social exchange and reciprocity in the workplace, they focus differently on the employee-employer relationship (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003). This research is based on organizational support theory because training in this study is not viewed as a contractual obligation that is owed to the employee by the organization, but rather as a discretionary work experience.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is a mindset or process by which employees consider their relationship with the organization (Mowday et al., 1982). It is generally defined as the strength of an employee's attachment to an organization and has implications regarding the individual's desire to remain with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). A much-studied construct, organizational commitment has evolved over the years from a single component (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) to one that is multidimensional (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Based upon the nature of the psychological state of the employee-organization relationship, Meyer and Allen (1991) defined three components of organizational commitment: affective, continuance, and normative. Affective commitment refers to the individual's emotional attachment to and involvement with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Continuance commitment refers to the perceived costs associated with leaving the organization, such as the loss of pensions and seniority. Normative commitment is the employee's intention to remain with the firm because of a sense of obligation.

According to Mathieu and Zajac (1990), for all of these components of commitment, the higher the level of commitment, the more likely it is that the employee will remain with the organization. However, the component of affective commitment has the strongest positive correlation with performance and is the most significant predictor of turnover intentions (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Jaros, 1997). In addition, research has shown a strong relationship between affective commitment and POS that is not present with the normative and continuance components (Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001). Because of these links between high employee commitment and low turnover, research on the variable of affective commitment is important to understanding employee workplace behavior and is the focus of this study.

Training

According to a study of employer-provided training conducted by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD, 2010), expenditures in employee training by U.S. organizations comprise 2.14% of payroll. Ahmad and Schroeder (2003) suggested that an organization's training costs should be considered an investment

toward human capital instead of just a cost of doing business. When training expenditures are viewed as a cost, they are often targeted for reductions during challenging times because companies do not understand the value that training can provide (Aragón-Sánchez, Barba-Aragón, & Sanz-Valle, 2003). However, reductions in training budgets can hurt the bottom line. A study on the effects of training on business results found that companies that made higher investments in employee training had better profitability than companies that made lower investments (Aragón-Sánchez et al., 2003).

In recent years, much attention has been given to the impact of human resource management practices on organizational performance. Many organizations recognize the importance of skill development through training. With job content consistently changing and a shift towards knowledge work, there is a "need for organizations to better understand and manage competence" (Jacobs & Park, 2009). In a review of literature on training in work organizations, Aguinus and Kraiger (2009) noted that training offers important benefits for individuals, teams, and organizations. These benefits include direct improvements in job performance and organizational performance as well as indirect benefits such as improved quality and reduced employee turnover (Aguinus & Kraiger, 2009). However, these authors also acknowledge the challenge in how training is defined stating that "it is often difficult to ascertain whether a specific research study addresses training, development or both" (Aguinus & Kraiger, 2009, p. 452).

Because training is viewed as a benefit in the employee-employer social exchange relationship, the role of training in organizations takes on increased significance. According to Gavino et al. (2012), the practices a firm employs to develop its employees

can facilitate the development of employee commitment. This study investigated how training was related to individual affective commitment.

Age

Given the aging workforce and the competitive nature of the management consulting industry, this study also examined whether perceptions of training as related to organizational commitment differed by age. According to Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak (2000), the workforce is composed of workers whose ages span four generations. This diversity in age has resulted in a workforce with many perspectives, preferences, and values. Organizations often ignore the need to understand the impact of these preferences and potential age effects on human resource management practices.

Mowday et al. (1982) defined age as an antecedent of employee commitment in the category of personal characteristics and found it to be significantly related to commitment. Additional research (Angle & Perry, 1981; Allen & Meyer, 1993) has found age to be positively related to affective commitment, with younger workers less affectively committed than older employees. Age effects have also been studied by cohort affiliation through grouping of people that are born during the same timeframe. It is suggested that people who share historical experiences will also share certain perspectives and norms.

As an example, Jurkiewicz and Brown (1998) studied the importance of 15 work-related factors and the similarities and differences between age cohorts and found that workers born between 1961 and 1981 ranked “the chance to learn new things” higher than workers who were older. Teaching new skills and offering more training is a great inducement for retaining younger employees (Mir, Mir, & Mosca, 2002). However, more

research is needed to understand how age impacts the relationship between training and employee commitment.

Summary

In consulting and other people-based industries, the leaders in the market are distinguished by knowledge, and it is their approach to exploiting human capital that differentiates them (Rodriguez & dePablos, 2002). The organizations that achieve success are those that can effectively manage people (Pfeffer, 1995). This suggests that management consulting firms that employ successful human resource management strategies to build employees' skills and knowledge are well positioned for success.

Training can contribute to skill building, which is essential for consultants (Adams & Zanzi, 2004), and training may also be a factor in the reduction of voluntary turnover, which is increasing in the consulting industry. To effectively target training, consulting firms need to understand how workers of different ages value it. This study examined training as a human resource management practice and as an investment by the firm that affects the employee-organization relationship and contributes to the level of employee affective commitment.

Summary of the Methodology

This research was a quantitative study utilizing a survey methodology. An associational design was intended to investigate how affective organizational commitment relates to training.

An online questionnaire was used to gather individual-level quantitative data on consultants' perception of training and commitment. The instrument comprised items

from existing validated instruments. Vandenberg, Richardson, and Eastman's (1999) knowledge subscale was used for training opportunities. Organizational commitment data were collected using Meyer and Allen's (1991) Affective Commitment Scale, and organizational support data were collected via the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997). The first three sections solicited responses on statements regarding training, commitment, and organizational support. Respondents indicated the extent of agreement with each statement using a seven-point Likert scale. Participants were also encouraged to write in comments. The final sections requested feedback on training policies, as well as basic demographic information. The survey was designed and administered to participants through Survey Monkey, an online survey software.

Several methods of statistical analysis were employed in the data analysis, including means and standard deviations to address central tendencies, Cronbach's alpha to test the reliability of the data, correlation coefficients to measure the extent of a linear relationship between two variables, and multiple regression to test moderating and mediating effects. Qualitative data from open-ended comments were analyzed using qualitative content analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994), developing codes, categories, and themes.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

This study had the following delimitations and limitations:

1. The study was delimited to client-facing consultants who provided consulting in change management, organizational development, or human resources and who

were employees of management consulting firms with at least 1000 employees and with offices in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area.

2. Since this research was limited to consultants who specialize in specific areas, the applicability of the results to consultants in other specializations is limited. In addition, the sample population was geographically limited, and unique factors related to the region may exist. Therefore, results may not be generalizable to consultants in other geographic areas.
3. The study used an associational design and a correlational approach. A limitation of this design is that it does not provide enough information to indicate causality.

Definition of Key Terms

The following are definitions of key terms used in this research study listed in alphabetical order.

Affective commitment. The form of organizational commitment that is the most studied. It refers to "the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 63).

Human resource management practices. "The organizational activities directed at managing the pool of human capital and ensuring that the capital is employed towards the fulfillment of organizational goals" (Wright, McMahan, & McWilliams, 1994, p. 304). Such activities can include employee training, performance appraisal, benefits, and career development. However, there is no widely accepted definition of what constitutes human resource management practices.

Organizational commitment. The strength of an employee's identification with organizational goals and interest in remaining with the organization (Mowday et al., 1982).

Perceived organizational support (POS). Employees' "beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being" (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p. 501).

Training. Formal in-house structured educational activities and learning events offered to employees to increase their existing skills, prepare them for new job requirements, or develop them for future career needs. Training includes employer-provided educational assistance for general training offered by external organizations and institutions. Informal and on-the-job training activities are not included. This definition builds on the definitions of training offered by Nadler and Wiggs (1989) and Vandenberg et al. (1999).

Voluntary turnover. The employee's decision to quit or terminate the employment relationship (Shaw, Delery, Jenkins, & Gupta, 1998).

CHAPTER 2:

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review provides an overview of key research findings and concepts related to the study. Theory and research from the psychology and management literature provide the framework for this review via social exchange theory, organizational support theory, and human resource management (HRM) theory. The study focuses on four key variables: organizational commitment, training, perceived organizational support (POS), and age. After each variable is discussed, closing sections present study hypotheses and a chapter summary.

In conducting this literature review, a number of online databases—including ABI/Inform, ProQuest, JSTOR, ERIC, Dissertation Abstracts, and PsychInfo—were searched for scholarly journal articles and academic literature, using search terms such as training, organizational commitment, training opportunities, HRM practices, employee commitment, social exchange, age, turnover, organizational support, perceived organizational support, management consulting, and affective commitment. This review was not limited to current research but incorporated studies and articles over the past 25 years (1987-2012) related to the key variables as well as significant contributions from earlier years.

The next section defines the construct of organizational commitment and presents an overview of key models, antecedents, and consequences.

Organizational Commitment

The academic literature provides a variety of definitions of commitment. Organizational commitment, as defined by Mowday et al. (1982), is the "relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (p. 27). Mathieu and Zajac (1990) suggested that commitment is "a bond or linking of the individual to the organization" (p. 171). While there is no clear consensus with regard to the definition, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) claimed that there is general agreement that commitment is a force that gives direction to behavior and "binds an individual to a course of action" (p. 301).

Organizational commitment is also referred to as attitudinal commitment (Mowday et al., 1979), which focuses on the development of the relationship between the employee and the organization and the alignment of their values and goals. Behavioral commitment, on the other hand, is primarily focused on the "process by which individuals become locked into a certain organization and how they deal with this problem" (Mowday et al., 1979, p. 26). The definition of organizational commitment adopted in this paper is the one offered by Meyer and Allen (1991), which encompasses both the attitudinal and behavioral approaches as well as key aspects of other definitions by describing organizational commitment as "a psychological state that characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization and has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization" (p. 67). Employees with strong commitment to the organization have stronger performance and are more likely to stay with the company (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Employees who exhibit strong affective

commitment adhere to organizational policy, exhibit better performance, and work harder than employees who are not committed (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Prior to the work by Mowday et al. (1979), the topic of organizational commitment was given considerable attention by researchers and social scientists. However, there was a lack of agreement on how to measure this construct. Though previous studies had been completed that acknowledged organizational commitment as a significant variable in understanding employee attitudes, existing measurement instruments were inconsistent and lacked predictive powers (Mowday et al., 1979). Mowday et al. (1979) developed the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire to address this issue. Designed to measure employee attitudes toward commitment, the questionnaire was validated through a series of studies over 9 years and was found to be a reliable measure and a valid predictor of employee turnover. Reichers (1985) argued that the resulting research uncovered a need to reconceptualize organizational commitment from a unidimensional concept to a more meaningful multiple commitment approach.

Building on the work of Mowday et al. (1979, 1982), Reichers (1985) and Meyer and Allen (1991) suggested that the difficulty in defining commitment was due to the complexity of the concept. They introduced a model that incorporated three broad themes uncovered through their comprehensive review of the commitment literature and expanded organizational commitment to a multidimensional construct. Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model and measures have been used extensively in commitment research.

Meyer and Allen's Three-Component Model of Commitment

The three components that comprise organizational commitment, according to Meyer and Allen (1991), are affective, continuance, and normative commitment. They suggested that these forms of commitment are not mutually exclusive and that it is possible for an employee to experience all of these elements at the same time.

Affective commitment is the employee's involvement with and attachment to the organization. This is the measure most studied and relates directly to research utilizing the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Employees with affective commitment identify with the organization and have a strong desire to remain. This is similar to Talcott Parsons' value-commitment medium of exchange (Rocher, 1974). Parsons' theory suggests that an actor committed to the values and norms of a group acquires a sense of belonging and participates in the process of exchange.

Employees with a strong continuance commitment continue employment because they must. There is more of an economic emphasis in this component. With continuance commitment, the employee is committed because the perceived costs of leaving the organization (e.g., loss of benefits, pension, or seniority) are greater than the costs of remaining. Meyer and Allen (1997) suggested that though turnover is likely to be low for employees primarily linked to the organization via continuance commitment, it is unlikely that there will be strong indicators of performance.

With the third component, normative commitment, employees feel a sense of obligation to the organization and remain because they feel they should. This sense of loyalty can develop as a result of organizational investments in the employee that create a perception of a need for repayment through commitment.

The model offered by Meyer and Allen (1991) clearly delineates the effect each component has on an employee's turnover intentions, and all elements of the model indicate a significant negative relationship between employee commitment and turnover. Meyer and Allen (1991) also developed eight-item scales to measure each component: the Affective Commitment Scale, Continuance Commitment Scale, and Normative Commitment Scale.

As expected, the most significant predictor of turnover intentions is affective commitment (Meyer et al., 2002). However, the empirical research utilizing the measures has uncovered a lack of clarity or overlap between affective and normative commitment, with findings showing a significant positive correlation between these two components (Jaros, 1997; Meyer et al., 2002; Cohen, 2007), indicating that further definition of the normative component is needed. In addition to the normative commitment inconsistencies, the finding of a slight negative correlation between continuance commitment and affective commitment has prompted scholars to question the three-component model and suggest that organizational commitment is only an affective attachment to the organization (Solinger, van Olffen, & Roe, 2008) or to propose an alternative theory that the nature of organizational commitment is two dimensional: instrumental and affective (Cohen, 2007).

Affective Commitment

Similar to other studies that have used affective commitment as the sole component to measure organizational commitment (Ehrhardt et al., 2011; Ardts, van der Velde, & Maurer, 2010), this study focused only on the affective component of organizational commitment. The continuance and normative dimensions were not

addressed for a number of reasons. First, affective commitment has been found to have the greatest benefit and is the most reliable of the three components (Meyer et al., 2002; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Second, this study was interested in investigating training as a strategy to reduce turnover in consulting firms, and of all the commitment components, affective commitment correlates most strongly with turnover intention and withdrawal cognition, as well as with overall job satisfaction (Meyer et al., 2002). According to Jaros (1997), "An employee's affective commitment to the organization is the most important component of organizational commitment in predicting turnover intentions" (p. 331). Third, affective commitment promotes desirable work behaviors and is the only type of commitment to correlate negatively with absenteeism (Meyer et al., 2002). Affectively committed employees are dedicated and loyal to the organization, involved in activities, and willing to pursue the firm's goals. Hence, firms are interested in attracting and retaining employees with these attributes as opposed to employees with normative or continuance commitment, who remain with the organization out of a sense of obligation or limited options. Finally, this study investigated POS as a mediator, and research has shown a strong relationship between affective commitment and POS that is not present with the normative commitment and continuance commitment components (Rhoades et al., 2001).

Antecedents and Consequences of Organizational Commitment

Studies have identified a number of variables that influence organizational commitment. These antecedents can be grouped into the following four major categories that have been identified through research to be important predictors of commitment:

personal characteristics (demographic variables), job characteristics, work experience, and structural characteristics (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday et al., 1982).

Examples of personal characteristics include age, gender, race, and tenure. Age and tenure have generally been found to have a positive relationship with commitment (Swailes, 2002; Mowday et al., 1982; Meyer et al., 2002). Job characteristics relate to the job role and scope of the job. Though role conflict has an inverse relationship with commitment, an increase in the challenge and scope of a job has been shown to increase employee commitment (Mowday et al., 1982).

Organization size and centralization of authority are two of the variables that comprise the organizational structure group of antecedents. No correlation has been found between commitment and organization size; however, positive relationships with commitment are related to employee participation in decision-making (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Much research has been done in the area of work experiences as a type of antecedent for organizational commitment. Work experience includes variables such as leadership style, the organization's commitment to career development and training, and attention to employee interests (organizational dependability) and POS. A meta-analysis by Meyer et al. (2002) found POS to have the strongest positive correlation with affective commitment among all work experience variables. Positive correlations have also been found between employee development and commitment and employee training and commitment in studies conducted in the hospital industry (Tansky & Cohen, 2001; Bartlett, 2001; Bartlett & Kang, 2004). The variable of organizational dependability was also found to be related (Mowday et al., 1982). These groupings of antecedents of organizational commitment help to categorize the variables that have been studied.

However, the list of variables in each classification continues to be defined through research.

With regard to consequences, the outcome supported by the strongest empirical evidence is that high employee commitment is negatively related to the employee's intention to leave the organization (Mowday et al., 1982; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer et al., 2002). This finding establishes a relationship between organizational commitment and employee retention. Commitment has also been found to be positively related to desirable work behaviors (i.e., attendance, job performance), though these findings are more strongly related to the component of affective commitment (Meyer et al., 2002). It should be noted that for continuance commitment and normative commitment, the results have varied. Studies examining these phenomena have shown weaker indications, depending on the component of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). For example, since continuance commitment focuses on remaining with an organization because of a sense of necessity, correlations between performance measures and continuance commitment have been weak.

Summary

This section outlined the importance of employee organizational commitment as a construct in predicting employee turnover. The next section defines training and provides an overview of the role of training and studies of training in relation to commitment.

Training

In recent years, much attention has been given to HRM practices as organizations seek to understand human capital resources in relation to firm performance. The current

study focused on training as a specific HRM practice and a key construct. The following sections outline this construct and the supporting literature in more detail.

Training Defined

Research on the construct of training can be challenging due to the many definitions of training in the literature. Nadler and Wiggs (1989) defined training as activities in an organization that teach employees skills, knowledge, and attitudes for performing the job or improving job performance. These authors differentiated training from education, which they defined as activities targeted at teaching employees new skills, knowledge, and attitudes to prepare them for a new or future job. Jacobs and Park (2009) suggested that the two components of workplace learning are formal training and informal learning. They defined formal training as "planned learning activities that are intended to help individuals acquire specific areas of knowledge, awareness, and skills" (p. 140). Similarly focused on a formal process, Vandenberg et al. (1999) defined training as "formal mechanisms employed by organizations to maintain job and business knowledge" (p. 315). Other definitions have more broadly characterized training as a "systematic approach of affecting individuals' knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to improve individual, team and organizational effectiveness" (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009, p. 452). For the purposes of this study, training is defined to include formal in-house structured educational activities and learning events offered to employees to increase their existing skills, prepare them for new job requirements, or develop them for future career needs. This definition builds on the definitions offered by Nadler and Wiggs (1989) and by Vandenberg et al. (1999). It also includes employer-provided educational assistance for training offered by external organizations and institutions, acknowledging

that, in addition to internal offerings, outside training may be essential for building the skills consultants need. Informal and on-the-job training activities were not included in the definition of training for this study because those activities are an integral part of the culture of the consulting environment, where senior consultants are involved in training junior consultants (Richter, Dickmann, & Graubner, 2008). The interest of this study was in structured and formal training.

Training is an investment that improves the productivity and effectiveness of the employee through the development of new skills (Becker, 1993). Becker (1993) defined two types of training: general and firm specific. General training provides workers with skills that are useful in more than one job or firm and are easily transferred to new jobs or employers. Firm-specific training often occurs on the job and is presumed to improve productivity only for the firm providing the training. According to Gattiker (1995), general training involves concepts and theories about a subject, and firm-specific training is on-the-job training and procedural knowledge on how to do something. Becker (1993) suggested that since providing general training to employees does not provide a return to the firm, the costs of general training should be borne by the employee. However, firms' increasing training expenditures have not supported Becker's reasoning.

The continual growth of total corporate spending on training is evidence that employers perceive they are receiving a return from their training investment. A report by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD, 2010) indicated that U.S. organizations spend over $125 billion on training and development annually and the annual expenditure per employee increased by 1.2% over the previous year. Data collected from a sample of 1,433 establishments in the 1995 Survey of Employer-

Provided Training by the Bureau of Labor Statistics also confirmed that employers invest considerable resources in both formal and informal training (Frazis, Gittleman, Horrigan, & Joyce, 1998). In addition to the direct costs of training, firms in the sample spent $37 billion on indirect wage and salary costs for the time employees spent in training. As the ASTD report stated, "Executives and business leaders demonstrated through their learning investments that employee learning and development is key to survival, recovery, and future growth" (ASTD, 2010, p. 6).

The Role of Training in Organizations

Training in organizations has evolved dramatically over the past 20 years. In the 1990s, there was rapid growth in the number of formal corporate training institutions. In 1988, 400 companies had centralized training functions (e.g., corporate universities); by 2001, over 1,600 did (Prince & Beaver, 2001). The direction for training in firms is to align their training needs with the business strategy and to measure the success of training through the attainment of business goals. The role of training in organizations has broadened in scope and is expected to continue to grow in prominence in the corporate boardroom. In forward-thinking organizations, the chief training officer reports to the chief executive officer, giving credibility and importance to the role of training (Allen, 2002). This strategic view of training is reinforced by studies that testify to the value of employee training (participation and effectiveness) in improving firm performance (Delaney & Huselid, 1996).

Acton and Golden (2003) completed a study of training (defined as structured formal events offered by the company) in software companies. They suggested that firms that are committed to addressing employee training needs experience improved success

with staff recruitment, and employees of these firms realize a number of benefits including improved job performance, increased job satisfaction, and reduced levels of job-related stress. In addition, employees of these firms are happier in their jobs and perceive the organization as a good place to work. In a knowledge-driven economy that creates a constantly changing organizational environment, employees must ensure that their competencies do not become obsolete (Finegold et al., 2002).

Training and Commitment

There are two distinct types of empirical studies in the literature that focus on the relationship between training and organizational commitment. In the first approach, training is studied as one component of human resource (HR) practices that include several other aspects such as recruiting, performance appraisal, benefits, and employee involvement. These studies investigate the influence of a bundle or system of practices (Delaney & Huselid, 1996). In the second approach, the research focuses specifically on training, with commitment as an outcome variable. Whether future research should explore HR practices independently or synergistically continues to be debated (Whitener, 2001; Shaw et al., 1998). Despite the growing amount of research that has studied training as an independent variable and as an antecedent of organizational commitment, the definitions and measures of training vary, as noted in Table 2.1. Unlike the measures for organizational commitment, which are consistent across the research, the definition and measurement of training in these studies vary greatly and create challenges in cross-study comparison of findings.

A link between organizational commitment and HR practices has been found in a number of studies; however, the significance of the training measure is inconclusive.

Kinicki et al. (1992) found that an organization's HR programs affect employee perceptions of the organization's commitment to the employee. This study also identified employer provision of training as one of the 11 most important HR activities. Fiorito, Bozeman, Young, and Meurs (2007), who investigated a number of HR practices in relation to organizational commitment, found little evidence of HR practice effects on commitment and specifically did not find support for their hypothesis that employee training was positively related to commitment. In Whitener's (2001) study, commitment was found to be related to an interaction between comprehensive training and POS.

Scholars have shown an increasing interest in exploring the contribution of training to the development of organizational commitment in isolation from other HR practices. These studies are detailed in Table 2.1. Among the research studies on training and commitment, most were conducted outside of North America. Meyer et al. (2002) suggested that care should be taken when applying the commitment scales and measures outside of North America and noted that translation-based and cultural-based differences must be considered in cross-cultural comparisons of findings and generalizability.

A number of studies have been conducted that have shown training to have a positive correlation with organizational commitment. For example, Ehrhardt et al. (2011) reported a positive relationship between employee perceptions of training comprehensiveness, defined as the extensiveness of training and development opportunities offered by a firm, and organizational commitment. In a study of white-collar workers in Malaysia, Ahmad and Bakar (2003) found that top management support for training accounted for as much as 56% of the variance in affective commitment. The researchers also found a positive relationship between the availability of training and

Table 2.1
Studies of Training (as Independent Variable) and Commitment

Study	Training variable and definitions	Measures
Ahmad & Bakar, 2003	*Training environment*	Training Environment Scale (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003)
Ahmad & Bakar, 2003	*Support for training:* Support from top management	Selected statements from Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger et al., 1986)
Bartlett, 2001; Bulut & Culha, 2010	*Support for training:* Social support for training from colleagues; support from senior staff	Adaption of the Social Support Scale (Noe & Wilk, 1993)
Ahmad & Bakar, 2003	*Availability of training*	Availability of Training Scale (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003)
Bartlett, 2001; Al-Emadi & Marquardt, 2007; Bartlett & Kang, 2004; Bulut & Culha, 2010	*Benefits of training:* Personal benefits of training, career benefits of training, and job-related benefits of training	Benefits of Training Scale (Noe & Wilk, 1993)
Ahmad & Bakar, 2003	*Benefits of training*	Benefits of Training Scale (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003)
Bartlett, 2001; Bartlett & Kang, 2004; Bulut & Culha, 2010	*Training motivation:* Specific desire of a learner to learn the content of a training program	Motivation to Learn Scale (Noe & Schmitt, 1986)
Ahmad & Bakar, 2003	*Training motivation*	Motivation to Learn Scale (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003)
Bartlett, 2001; Bartlett & Kang, 2004	*Participation in training:* Frequency and duration of training experiences as well as perceived access to training *Frequency of training:* Number or amount of training experiences participated in during the past year	Training Frequency Measure (Tharenou & Conroy, 1994)
Bartlett, 2001; Bartlett & Kang, 2004; Bulut & Culha, 2010	*Access to training:* Employee perception of the availability of training opportunities as measured by organizational training policies and perceived access to training	Perceived Access to Training Measure (Bartlett, 2001)
Tannenbaum et al., 1991	*Training fulfillment:* The extent to which the training met trainees' expectations/desires *Reactions to training:* Trainees' satisfaction with training *Training performance:* Composed of test performance, inspections, honors, and demerits	Training Fulfillment Measure (a researcher-developed measure including items from Hoiberg & Berry, 1978, and Noe & Schmitt, 1986); researcher-developed measures for reactions to training and training performance
Meyer & Smith, 2000	*Training satisfaction and sufficiency:* Satisfaction with training, comparability of training with other organizations and the sufficiency of training received	Training Measure (Meyer & Smith, 2000)
Ehrhardt et al., 2011	*Training comprehensiveness:* Employees' impressions of extensiveness of training and development opportunities offered by a firm	Adaption of Comprehensiveness of Training Measure (Snell & Dean, 1992)
Guffey et al., 1997	*Employee assistance for external training:* Firm-provided educational assistance for job-related courses and college degrees	Educational Assistance Questionnaire (Guffey et al., 1997)

affective and normative commitment. Al-Emadi and Marquardt (2007) studied petroleum company employees in Qatar and found the relationship between personal benefits of training and career benefits of training to be significantly related to affective commitment. This finding supported previous studies by Bartlett (2001) and Bartlett and Kang (2004). A subsequent study of hotel employees in Turkey (Bulut & Culha, 2010) also confirmed training as an antecedent of organizational commitment. Contrary to these findings, a study of training conducted via survey to knowledge workers in 39 software companies found no significant correlation between the provision of training and employee retention (Acton & Golden, 2003).

With regard to employer-provided assistance for external training, a study by Guffey et al. (1997) found that employees value educational assistance highly as a benefit and found it positively related to organizational commitment. Organizational commitment increases as employees are offered the opportunity through employer-provided financial support to participate in external courses. Supporting this finding, in research of firm investments in general training, Feuer, Glick, and Desai (1987) found that job mobility negatively correlated with firm sponsorship of general training and that individuals whose firms financed their education exhibited lower rates of turnover.

Summary

This section reviewed the key literature and theories of training as an HRM practice and noted the significant training investments being made by organizations and the research on training and commitment. The next section defines the construct of organizational support as a contemporary social exchange theory.

Organizational Support

Social Exchange Theories

The employee-organization relationship has been of interest to theorists and researchers for many years. According to Blau (1964), there are two types of exchange relationships between the employee and the employer: an economic exchange, which is compensation for work, and a social exchange. Social exchange theory is based on the belief that relationships are entered into for mutual benefit, and players engage in a voluntary exchange of resources (Blau, 1964). Blau's work built upon the work of Gouldner (1960), who conceptualized the concept of the norm of reciprocity, which holds that both the employee and the organization will provide the resources desired by the other. Unlike economic exchanges, which are well-defined and explicit transactions, social exchanges are voluntary and nonspecific. However, with social exchange there is an expectation that a favor will be reciprocated.

Further exploring this concept, two contemporary theories of social exchange emerged: psychological contract theory and organizational support theory. Psychological contract theory concerns employees' beliefs regarding their obligations and entitlements as well as those of the organization (Rousseau, 1990; Schein, 1965). With psychological contracts, employees believe that the perceived reciprocal obligations are promissory. These perceptions become contractual, and not fulfilling the promise is considered a breach of contract (Rousseau, 1990).

The second contemporary theory of social exchange, organizational support theory, is a key element in this study. The next section investigates this theory in more detail.

Organizational Support Theory

Organizational support theory looks at employees' emotional commitment and proposes that employees form general beliefs about how much their contributions are valued by the organization, based upon their perception of the actions of the organization, and about the extent to which the organization is supportive and concerned about the well-being of its employees (Eisenberger et al., 1986). This belief is defined as POS and assumes that favorable beliefs, based on reciprocity, create a feeling of obligation and commitment to help the organization achieve its goals (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The POS and caring exhibited by the organization meet the socioemotional needs of the workers by facilitating a sense of belonging and indicate that the organization rewards employee performance. Employees view the organization like a person with human characteristics. They regard treatment received from the organization as indicative of the organization's feeling toward them and reciprocate positive treatment (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Rhoades et al., 2001).

Eisenberger et al. (1986) developed the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) to test employees' beliefs regarding support from the organization. Results of their 1986 study supported the need to look at commitment theories as part of an integrated social exchange approach and suggested that organizational commitment is a consequence of the social exchange process. The original version of the SPOS contained 36 items. Since that time POS has been explored in over 70 empirical studies, most of which used a shortened version of the SPOS. As indicated in the meta-analysis completed by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), most studies of POS have focused on its

antecedents and consequences. Only recently has research begun to examine the mediating role of POS in the various types of support offered by the organization.

Antecedents of Perceived Organizational Support

The antecedents for POS and affective commitment are similar. Organizational support theory defines three key antecedents of POS: fairness, supervisor support, and organizational rewards and job conditions (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). These categories outline the general forms of perceived favorable treatment that increase POS, and each can involve a number of components. The category of fairness includes procedural justice, fairness of resource allocation, rules and policies, organizational politics, and overall treatment of employees with dignity and respect (Rhoades et al., 2001). The second category, supervisor support, is important because employees regard supervisors as agents of the organization and their treatment as representative of organizational support. As an example, poor supervision is the main reason younger employees leave an organization (Bova & Kroth, 2001). Training (developmental experiences) is part of the third category, organizational rewards and job conditions, which also includes pay and promotions, autonomy, and job security.

Perceived Organizational Support and Training

Training represents high-commitment HR practices by the organization. This study suggests that such an investment in employees benefits the firm. Some research has found positive effects regarding the association of training and POS (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). According to Aselage and Eisenberger (2003), employees who participate in training feel a sense of obligation to help the firm achieve its goals. A study

of 295 employees in multiple organizations (Eisenberger et al., 1997) found a strong relationship between POS and the favorableness of discretionary practices (e.g., training) that employees believed the organization had high control over. Providing developmental training experiences to employees indicates an investment by the firm and has been found to be positively related to POS (Wayne et al., 1997). In the study by Wayne et al. (1997), the level of POS was higher for employees who participated in formal and informal training activities. This is an indication that training may display the firm's support and also foster reciprocity.

However, contrary to these findings, Whitener's (2001) research in credit union employees found a significant and negative relationship between training and POS. In this study, POS was higher in organizations that offered fewer training opportunities. As a mediating variable, POS has been found to completely mediate the effect of HRM practices (e.g., training) on organizational commitment (Meyer & Smith, 2000). In a study by Rhoades et al. (2001), POS mediated the association of organizational rewards with affective commitment. Chambel and Sobral (2011) found that organizational investment in training and affective commitment were partially mediated by POS.

Organizational Support and Affective Commitment

Numerous studies have indicated a strong association between POS and affective commitment. A study of 367 employees by Rhoades et al. (2001) provided evidence that POS leads to increased affective commitment and decreased employee turnover. Tansky and Cohen's (2001) study of career development in a Midwestern hospital confirmed previous findings that organizational commitment is influenced by employee perceptions of organizational support. Specifically, when supervisors made an effort to develop their

employees, employees were more committed to the organization. Rhoades and Eisenberger's (2002) meta-analysis of POS found a strong positive relationship between affective commitment and POS, increased employee performance, and reduced withdrawal behaviors.

Summary

This section reviewed organizational support, its importance in the employee-employer relationship, and its relationship with training and commitment. Interest by researchers in the mediating role of organizational support is increasing, but the research is limited. There is a need for further exploration of POS and its influence on HRM antecedents of commitment. The next section outlines the variable of age in relation to commitment and training.

Age

Research on age in the workplace has been examined in a number of conceptualizations, including life stages, career stages, and generational cohorts. Age has also been studied in conjunction with organizational tenure and occupational tenure, and these are often interrelated. This study investigated the influence of age on commitment and utilized the chronological age (calendar age). While there is a lack of agreement by researchers on a single definition of an "older worker" and a "younger worker," Pitt-Catsouphes and Smyer (2005), in their research on employing an aging workforce, defined an older worker as 45+ years. That definition was used in this study; thus, a younger worker was defined as someone less than 45 years.

Commitment and Age

Employers seeking to reduce attrition by fostering organizational commitment need to recognize and understand how age differences affect commitment. Employees in different age groups view work with diverse perspectives; thus, organizational commitment may vary by age. As employees age, their priorities can shift, resulting in changes in the antecedents of commitment (Mowday et al., 1982). Some research has indicated that the likeliness of an employee remaining with the organization increases with age (Meyer & Smith, 2000; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). For example, a study by Morrow and McElroy (1987) found a positive linear relationship between affective commitment and age, with younger employees less committed to the organization than older employees. This result confirmed previous research by Angle and Perry (1981). Building on that work, Allen and Meyer (1993) found affective commitment to be positively correlated with age. They also found a strong sense of obligation (normative commitment) to the organization among older workers, and these findings were independent of career stage. In a study of professional workers in Malaysia, Ahmad and Bakar (2003) found that workers in their 40s have significantly higher commitment than workers less than 30 years of age.

Age as a Moderating Variable

Although the literature suggests an age effect, there is limited empirical work on age as a moderator between commitment and other components (e.g., training) of the employer-employee relationship, and that research has been inconclusive. One such study by Finegold et al. (2002) investigated age as a moderator of antecedent variables and organizational commitment and found a strong relationship between commitment and

employee satisfaction with skill development for all ages of employees. Qiao, Khilji, and Wang (2009) did not find that age had any moderating effect on the relationship between the perceptions of the existence of high-performance work systems and employee commitment in a study of Chinese organizations. In a meta-analysis on the influence of age on HR practices, the hypothesis that the relationship between the HR development practice of training and affective commitment weakened with age was not confirmed (Kooij, Jansen, Dikkers, & De Lange, 2010). In a study of HR practices and commitment of employees in financial services organizations in Ireland, Conway (2004) found a significant relationship between all HR practices and affective commitment for employees 30 years or younger.

Training and Age

Arsenault (2004) suggested that employees of different age groups have unique mindsets and that to be effective, the development and delivery of training (leadership development programs) should vary by age group because of generational differences related to attitudes, beliefs, and preferences. Chronological age has been found to be an important predictor of work variables (Cleveland & Shore, 1992). The level of organizational commitment may fluctuate by age depending on how employees in different age groups view the importance of training. Finegold et al. (2002) found that although commitment was higher for employees of all ages when skill development needs were being met, the relationship between opportunities to develop skills and willingness to change companies was more strongly negative for those less than 30 years.

In agreement with the results of Finegold et al. (2002), research by Bova and Kroth (2001) indicated that younger employees value continuous learning and

professional growth. Examining employee commitment and age is important with regard to training because younger employees make job decisions based upon training availability (Caudron, 1998). Finegold et al. (2002) proposed that this is because new entrants to the workforce view building competencies and developing skills as significant. Research by Conway (2004) indicated a relationship between training and commitment for all age groups, though significantly stronger correlations were found for younger employees.

Summary

This section reviewed age and its relationship with training and commitment. Research on age as a moderating variable has been limited and inconclusive. The next section outlines the study hypotheses.

Hypotheses

Training and Organizational Commitment

When firms invest in training, employees learn new skills and improve their productivity and effectiveness (Becker, 1993). Firms that fail to offer training risk having employee skills become obsolete (Benson, Finegold, & Mohrman, 2002). Training also helps to foster commitment to the organization. A number of studies have found that investments in training and employee development can influence employee commitment (Meyer & Smith, 2000; Whitener, 2001; Allen et al., 2003). Other empirical evidence indicates that support for training (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003; Bartlett, 2001; Bulut & Culha, 2010), participation in training (Bartlett, 2001), and training comprehensiveness (Ehrhardt et al., 2011) can increase commitment among employees. From the point of

view of the employee-firm social exchange relationship, training as an HRM practice is viewed as a benefit to the employee and can contribute to improved commitment (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003). As an example, Kooij et al. (2010), in a study of high-commitment HR practices, found training to be significantly and positively related to affective commitment. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Employee perception of training opportunities is positively associated with affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.

Moderating Influence of Age

The commitment literature indicates that age plays a role in the development of commitment. According to Mowday et al. (1982), as workers age, their priorities can shift, resulting in changes in the antecedents of commitment. As an example, younger employees make job decisions based upon training availability (Caudron, 1998). Adams and Zanzi (2012) noted that few business schools provide the comprehensive courses necessary to prepare their graduates for a career in management consulting, and at the same time firms are reducing in-house entry-level training programs. Since skills and competencies are critical to strong performance and career advancement in the consulting industry, employees may not remain with a firm that is not helping them improve their skills. Finegold et al. (2002), in a study on age effects on the employment relationship, showed that the relationship between satisfaction with skill development and willingness to change companies was stronger for younger employees. Thus, this study expected that age as a moderator would affect the strength of the association between training opportunities and commitment. As age increases, the relationship between training and commitment will decrease. Also, if younger employees receive the training they require,

they are expected to be more committed to the firm. With this basis, the following hypotheses were proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Age moderates the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.

Hypothesis 2a: The younger the employee, the stronger the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment.

Perceived Organizational Support

According to Eisenberger et al. (1997), the favorable treatment received from the organization through discretionary practices such as training results in higher POS because training represents an investment in employees by the firm. A study by Wayne et al. (1997) confirmed that employees who participate in training activities have a higher level of POS. Based on the theories of social exchange and the norm of reciprocity, training provided by the organization may contribute to employees' perception that the organization cares about their well-being, which could result in increased commitment (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Research by Rhoades et al. (2001) showed a strong association between POS and affective commitment and evidence of decreased employee turnover. Tansky and Cohen (2001) confirmed previous findings that POS leads to increased affective commitment. Therefore, this study expected employees' perception of the training offered by the firm to be regarded as an indication that the firm cares about their well-being, resulting in positive organizational support and increased commitment. Accordingly, the following were hypothesized:

Hypothesis 3: Employee perception of training opportunities is positively associated with POS among management consultants.

Hypothesis 4: POS is positively associated with affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.

Organizational Support as a Mediator

The interaction of POS and other HR practices in affecting employee commitment has been found in several studies. Rhoades et al. (2001) found that POS mediated the association of organizational rewards with affective commitment, and Tsui et al. (1997) found an interaction between employee commitment, HR practices, and employees' POS. Research on the social exchange relationship between temporary workers and organizations found that organizational support partially mediated the relationship between investment in training and affective commitment (Chambel & Sobral, 2011).

This study posited that training practices would be viewed as favorable treatment and would enhance employee feelings of being cared about and supported by the organization, thus enhancing affective commitment. This implies that training, when considered part of employee feelings and expectations of the organization, would result in positive effects. Since Hypotheses 1 and 3 posited that a significant relationship was expected between training opportunities and commitment, and between POS and commitment, POS was not expected to account for the entire relationship (full mediation). Therefore, it was expected that the relationship between training opportunities and affective commitment would be partially mediated by POS as set forth in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5: POS partially mediates the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.

Chapter Summary

Wright, Dunford, and Snell (2001) suggested that in tough times, firms often first make cutbacks in investments in HR systems such as training. However, training may be critical to employee skill development and firm success. Training is viewed as a discretionary practice and is positively related to employees' perception of organizational support (Gavino et al., 2012; Eisenberger et al., 1997). Therefore, this research—which sought to understand the relationship between training offered by the firm, the individual's feelings of commitment to the organization, and the effects of age—can help organizations increase the effectiveness of their training strategies.

This literature review has provided a foundation for the study of firm-provided training and commitment. A review of the literature has highlighted the fact that research on the variable of training with relation to affective commitment is limited and inconclusive. This study sought to shed new light on this construct to begin to outline findings that will inform firm training investments.

CHAPTER 3:

METHODS

This research was an associational study of management consultants to determine the relationship between affective commitment and employer-provided training as measured by employee perceptions of training opportunities. The study also investigated how the relationship was moderated by age and mediated by perceptions of organizational support. Although previous studies have indicated a link between training and organizational commitment (Bartlett, 2001; Ahmed & Bakar, 2003; Meyer & Smith, 2000; Al-Emadi & Marquardt, 2007), there is a lack of empirical research on training and commitment in the consulting industry. The study used a survey methodology to collect individual-level data from consultants on their perceptions via a self-administered web-based survey developed from existing validated instruments.

The process, procedures, and methods employed in this study are delineated in this chapter, beginning with an overview of the study design and a review of the research questions and hypotheses. These sections are followed by discussions of the population, sampling plan, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

This quantitative study applied an associational design utilizing a survey methodology. It investigated how organizational commitment related to training as well as age and organizational support. A web-based survey instrument was used to gather individual-level data on consultants' perception of training opportunities and

commitment. A limitation of survey research is that it does not provide sufficient information to indicate causality (Alreck & Settle, 1995). However, the survey results can contribute to an increased understanding of which variables may impact organizational commitment.

Research Questions

This study had one overarching research question: What is the relationship between employees' perception of training and their organizational commitment in management consulting firms? Employees' age was investigated as a potential moderator of the relationship between the training variable and commitment. Research has found that younger employees are more likely to value training (Caudron, 1998); therefore, they should be more committed to organizations that support training. Other studies have suggested that perceived organizational support (POS) is positively related to affective organizational commitment (Rhoades et al., 2001), and job training has been found to be positively related to POS (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Thus, this study examined POS as a potential mediator of the relationship between training and affective organizational commitment. The following six hypotheses were tested:

1. Employee perception of training opportunities is positively associated with affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.
2. Age moderates the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.
   2a. The younger the employee, the stronger the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment**.**

3. Employee perception of training opportunities is positively associated with POS among management consultants.
4. POS is positively associated with affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.
5. POS partially mediates the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.

Population

The target population was client-facing consultants who provide consulting services in the areas of change management, organizational development, or human resources. This population was selected because voluntary attrition is high in this industry, and building new expertise and maintaining current skills are critical to the success of consultants in these practice areas. The study focused on firms with more than 1000 employees. Firm size was considered because larger firms were expected to have more resources to provide training. Executive-level employees were excluded from direct participation in the study because of their role in the creation of training policies. The study was limited to consultants in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. This region was selected for convenience and also because it has a large population of consultants who specialize in the targeted consulting service areas. Thus, to be eligible for participation, the individual had to (1) be a nonexecutive consultant in the Washington, DC, area employed by a consulting firm that had more than 1000 employees and (2) serve in a client-facing role specializing in change management, organizational development, or human resources.

Sampling Plan

Two sources were used to identify the firms that met the inclusion criteria: the Association of Management Consulting Firms and Kennedy Information. The Association of Management Consulting Firms is a resource for information on consulting and provides a forum for ideas and a community for knowledge exchange and networking within the consulting profession. Kennedy Information publishes *Consulting*, a key magazine of the consulting profession. The magazine features the results of consulting industry studies conducted by Kennedy Consulting Research & Advisory. The firms' size, location, and service areas were verified through the organizations' websites and Dunn and Bradstreet. Different survey distribution methods were used in order to have a sufficient sample size. Surveys were distributed between January and May 2012 through consulting firms and referral sampling.

Twelve firms were invited to participate in the study. The initial point of contact was a key executive. Of those contacted, six firms indicated an interest in the research. Several of the organizations required a lengthy review of the survey and process by their legal representative and subsequently decided not to participate. Surveys were sent to 34 consultants from three companies that agreed to take part in the study. Some firms were not accessible to the researcher due to company policies prohibiting external surveys. Because of this limited access, distribution of the survey via referral sampling was also used to reach participants. "Snowball or referral sampling is used when the population being researched is difficult to reach" (Grossnickle & Raskin, 2001, p. 126). This approach begins with the identification of a nonrandom initial sample of members of the population who are asked to participate in the study and to refer other qualified study

respondents to the researcher. Those identified in the initial sample form the first wave and refer other participants (Goodman, 2011). This continues until the required data size is reached.

This study utilized two types of referral chains to reach potential respondents. The first referral chain consisted of consultants selected by the researcher based on meeting the eligibility criteria of the research. The second referral chain consisted of contacts selected by the researcher based on their connections in the consulting industry and potential to recruit people from their social networks who met the inclusion criteria. The three methods of survey distribution that comprised the sampling plan are presented in Figure 3.1.

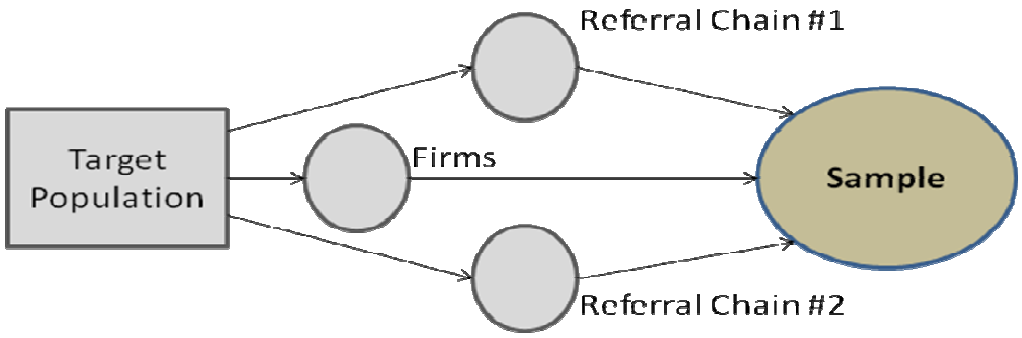

Figure 3.1. Survey distribution plan.

Instrumentation

The survey was designed as an online questionnaire comprising scales taken from established instruments (Appendix A). Instructions on how to complete the survey and a statement of informed consent were included on the initial screen. Following the instructions, the remaining five sections were grouped by content. The first three sections solicited responses on statements regarding training, commitment, and organizational

support. A summary of these variables and the scales used in the study is presented in Table 3.1. The final two sections requested feedback on training policies and professional and demographic information.

Table 3.1
Summary of Variables and Scales Used in the Study

Variable	Scale	Number of items
Training opportunities	Knowledge subscale of the High Impact Work Process Model (Vandenberg et al., 1999)	8
Affective commitment	Affective Commitment Scale (Meyer & Allen, 1991)	6
Organizational support	Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger et al., 1997)	8

Training Opportunities

Training opportunities were measured in Section A of the survey by eight items taken from the knowledge subscale of the High Impact Work Process Model (Vandenberg et al., 1999). This subscale concerns the perceptions of employees regarding the organization's provision of opportunities for training to develop skills needed to perform their jobs and the "formal mechanisms employed by the organization to maintain business and job knowledge" (Vandenberg et al., 1999, p. 315). Sample statements include "I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills at this company though education and training programs" and "I receive ongoing training, which enables me to do my job better." Participants were asked to rate the items on a Likert scale ranging from 1 *(strongly disagree)* to 7 *(strongly agree)* to indicate their perception of training opportunities offered by the organization.

Reliability and validity of the knowledge subscale. The knowledge subscale of the High Impact Work Process Model has consistently reported high reliability scores. In a study of 3,570 participants in 49 organizations, Vandenberg et al. (1999) noted a reliability estimate for the knowledge subscale at $\alpha = .90$. Knight-Turvey (2006) used the knowledge subscale in research on progressive human resource practices, and in a sample of 756 employees from an Australian manufacturing firm also found a high reliability measure of $\alpha = .90$. Wilson, DeJoy, Vandenberg, Richardson, and McGrath (2004) included the knowledge subscale in an instrument designed to test a healthy work organization model, and the development process included validation by experts, an exploratory analysis, and a confirmatory factor analysis. Consistent with other studies, the coefficient alpha estimate was .90.

Commitment to the Organization

Section B of the instrument contained the six items of the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) from the 18-item revised instrument of the three-component model of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The model defines affective, normative, and continuance commitment as components of organizational commitment. This study focused on employee affective commitment; thus, the continuance and normative scales were not used.

The ACS includes both negatively and positively scored items that measure the emotional attachment of an individual to the organization. A seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 *(strongly disagree)* to 7 *(strongly agree)* was used to indicate participants' level of agreement with the statements. Sample items are "This organization has a great

deal of personal meaning for me" and "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own."

Reliability and validity of the ACS. The Meyer and Allen commitment scales have exhibited good psychometric properties and acceptable content validity (Cohen, 2007). Anvari, Arin, and Seliman (2010) conducted a study of 436 hotel employees to examine the relationships between psychological contracts, job involvement, strategic training, and affective commitment. The coefficient alpha for affective commitment for the study was .86. A study of 281 employees that investigated the relationship between human resource management and employee organizational commitment reported a coefficient alpha of .86 for affective commitment (Meyer & Smith, 2000).

In a review of research in which the affective, continuance, and normative commitment scales have been used, Allen and Meyer (1996) analyzed data from over 40 employee samples to determine the reliability and internal consistency of the measures. The study found the median reliability for the affective commitment scale to be .85. The review also found substantial evidence of construct validity of all measures as well as stability over time of the factor structures. Both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses indicated a clear distinction between the affective, continuance, and normative commitment scales and between the ACS and POS (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Overall findings support the use of the commitment scales in future studies.

Organizational Support

Organizational support was measured in Section C with eight items from the short form of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) (Eisenberger et al., 1997). The scale includes both negatively and positively scored items that measure how

organizations are supportive of employees and value their contribution. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent of agreement with each statement on a Likert scale ranging from 1 *(strongly disagree)* to 7 *(strongly agree).* Sample items include "My organization really cares about my well-being" and "Help is available from my organization when I have a problem."

Reliability and validity of the SPOS. A meta-analysis conducted by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) reviewed 73 studies in multiple industries and found high internal reliability (average $\alpha = .90$) for the SPOS. A strong loading on the perceived support factor was reported by Eisenberger et al. (1986) in an analysis of 361 employees from various organizations. In a study to evaluate the construct validity of the SPOS, Shore and Tetrick (1991) used confirmatory factor analysis and determined evidence of unidimensionality of the SPOS and the ACS scales. POS as a construct is both conceptually and empirically distinct (Rhoades et al., 2001). Most studies on POS have used a short version of the SPOS, and "because the original scale is unidimensional and has high internal reliability, the use of shorter versions does not appear problematic" (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002, p. 699).

Demographic Items

In Sections D and E, participants were asked to complete nine questions about organizational training policies and demographic information. For training policies, they were asked if they could get monetary assistance, tuition assistance, and time off for external training. To determine age, participants were asked "In what year were you born?" The entry was validated via the survey software. Asking respondents the year they were born has a higher response rate and accuracy than asking for their age (Peterson,

1984). It also provides greater flexibility in analysis than age ranges. Participants were also asked multiple-choice questions on educational level, industry and organizational tenure, and professional certification.

Open-ended Questions

An open-ended question in each of the first four section sections of the survey prompted survey participants to provide additional comments regarding training opportunities, commitment to the organization, organizational support, and their firm's training policies. A text box was included to allow respondents to enter write-in comments. This information was used to assist in interpretation of results.

Permission to Use Instruments

Three instruments were utilized in this study: Vandenberg, Richardson, and Eastman's (1999) knowledge subscale of the High Impact Work Process Model, Meyer and Allen's (1991) ACS of the three-component model of organizational commitment, and the SPOS developed by Eisenberger et al. (1997). Robert Vandenberg, author of the knowledge subscale, gave permission via e-mail to use the scale in this study. Permission was also obtained from John Meyer, author of the ACS, and Robert Eisenberger, author of the SPOS. Copies of the communications are included in Appendix E.

Data Collection Procedures

The survey was designed and administered utilizing Survey Monkey, a commercially available online survey software, and was accessible to participants via the World Wide Web. The rationale for this method was accessibility. Consultants who are the target of the survey are rarely in the office. A web-based survey was available to

participants 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at home, at the client site, or at the office. The survey was designed using Dillman's (2007) tailored design method. E-mail requests were used because they are an effective method to reach participants who are often working at client locations or telecommuting, which makes delivery and return of paper-based surveys difficult. Also, having the survey available via the web allowed the respondent flexibility in where and when the survey could be submitted and eliminated the need for mailing. Firm sampling and referral sampling were employed to select participants, as described earlier, with slightly different survey distribution procedures for each group. A summary of the survey results by distribution method is presented in Table 3.2 on p. 62.

Procedures for Individuals Participating Through Firm Sampling

Three firms agreed to participate in the research. Once agreement to participate was secured, a coordinator was assigned by the firm. The researcher provided four communication items to the firm coordinator, which were used as part of the survey process (Appendix B). The coordinator was responsible for identifying the consultants in the firm who met the inclusion criteria and for sending all e-mails to the participants. First, an advance notification e-mail requesting volunteer participation was sent to prospective participants before distribution of the survey. The initial e-mail to consultants included an information sheet on the purpose of the study (Appendix D) and indicated that participants would be receiving an e-mail with survey information within the next week. In addition, the communication emphasized the confidentiality of the process, stating, "All responses will be anonymous and no record will be kept of employees

receiving or completing the questionnaire. Only group statistics will be prepared from the survey results."

Prospective participants then received a second e-mail, which was a request to participate. The request outlined the purpose of the survey and indicated that the survey was voluntary and that all responses were anonymous and would be returned to the researcher. The e-mail also included a deadline date for survey completion and a web link to launch the questionnaire. Different survey links were provided to each participating firm to facilitate tracking of the response rate by organization and inform follow-up actions. Only the researcher was aware of the links given to each firm. The researcher provided periodic counts of the number of respondents to the firm coordinator. Anonymity was maintained as responses were not identified with participants, and the names of the firms were not noted in the survey or collected as part of the data. Clicking on the button to initiate the survey after reading an informational page indicated the participant's consent to participate. Two follow-up e-mails included the survey link, encouraging participation and thanking those who had already completed the survey.

The firm coordinators gave a count to the researcher of the number of consultants who met the criteria and received the survey. Usable surveys were collected from 19 consultants in the three firms that participated in the research. A 20th consultant started the survey but did not complete a substantial part of it. This represented a 56% response rate for the firms in the study.

Given response was not sufficient, given the limited number of firms that participated; the researcher determined other strategies to obtain the sample. These are described below.

Procedures for Individuals Participating Through Referral Sampling

Two types of referral chains were used in this study. The first referral chain was composed of 73 professional contacts selected by the researcher who met the study criteria and were representative of the target population. Prospective respondents in the referral chain received an e-mail invitation (Appendix C) from the researcher to participate. The e-mail introduced the research and included an information sheet (Appendix D) and a web link to the survey. The e-mail also asked for assistance in promoting the study and requested that the respondent forward the link to colleagues or provide contact information to the researcher for other possible candidates. The survey sent to the first referral chain was identical to the survey that was distributed to the firm participants with the exception of the addition of two filter questions. The filter questions were used to verify eligibility, which can be problematic in referral sampling. A negative answer to either of the filter questions exited the participant from the survey.

The second referral chain was selected by the researcher and included 39 additional colleagues and professional contacts with knowledge of the consulting industry and the potential to recruit people from their social networks who met the inclusion criteria. The researcher sent an e-mail invitation (Appendix C) to prospective respondents in the referral sample. The e-mail introduced the research, requested assistance in promoting the study, and requested that the respondent forward the link to colleagues or provide contact information to the researcher for other possible candidates. The e-mail contained a web link to the survey and included an information sheet (Appendix D). The survey sent to the second referral chain was identical to the survey that was distributed to

the first referral chain. Unique e-mail links were provided to the first and second referral chains in order to track the responses by referral type.

Completed surveys were collected from 39 consultants in the first referral chain. The second referral chain submitted 17 usable surveys. The actual response rate for the snowball sampling cannot be calculated because the second-level forwarding was not tracked. For the overall study, there were 75 completed surveys resulting from 146 web links sent (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2.
Completed Surveys by Distribution Method

Method	Group	Web links sent	Surveys completed	Response rate
1	Firms	34	19	55.9%
2	Referral #1	73	39	
3	Referral #2	39	17	
	TOTAL	146	75	

Data Handling

The survey software allows researchers to monitor receipt of responses online in a real-time manner. Responses were downloaded in a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) format for analysis. The survey software has features that eliminate the need for some data edits. For example, only one option can be chosen for each question. Therefore, erroneous multiple markings was not an issue. The survey did not include branching or multiple formats, so considerations in these areas were not applicable. Each response was reviewed for completeness. For this study, substantially incomplete questionnaires were those where 25% of the responses were missing for the first three sections of the survey. Excluding the survey that was started and not completed and thus

was not usable, there were no responses that were substantially incomplete; however, some responses had missing data for less than 25% of the questions. For these responses, the series mean was used to replace missing variables. The survey was set up so that numeric values instead of text values were captured for variables, which reduced the need for additional data entry.

For the four open-ended questions, 35 participants (47%) typed at least one response into an open-ended comment box. Twenty-seven commented on training opportunities, 20 entered comments on organizational commitment, 10 answered the question on organizational support, and 19 entered information on training policies.

Data Analysis

Using SPSS version 20.0, numerous methods of statistical analysis were conducted for this study to address the hypotheses. To assess central tendencies, means and standard deviations were determined for each item and scale. To determine the reliability of the data for the present study, Cronbach's alpha was run on the item sets for each factor and compared with the alpha published by the instrument's author.

The correlation coefficient (Pearson *r*), which measures the extent of a linear relationship between two variables, was computed to understand the significance and direction of the relationships outlined in Hypotheses 1, 3, and 4. Multiple regression analyses were used to test Hypotheses 2 and 2a for the moderating effect of age. In the analysis, the perception of training opportunities was investigated to determine if it demonstrated independent effects on affective commitment or if an interaction effect with age existed. In addition, the sample was divided into two subgroups based on the moderator variable, and a regression analysis was conducted on each subgroup.

Hypothesis 5 was tested using multiple regression, where affective organizational commitment was the dependent variable. As suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986), establishing mediation requires a number of conditions: (1) training opportunities must affect affective commitment; (2) organizational support must affect affective commitment; and (3) training opportunities must affect organizational support. When the relationship in the third condition is controlled for and is no longer significant, then mediation is established.

The qualitative data from the open-ended comments were downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed utilizing qualitative content analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). After an initial review of the data, codes were developed and assigned to all responses to identify themes. The data were then organized into categories based on the themes and patterns that emerged. Five themes were identified from the comments.

Ethical Considerations

Guidelines for human subjects and ethics were adhered to in this study. Anonymity was an important concern to this audience, since individuals were asked to respond to questions about their commitment to the firm. To address anonymity, a statement was included on the initial web page, and no personal identification appeared in the data. To maintain confidentiality, neither the names of the participants nor the names of their firms were captured in the data collected or associated with any responses. A study information sheet (Appendix D), outlining study risks and the rights of respondents, was provided to all participants. The items in the survey were taken from existing instruments. To avoid copyright infringement, the authors of the surveys were contacted for permission prior to use.

Summary

This study used an associational design and quantitative survey methods to investigate whether training opportunities had an influence on management consultants' intention to remain with the firm as measured by affective organizational commitment. An online survey was administered to gather these perceptions and demographic data. The resulting data were analyzed using statistical tools to address the research question and hypotheses. The results of this analysis are discussed in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4:

RESULTS

This research was an associational study of management consultants to determine the relationship between affective commitment and employer training support as measured by employee perceptions of organizational support and training opportunities. To accomplish this, the study used a web-based survey to collect quantitative data from consultants on their perceptions.

The study population consisted of consultants specializing in change management, organizational development, and human resources in consulting firms in the greater Washington, DC, area. The survey was initially distributed in three firms to recruit participants from this population. Nineteen consultants from three firms provided usable surveys for the research. Referral sampling was also used to achieve a sufficient number to provide confidence in the results, resulting in 56 additional responses. Data were collected between January and May 2012.

A total of 146 e-mails were sent with the survey link, and 83 participants accessed the survey. Seven respondents did not meet the inclusion criteria and were exited from the survey. One respondent from the firm group started the survey but did not complete a significant portion of it; thus, that response is not included.

This chapter presents the data collected and outlines the data analysis procedures. It begins with a discussion of the participants' demographic characteristics and analysis of survey distribution methods and the study's reliability. It then provides results of the hypotheses testing and analysis of open-ended comments. A summary concludes the chapter.

Demographic Characteristics

In Section E of the survey, six demographic questions provided data to describe the research sample. Respondents were asked to provide information about gender, age, educational level, industry tenure, firm tenure, and professional certification. The categories, frequency, and percentages are summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1
Demographic Characteristics

	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	25	34.2%
	Female	48	65.8%
Education	Associate's degree	1	1.4%
	Bachelor's degree	18	24.3%
	Master's degree	46	62.2%
	Doctoral degree	9	12.2%
Industry tenure	1–5 years	12	16.2%
	6–10 years	18	24.3%
	11–15 years	24	32.4%
	16–20 years	12	16.2%
	21–25 years	3	4.1%
	26–30 years	2	2.7%
	More than 30 years	3	4.1%
Firm tenure	Less than 1 year	9	12.0%
	1–5 years	34	45.3%
	6–10 years	23	30.7%
	11–15 years	8	10.7%
	16–20 years	1	1.3%
Certification	Yes	30	40.0%
	No	45	60.0%

The sample comprised more women (n = 48) than men (n = 25), as could be expected given that the practice areas of the population studied are dominated by women; two participants did not indicate their gender. Three participants did not report the year they were born. The 72 study participants who responded ranged in age from 25 to 63 years old, with the largest percentage of respondents, 44.4%, between 34 and 43 years of age. A frequency distribution presents the results for age (Figure 4.1).

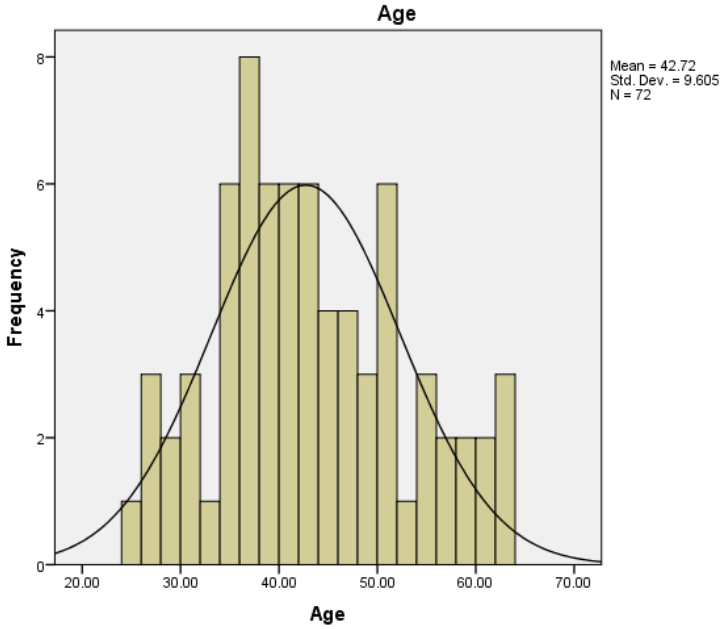

Figure 4.1. Frequency distribution for participants' age.

The majority of respondents (74.4%) reported completing a master's or doctoral degree. Eighteen participants (24.3%) had a bachelor's degree, and one respondent (1.4%) reported an educational level of associate's degree. One respondent did not report educational level.

Forty-four consultants, or 59%, had over 10 years of tenure in the consulting industry. One respondent did not report firm tenure. Interestingly, though tenure in the consulting industry was high, over half of the respondents (57.3%) reported tenure of 5 years or less at their current firm. Less than half of the participants, 40%, held a professional certification that required training for recertification.

Analysis of Distribution Methods

Demographic characteristics of gender and age for the three survey distribution methods are noted in Table 4.2. To determine if the distribution methods had

significantly different mean scores for training opportunities, perceived organizational support and affective commitment values, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the three sample groups a) participants recruited from firms, b) participants recruited via the first referral sampling process and c) participants recruited via the second referral sampling process. As determined by the one- way ANOVA, there were no statistically significant differences between the groups for training opportunities ($F(2,72) = 2.585$, $p = .082$); affective commitment ($F(2,72) = 2.161$, $p = .123$); or POS ($F(2,72) = 2.262$, $p = .111$). Detailed results on the analysis are presented in Appendix F.

Table 4.2
Demographic Characteristics by Distribution Method

Distribution method	Male	Female	Age minimum	Age maximum
Firms	8	10	27	57
Referral #1	9	30	25	62
Referral #2	8	8	34	63

Reliability of the Data

To determine the reliability of the data, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for the three scales used in the study. All of the scales exhibited good reliability in the same range as prior studies. Table 4.3 shows these results and the means and standard deviations for the responses.

Table 4.3
Reliability Analysis

Scale	Number of items	Mean	SD	Coefficient alpha
Training opportunities	8	38.02	12.10	.96
Affective commitment	6	27.37	7.79	.90
Organizational support	8	39.87	7.34	.88

Training opportunities were measured by an eight-item scale developed by Vandenberg et al. (1999); affective commitment was measured by the six-item short form of the Affective Commitment Scale developed by Meyer and Allen (1991); and employees' beliefs regarding support from the organization were measured by eight items from the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger et al., 1997). The latter two scales had items that were reverse-coded; these were recoded prior to the analysis.

Results of Hypotheses Testing

As outlined in chapter 3, several methods of statistical analyses were applied using SPSS. This study used a .05 level of significance. In this section, each hypothesis is presented sequentially along with the research data and the results of the analyses.

Hypothesis 1

Employee perception of training opportunities is positively associated with affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.

Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed to test this hypothesis and to understand the significance of the relationship between training opportunities and affective commitment. The hypothesis was supported, with results in Table 4.4 indicating a moderate positive linear relationship that was statistically significant at $r = .41$, $p < .01$.

Table 4.4
Pearson Correlation Matrix for Study Variables

	Affective commitment	Organizational support	Training opportunities
Affective commitment	1.00	.70**	.41**
Organizational support	.70**	1.00	.58**
Training opportunities	.41**	.58**	1.00

** $p < .01$.

Linear regression with training opportunities as the predictor variable was also conducted and was significant at $R^2 = .17$, $F(1, 73) = 14.609$, $p < .01$. The R^2 indicates that 17% of the variation in the dependent variable, affective commitment, can be explained by training opportunities. Detailed results on the analysis are presented in Appendix F.

Hypothesis 2

Age moderates the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.

A regression analysis was conducted to test for moderating effects of age. The intent of the analysis was to determine if age influences the relationship between training opportunities and affective commitment. Linear regression and the comparison of change in R^2 were used to test for moderation. To reduce the potential problem of multicollinearity, the predictor variable (training opportunities) and moderator variable (age) were centered prior to the creation of an interaction variable. When the interaction variable was added to the predictor and moderator variables in the second step, the regression results (Table 4.5) indicated an R^2 change of .010. This change was not significant, $F(1,68) = .84$, $p = .36$. This result indicates that age did not moderate the

effects of training opportunities on affective commitment; thus, the hypothesis was not supported.

Table 4.5
Regression for Moderation

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R_2	Std. error	R^2 change	F change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F change
1	.425[a]	.181	.157	7.220	.181	7.611	2	69	.001
2	.437[b]	.191	.155	7.229	.010	.835	1	68	.364

[a] Predictors: (Constant), Age, Training Opportunities
[b] Predictors: (Constant) Age, Training Opportunities, Training Opportunities*Age

Hypothesis 2a

The younger the employee, the stronger the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment.

The data were divided into two age groups (<45 years and ≥45 years). A linear regression was conducted on each subgroup to see if training opportunities affected commitment across age groups (Table 4.6). For the younger age group, those 44 and under, training opportunities significantly predicted commitment with a positive beta coefficient, $\beta = .48$, $F(1, 42) = 11.1$, $p < .01$. No significant relationship was found for the older age group (>44 years). The subgroup regression results found moderating age effects and indicated that the relationship between training opportunities and affective commitment was negatively correlated with age; thus, the hypothesis was supported. Appendix F provides the complete analysis results.

Table 4.6
Regression for Age Groups

	R	R^2	Adjusted R_2	Std. error	R^2 change	F change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F change
<45 years	.457[a]	.209	.190	7.644	.209	11.104	1	42	.002
45 and older	.332[a]	.110	.076	6.614	.110	3.219	1	26	.084

Predictor: Training Opportunities
Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

Hypothesis 3

Employee perception of training opportunities is positively associated with perceived organizational support (POS) among management consultants.

To assess the relationship between training opportunities and organizational support, a bivariate correlation analysis was performed. The results in Table 4.4 show a strong positive correlation between the two variables. Pearson's *r* was .58 at the $p < .01$ level, indicating a statistically significant relationship. Consequently, we can accept the hypothesis that a positive association exists. The more favorable the employee perception of training opportunities offered by the organization, the higher the level of organizational support.

Linear regression analysis was also conducted with training opportunities as the independent variable, and the results were significant at $R^2 = .33$, $F(1, 73) = 36.122$, $p < .01$. An R^2 of .33 indicates that 33% of the variation in organizational support can be predicted by training opportunities. Appendix F provides the detailed results.

Hypothesis 4

POS is positively associated with affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.

Organizational support as measured by the POS scale was investigated to determine the association between organizational support and affective commitment. An evaluation of the relationship was conducted using Pearson's *r*. Organizational support was found to be positively related to affective commitment. The results in Table 4.4 indicate a strong relationship, which was significant at the $p < .01$ level, $r = .70$. This suggests that consultants who perceive that the firm is supportive of them will have a higher level of affective commitment.

Linear regression with organizational support as the predictor variable was also conducted and was significant at $R^2 = .49$, $F(1, 73) = 69.256$, $p < .01$. The R^2 indicates that 49% of the variation in the dependent variable, affective commitment, can be explained by organizational support. Complete results of the analysis can be found in Appendix F.

Hypothesis 5

POS partially mediates the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.

To test for Hypothesis 5, a multiple regression analysis was conducted with affective commitment as the dependent variable. The intent of the analysis was to determine if organizational support creates a causal path between training opportunities and affective commitment. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), establishing mediation requires satisfaction of four conditions: (1) the regression of the independent variable (training opportunities) and the dependent variable (affective commitment) is significant; (2) the regression of the mediator (organizational support) and the dependent variable

(affective commitment) is significant; (3) the regression of the independent variable (training opportunities) on the mediator (organizational support) is significant; and (4) when the mediator (organizational support) is controlled for, the effect of the independent variable (training opportunities) on the dependent variable (affective commitment) is decreased.

In the first step of the regression analysis (Table 4.7), training opportunities significantly predicted affective commitment, $\beta = .41$, F-change $(1,73) = 14.61$, $p < .01$. In the second step (Table 4.8), there was a strong correlation between organizational support and affective commitment that was significant, $\beta = .70$, $p < .01$. Results in Step 3 (Table 4.9) on the regression of training opportunities and organizational support were also significant, $\beta = .58$, $p < .01$. As previously supported in Hypotheses 1, 3, and 4, all variables were correlated and all were significant at a $p < .01$ level. Further, the R^2 was .49 for the independent variables, which indicates that 49% of the variance in affective commitment can be explained by training opportunities and organizational support.

Table 4.7
Regression for Mediation – Step 1

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R_2	Std. error	R^2 change	F change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F change
1	.408[a]	.167	.155	7.157	.167	14.609	1	73	.000

[a] Predictors: (Constant), Training Opportunities

Table 4.8
Regression for Mediation – Step 2

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R_2	Std. error	R^2 change	F change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F change
1	.698[a]	.487	.480	5.617	.487	69.256	1	73	.000

[a] Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Support

Table 4.9
Regression for Mediation – Step 3

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R_2	Std. error	R^2 change	F change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F change
1	.575[a]	.331	.322	6.048	.331	36.122	1	73	.000

[a] Predictors: (Constant), Training Opportunities

In Step 4, when organizational support was entered into the regression as a mediator, training opportunities no longer significantly predicted affective commitment, $\beta = .70$, F-change (1, 72) = .01, $p = .92$, as shown in Table 4.10. After controlling for organizational support, training opportunities was no longer a significant predictor of affective commitment. Because the beta for the effect of training opportunities on affective commitment decreased from significant to not significant, full mediation was met. A partial correlation was also used to validate the mediation affect. Though only partial mediation was expected, the relationship between training opportunities and affective commitment was completely mediated by organizational support. Detailed results on the analysis are listed in Appendix F.

Table 4.10
Regression for Mediation – Step 4

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R_2	Std. error	R^2 change	F change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F change
1	.698[a]	.487	.480	5.617	.487	69.256	1	73	.000
2	.698[b]	.487	.473	5.655	.000	.010	1	72	.921

[a] Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Support
[b] Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Support, Training Opportunities

Additional Analyses

To determine if the training policies (monetary assistance, tuition assistance, and time off for training) from Section D of the survey predicted affective commitment, a

linear regression analysis was conducted. In the analysis, monetary assistance predicted affective commitment, $\beta = .25$, F-change (1,73) = 4.96, $p = .03$. Tuition assistance was also a significant predictor, with $\beta = .37$, F-change (1,72) = 11.32, $p = .001$. Time off for training did not predict affective commitment. Detailed results for all additional analyses are listed in Appendix F.

Analysis of Responses to Open-Ended Questions

As noted in chapter 3, an open-ended question in each of the first four sections of the online survey offered respondents the opportunity to enter information into a free-form text box. First, the employees were asked to comment on training opportunities provided by their company. Next, they were asked to comment on their commitment to the organization. Participants were also invited to enter comments on organizational support and their organization's training policies.

Thirty-five (47%) of the participants typed at least one response into the open-ended comment box. Twenty-seven commented on training opportunities, 20 entered comments on organizational commitment, 10 answered the question on organizational support, and 19 entered information on training policies.

The complete responses were exported from SPOS to a format (Excel) that allowed for easy manipulation of the survey data. The length of the comments varied, with the shortest 4 words in length and the longest 181 words. The data set was analyzed utilizing qualitative content analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher read through all of the comments for each of the five questions. Responses that were composed of multiple topics were separated into different statements, resulting in 73 units of analysis. Using an inductive approach, codes were noted for each statement as

categories emerged from the data. Nine categories were generated from the initial analysis. The codes were clustered into themes based on similarities in the data. Five key themes were identified from the comments: limited training opportunities, lack of time, limited funding, commitment factors, and supportive firm. An independent review was conducted of the codes and themes, confirming the findings of the researcher. Additional detail on the categories and themes can be found in Appendix F.

Limited Training Opportunities

The theme of limited training opportunities was the second largest theme with regard to the number of comments. This theme included concerns regarding the lack of training as well as the effectiveness of the delivery methods of available training. The link between training and turnover was noted by several employees. For example, one consultant stated, "The lack of training opportunities at my company would be a significant factor in me leaving the company if I found an opportunity elsewhere." The employee comments also raised concerns about training delivery methods and indicated a desire for classroom, instructor-led training. However, much of the internal firm training was offered online, and employees viewed this as ineffective. As an employee noted, "All that is offered are free online courses that do not provide the necessary training for me to perform my job." Another consultant reinforced this sentiment, stating, "The majority of the courses are also offered virtually, which lacks the focus and interaction that the classroom format allows."

A number of comments referenced a preference for external training offerings. Respondents expressed the sentiment that courses offered outside the firm were more successful in meeting their training needs. As one employee commented, "I am more

satisfied by external seminars and courses to fulfill my professional growth requirements." In another example, a consultant wrote, "The lackluster training opportunities and offerings force employees to seek training outside the company program."

Lack of Time

The second theme that emerged from the data was lack of time. Overall, this theme had the greatest number of respondent comments. Participants raised specific concerns about the demanding culture of consulting and utilization targets where consultants are expected to charge 40 hours per week to the client. These hours are in addition to hours spent on administrative and other company-related activities. Comments indicated that given the amount of billable hours required, finding time for training was difficult. According to one respondent, "The amount of training available is not the issue, but rather the lack of unbillable time to actually participate and take advantage of these opportunities is the real obstacle." Several comments noted that though time off for training may be granted by the firm, consultants were expected to work extra hours to make up for any time used to attend training or utilize personal or vacation time for training. As one participant noted, "We can have all the time off for training that we want, but have to make up the billable hours."

Contrary to the first theme of limited training opportunities, some comments from respondents in this theme indicated that training was available from their firm, but because of lack of time they were unable to participate. As an example, "There are great options for training, but finding the time to take them is very challenging with all that is required of us at [firm name]." There were also a number of references to the difficulty of

achieving work-life balance due to time constraints. As indicated by one consultant, "The [firm name] culture is intense. The expectation that we are to remain chargeable and provide another 10-15 hours of practice contribution time each week; it is exhausting." Echoing this sentiment, another employee noted, "While I have a great deal of vacation time available to me, I'm concerned about utilization and therefore will not take the 6 weeks of time I have earned. I resent this."

Limited Funding

Limited funding, the next theme among participant write-in comments, related to concerns regarding the lack of available money to pay for training. Respondents indicated that training was either not being funded or funding was inadequate. For example, one consultant commented, "My service area's training budget has been virtually nonexistent for years." In concert with this, there was a sentiment of disagreement with the stance some firms have taken to not prioritize investments in training. As one practitioner expressed, "I think our Fortune 10 firm is foolish in its 'we can't afford it' approach to learning. We have lost a number of employees in the DC area because of this lack of support for staff development." This feeling was confirmed by another consultant who stated, "The business group says that 'we can't afford educational support,' but other parts of the organization apparently can and do—this is a ridiculous policy."

A number of references suggested that where training funds were available they were scarce, and securing approval for funding could be a complicated process. A respondent explained, "Getting approval for and access to funds to attend training is like the 'holy grail' in consulting; very hard to come by." Another participant lamented, "Tuition assistance would need to be tied to our specific areas of expertise and would

only be given to top performers on an 'under the table' basis—no formal program exists." In some instances, funding for training involved competition among employees, and only selected practitioners received funds. As an example, one consultant explained, "While there is support for external training and for tuition, the funds are very limited and employees compete for available funds. Some time off is given, but again, those hours are budgeted and employees compete for them." Along the same vein, some comments indicated that firms offered programs that funded training but required a commitment from the employee. "They have a matching program that requires the employee to spend $10,000, which will be matched by $10,000, but make it very restrictive to obtain," noted one respondent. Another consultant wrote, "Money is available for training and education with an agreement to stay 18 months after completion." Overall, comments in this theme suggested a concern by consultants regarding the limited amount of training dollars that were being invested, and where funds were available the process for obtaining the training funding was often restrictive, complicated, and competitive.

Commitment Factors

The commitment factors theme consisted of respondents' sentiments regarding commitment to the organization. It included several references to the view that characteristics such as interesting and meaningful work and autonomy contribute to the level of commitment. As an example, a consultant wrote, "As long as I work on efforts that challenge me and help me grow personally and professionally, I am satisfied with my organization." Another noted, "I think training opportunities have certainly contributed to my level of engagement, but other factors certainly play a strong role as well (e.g., autonomy, recognition, nature of the work, connection of work to personal values)."

A number of comments seemed to indicate that consultants were committed, but not necessarily to the firm. A practitioner expressed, “I work remote at a client site. I very rarely have interaction with my one-on-one supervisor. I feel more attached to my client team [belonging to the client organization] than I do my core company.” Another consultant indicated a commitment to the work, stating, “I am not part of the inner circle of my company, but that is very much okay with me. I do not tie myself emotionally to the company but I am personally very vested in my work.” The concerns about firm billability demands that were expressed in the second theme were also noted in this theme in a comment by a consultant who stated, “To answer your questions on commitment, the commitment is to ‘headcount’ and ‘revenue.’ If you can provide that, you are ‘part of the family.’” Relationships, networking, and participation in firm activities also contributed to commitment and retention of employees, as indicated by the comments. For example, a consultant noted, “I value my relationships; so even if my training opportunities have been pathetic, there are a lot of good things keeping me here.” Similarly, a respondent wrote, “I became more ‘emotionally attached’ with the more effort I put into activities—by reaching out to peers and managers, voluntarily participating in non-mandatory face-to-face events and volunteering for extra activities.” Recognition by the firm was also noted as a factor contributing to commitment according to one respondent who said, “I have been recognized on several occasions in the past year for my achievements, helping me to feel more like I belong.” Overall, data in this theme suggested that a number of factors influence the feeling of attachment and commitment to the firm.

Supportive Firm

The final theme of supportive firm that emerged from the data consisted of positive comments from respondents regarding their organization's support and policies. Where firms did offer training and were supportive, study participants had favorable feelings about their organizations and submitted write-in comments to outline their praise. Acclaim for firm funding of certifications for consultants was provided, with a consultant stating, "I feel extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to get 5+ certifications for which those not within the company would have to pay thousands of dollars." Training investments in experienced, older consultants were also noted: "I have 25 years of experience in Human Capital/Change Management and extensive experience. My organization recently paid for me to get two additional certifications." Generous and flexible policies offered by firms garnered accolades from participants. As an example, one consultant stated, "[Firm name] does a great job of responding to the needs and desires of its employees when it comes to training. We offer awesome in house training and are very flexible with external training folks want to take." Another comment noted, "I have arranged a flexible work schedule to accommodate my graduate school needs."

This theme also included positive comments about working for the organization. As noted by one practitioner, "My organization provides value to my personal brand. I am proud to work there." Strong praise from another consultant stated, "As long as I am a consultant working for a consulting firm I will be a [firm name]; . . . I can't imagine working for another consulting firm."

Summary

This chapter presented the results of the statistical analyses on the data collected. Support was found for five of the six hypotheses, and a summary of the findings is presented in Table 4.11. A significant relationship existed between training opportunities and affective commitment, and between training opportunities and organizational support. Organizational support showed a positive correlation with affective commitment. Organizational support was found to be a mediator of the relationship between training opportunities and affective commitment. Age was not found to be a moderator; however, moderating effects of age were found for younger employees.

Table 4.11
Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Description	Result
1	Employee perception of training opportunities is positively associated with affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.	Supported
2	Age moderates the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.	Not supported
2a	The younger the employee, the stronger the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment.	Supported
3	Employee perception of training opportunities is positively associated with perceived organizational support among management consultants.	Supported
4	Perceived organizational support is positively associated with affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.	Supported
5	Perceived organizational support partially mediates the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment to the organization among management consultants.	Supported Full mediation

An analysis of qualitative data collected via open-ended questions was also presented in this chapter. Forty-seven percent of respondents answered at least one of the four questions. Five themes emerged from the data: limited training opportunities, lack of time, limited funding, commitment factors, and supportive firm. The lack of time theme had the greatest number of comments. The quantitative and qualitative results are discussed along with their implications and recommendations in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5:

INTERPRETATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between training and organizational commitment by examining the perceptions of consultants employed in consulting firms in Washington, DC. One research question guided the study: What is the relationship between employees' perception of training and their organizational commitment in management consulting firms? Figure 5.1 provides a graphical representation of the variables and the six study hypotheses, which included the investigation of age as a moderating variable and organizational support as a mediating variable. Individual-level data were collected via a web-based survey instrument compiled from established scales. Vandenberg et al.'s (1999) knowledge subscale was used for training opportunities. Organizational commitment data were collected using Meyer and Allen's (1991) affective commitment scale, and organizational support data were collected via the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger et al., 1997). To test the hypotheses, regression analysis and Pearson's correlation coefficient were used. Four open-ended questions on the survey asked participants to comment about training opportunities, organizational commitment, organizational support, and training policies. These data were analyzed using qualitative analysis methods.

In this chapter, the research study is summarized and the findings are discussed. The first section of this chapter summarizes the findings. The second section presents the interpretation and conclusions, followed by implications for theory and future research and recommendations for practice.

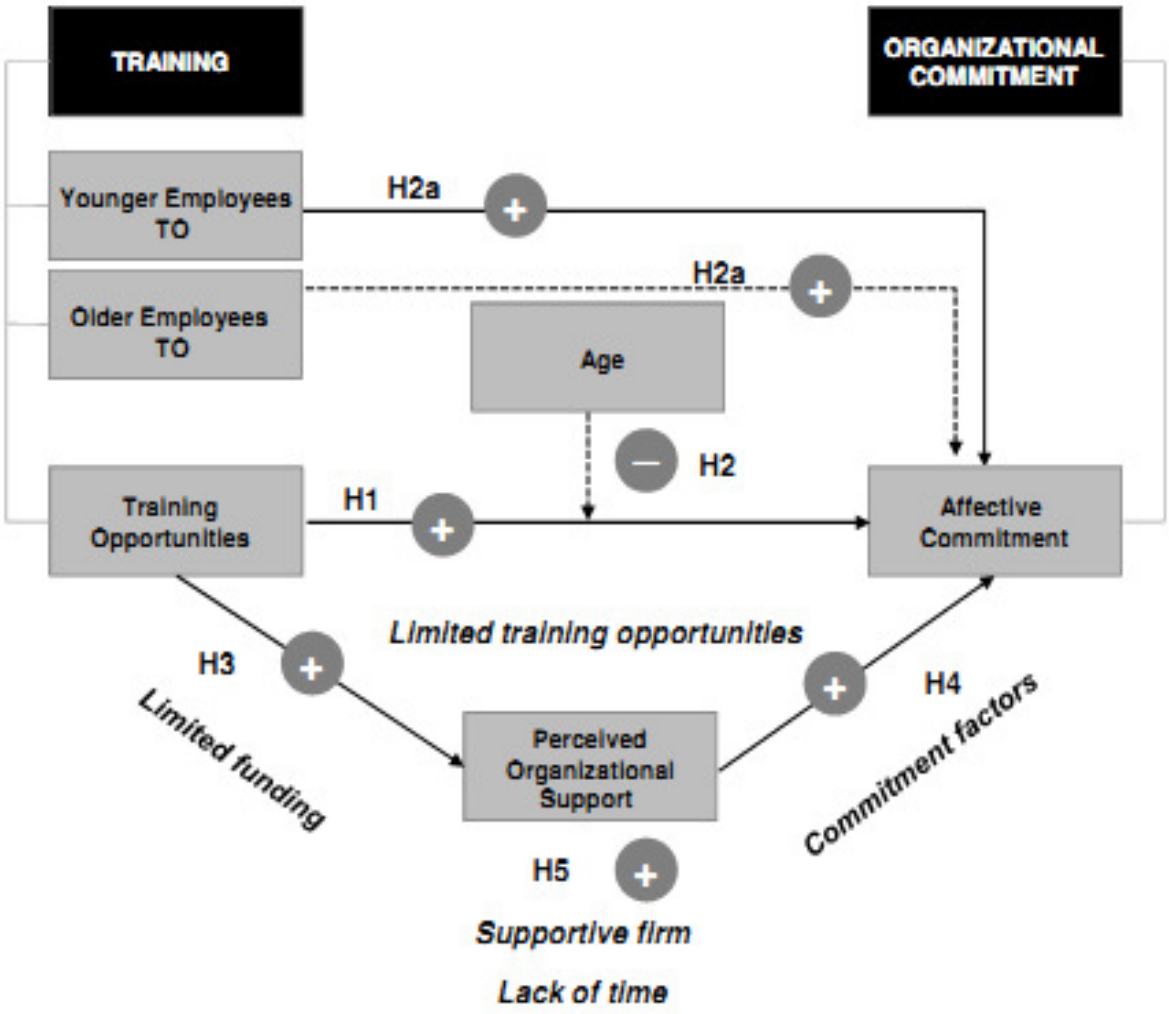

Figure 5.1. Graphical representation of study hypotheses, testing results, and themes.

Summary of Findings

In Figure 5.1, solid lines indicate significant relationships, and dotted lines indicate nonsignificant relationships. A plus sign symbolizes that the hypothesis was supported, and a minus sign symbolizes the hypothesis was not supported. Qualitative themes are represented in the figure relative to the quantitative results. Hypothesis 1

posited that perceived training opportunities would be positively associated with affective commitment. The hypothesis was supported, with results indicating a moderately positive relationship between consultants' perception of training opportunities and their commitment to the firm at a .01 level of significance. Hypothesis 2, which predicted that age would moderate the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment, was not supported. Hypothesis 2a, which predicted that the younger the employee, the stronger the relationship between the perception of training opportunities and affective commitment, was supported. Results of the subgroup analysis of younger and older workers indicated that the relationship between training opportunities and commitment was negatively correlated with age.

Correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive correlation of .58 supporting Hypothesis 3—that employee perception of training opportunities is positively associated with perceived organizational support (POS). Hypothesis 4 predicted positive relationships between organizational support and affective commitment. A moderate correlation of .70 was found; thus, the hypothesis was accepted. Hypothesis 5 explored whether POS partially mediates the relationship between training opportunities and affective commitment. The results of the regression testing supported the prediction. There was a substantial decrease in the relationship between training opportunities and affective commitment when organizational support was introduced, and full mediation was found.

Supplemental Findings

The results of linear regression analyses showed monetary assistance for training and tuition assistance to be predictors of affective commitment, with correlations of .25

and .37, respectively. However, time off for training did not predict affective commitment. Five themes emerged from a qualitative analysis of the data entered into the open-ended questions: limited training opportunities, lack of time, limited funding, commitment factors, and supportive firm.

Interpretations and Conclusions

In this section the findings and relationships reported in this research are discussed in the context of existing theories and relevant literature.

Training Opportunities and Affective Commitment

As hypothesized, employee perceptions of training opportunities correlated with higher affective commitment. When training opportunities (formal, structured in-house training and/or educational assistance for external training) offered by the firm are positively perceived by employees, they are more likely to be committed to the organization. These results extend the understanding of factors that influence affective commitment by verifying the contribution of training opportunities in predicting commitment. This finding supports the literature on training and organizational commitment that examined the relationship between these constructs (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003; Bartlett, 2001; Al-Emadi & Marquardt, 2007; Bartlett & Kang, 2004). In previous research, employer educational assistance has been shown to positively influence organizational commitment (Guffey et al., 1997) and have an overall positive effect on retention (Benson, Finegold, & Mohrman, 2004). Those results were confirmed in this study, which found monetary assistance for training ($\beta = .25$) and tuition reimbursement ($\beta = .37$) to be related to affective commitment. The study by Benson et al. (2004) found

a coefficient of .45, indicating that employees who participated in tuition reimbursement without attaining degrees were less likely to quit than nonparticipants.

Two themes that emerged from the qualitative data, limited training opportunities and limited funding, offer additional insight into the quantitative findings, suggesting that when firms do not provide training or do not make money available to pay for training, employees view this as a lack of support for development. In line with social exchange theory, these results together suggest that employees view firm-sponsored training opportunities and funding for training as an investment in the employee-employer relationship, and when offered they respond positively. The results confirm previous studies (Tsui et al., 1997; Benson et al., 2002), which found that investments in training by employers are regarded as favorable treatment by employees and as part of the social exchange relationship and result in the reciprocation of commitment from the employee.

Further insight into the relationship between affective commitment and training opportunities could be interpreted from the evidence in the theme of limited training opportunities, which indicated that the online training offered by the organization was ineffective and did not contribute to commitment. This perception of the ineffectiveness of online training may reflect a need from consultants for interaction, and it is less typical to have instructional factors such as interaction present in online instruction (Milheim, 2011). When comparing online learning and classroom training, classroom training is more effective because the degree of interaction with the instructor and other participants is key to learning practical skills (Laine, 2003). Though relevant, this finding should be interpreted with caution—as the mode of training delivery was not a factor in this study

and the sample of qualitative data is insufficient to draw any conclusions—but it is offered as a possible explanation and opportunity for future research.

No statistically significant relationship was found between time off for training and affective commitment. A possible explanation for this finding might be offered in the lack of time theme from the qualitative analysis, which found that firm training policies may require consultants to make up any time taken off for training or utilize vacation time. For these employees, who are already finding it a challenge to balance work-life demands, time off for training may not be seen as a benefit from the employer.

Training Opportunities, Commitment, and Age

In the results from the multiple regression analyses, age was not found to be a moderator of the relationship between perceptions of training opportunities and affective commitment. Previous studies investigating age as a moderator found similar results. Specifically, Qiao et al. (2009) did not find support for the hypothesis that the relationship between the perception of the existence of high performance work systems and employee commitment weaken with age. In a meta-analysis on the influence of age on human resource (HR) practices, the hypothesis that the relationship between the HR development practice of training and affective commitment weakens with age was not confirmed (Kooij et al., 2010).

A possible explanation for the finding that age was not a moderator in this study is that some moderators are not identified through multiple regression analyses according to Sharma, Durand, and Gur-Arie (1981). They recommended that researchers incorporate both multiple regression and subgroup analysis when identifying moderator variables. Though moderation was not present in the multiple regression results, when the

relationship between the predictor variable and the dependent variable was analyzed by subgroup, the moderating effects of age were apparent. The results reveal that age does influence the relationship between training opportunities and affective commitment, indicating that training opportunities positively contribute to higher organizational commitment for younger consultants. These findings on age are consistent with those of Finegold et al. (2002), who found that younger employees (≤45 years) were more willing than the older age group (>45 years) to leave their company if they were dissatisfied with the skill development opportunities provided. The results are also in line with the study of Conway (2004), who found a significant correlation between training and affective commitment for younger employees (≤30 years). One explanation for the positive correlation in this study ($\beta = .46$, $p < .01$) for consultants aged 44 and under may be because comprehensive and effective training is important to their current and future success. In the first few years of employment with a consulting firm, the primary focus is on gaining experience and building consulting skills, which enable consultants to increase their value to the firm and the client and to be eligible for promotion. Younger employees who are new entrants to the workplace are focused on building competencies; thus, they need development opportunities (Finegold et al., 2002). As younger workers develop the core skills necessary to perform the job, training opportunities are still important as they take on more responsibilities and need to gain skills and expertise to manage projects, lead a team, and build client relationships (Markham, 2005; Benson et al., 2002). Training opportunities are viewed as a type of mutual exchange where firms invest in the development of employees, and in response employees contribute their time and effort to improve their skills (Benson et al., 2002).

As expected, for the older age group (>44 years), no significant relationship was found between affective commitment and training opportunities. Individuals in the older age group may already have the needed skills and may not view training as critical for their career progression. As noted by Urwin (2006), older workers are more likely to have more experience and need less training. Taken as a whole, this suggests that training opportunities are not useful in enhancing commitment for older workers. However, age effects do exist for younger workers, and for these employees, training opportunities offered by the firm may have a positive effect on their commitment to the organization.

Perceived Organizational Support

The results of the hypotheses testing revealed several key findings with regard to POS. First, training opportunities were positively associated with POS ($\beta = .58$, $p < .01$), suggesting that firms can use training opportunities to make consultants feel they are valued and supported by the organization. This finding is consistent with the work of previous researchers (Allen et al., 2003; Wayne et al.,1997), who have asserted that employees who participate in training activities have a higher level of POS, and the provision of supportive HR practices (e.g., training activities) displays the firm's support and may encourage reciprocity (Gavino et al., 2012).

Second, POS was significantly related to affective commitment ($\beta = .70$, $p < .01$). This result supports the findings of Rhoades et al. (2001), who reported that POS strengthens affective commitment and identification with the organization. The findings indicate that consultants who have a high degree of POS will develop feelings of belonging (Meyer & Allen, 1991) and a belief that the firm is a good place to work and will be more willing to stay with the firm (Gavino et al., 2012; Eisenberger et al., 1990).

These findings are consistent with organizational support theory in which employees regard treatment received from the organization as indicative of the organization's feeling toward them and reciprocate positive treatment (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Rhoades et al., 2001). Third, POS fully mediated the relationship between training opportunities and affective commitment. This finding confirms previous research (Meyer & Smith, 2000; Rhoades et al., 2001) on HR management (HRM) practices and affective commitment and demonstrates that training opportunities (as an HRM practice) interact through organizational support to indirectly affect commitment. This study adds to the research on POS as a mediator of training (as a discretionary HR practice) and organizational commitment, and the research on training in relation to commitment. It contributes to a better understanding of how training opportunities influence the employee-firm social exchange relationship, the formation of POS, and feelings of belonging.

As Meyer and Smith (2000) suggested, HRM practices that contribute to perceptions of support indirectly contribute to improving affective commitment, and there may be other factors that employees use to determine if the organization is supportive. The qualitative data provided some insight into other possible factors. Under the theme of supportive firm, flexible work schedules and funding for certifications were two practices that consultants praised. Further, as noted in the theme of commitment factors, other aspects such as interesting and meaningful work contribute to the improvement of commitment to the firm (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Taken together, these findings suggest that firms that offer training opportunities can foster the formation of

positive beliefs regarding organizational support and produce affective commitment to the organization in employees.

Implications for Theory and Future Research

This study has contributed to the commitment research by testing the relationship between training opportunities and affective commitment. Employee perceptions of training opportunities offered by the firm were found to be positively associated with affective commitment and organizational support. These findings support the literature on affective commitment, which suggests that access to training demonstrates support for employees and fosters affective commitment (Bartlett & Kang, 2004). The results also expand social exchange theory and the understanding of the employee-employer exchange relationship by demonstrating how training opportunities (as an HRM practice) influence commitment. Employees regard training opportunities as recognition of their contribution and respond positively. One direction for future research could be a meta-analysis on training and commitment to look at the different training factors that influence commitment in order to provide a more thorough understanding of training and its role in the commitment process.

This study has provided insights into HR variables as antecedents of organizational commitment and into POS as a mediating mechanism, thus contributing to HRM research. Previous research on training and commitment has indicated a direct association between the variables. This research provides additional perspectives on the training–organizational commitment relationship by incorporating POS. It validates training as a key resource in the employee-organization social exchange process as well as the importance of POS in building commitment. The finding that organizational

support fully mediates the relationship between training opportunities and affective commitment suggests that POS as a mediating variable governs the association of training and commitment, resulting in an indirect relationship. Specifically, training opportunities lead to affective commitment through organizational support. Understanding mediators is an area for research that can provide order to the exploration of antecedents of commitment, which has for the most part been unsystematic (Meyer et al., 2002). Similar to the studies of Meyer and Smith (2000) and Rhoades et al. (2001), in this study, perceptions of organizational support were found to have a vital mediating role in the commitment process. Consequently, future researchers investigating the impact of training on commitment should also explore the mediating role of organizational support in order to gain a more thorough understanding of the impact of training on attitudinal outcomes.

The moderating effects of age that were found in the relationship between training opportunities and affective commitment draw attention to the importance of investigating differences in relationships by age group. The findings imply that training opportunities likely result in strong commitment for younger consultants and the impact of training becomes less important with increases in age. Rousseau (1995) suggested that the needs of workers and organizations change with age. As workers mature, the value of employee-provided benefits also changes (Rousseau, 1995). Additional studies are needed to explore the moderating effects of age on other HRM practices and commitment to determine if the contribution of these factors to commitment is influenced by age. Finally, as noted by Bartlett and Kang (2004), commitment to the occupation is another potentially fertile avenue for research that may be relevant to the consulting industry. For

example, the survey revealed that 59% of participants had over 10 years of experience in consulting, and 57% had been working at their current firm 5 years or less. This seems to indicate that an examination by researchers of predictors of commitment to the consulting profession and its relationship to organizational commitment might offer additional insight on the nature of commitment to managers in consulting firms.

Recommendations for Practice

Managers in the U.S. consulting industry, which is estimated at $80 billion (The 2013 Executive Outlook, 2013), may find that the results of this study have increased importance given the industry outlook. Consulting firm leaders expect double-digit revenue growth, while retention remains one of the biggest internal concerns (The 2013 Executive Outlook, 2013). Also of note is a trend related to the practice area of the study population. The increase in the number of change management engagements is expected to continue, "leading to a re-emergence of the discipline as a critical consulting competency" (Burchfield, 2013, p. 26). The findings of this study offer several recommendations for practice.

First, firms should invest in formal training for consultants. This effort needs to include sponsoring formal internal training, offering tuition reimbursement, and allocating funds for employee participation in external training offerings. HR managers in consulting firms should consider the concerns noted in the qualitative data about online training as a delivery method. Consultants did not seem to value online training and it may not have an impact on commitment. Management should regard the provision of training opportunities as a method to gain committed employees. However, the results of this research do not imply that firms can influence commitment by just offering training,

or that it is sufficient for employees to simply participate in training. Training opportunities need to focus on those skills employees are motivated to develop that are aligned with firm needs (Benson et al., 2002). The duration and frequency of training are not consistent predictors of commitment (Bartlett, 2001), and hours of training has been found to be negatively related to affective commitment (Chambel & Sobral, 2011). To affect commitment, the training offered by the firm must be viewed as a concern for employee needs. Additionally, tuition reimbursement helps to foster employee commitment and plays a significant role in employee retention (Benson et al., 2004). In addition to strengthening commitment, tuition-based training courses, which usually take place outside of work hours, are a cost-effective approach to building competencies because salary costs are avoided (Benson et al., 2002).

Since POS plays a significant role in the exchange process, firms also need to seek employee input to understand how other work experiences, in addition to training, result in employee feelings of favorable or unfavorable treatment. With that informed view, managers should implement policies and practices that communicate to employees that they are cared for and valued by the organization.

Finally, consulting firms need to address the issue of lack of time for training by revisiting the way billable utilization is calculated and reported. Though training is not a billable activity, investing in the development of individuals adds value to the employee and the organization (Benson et al., 2002). Developing consultants that enable a firm to respond successfully to market and client demands requires ongoing training that builds skills at every level (Nevins, 1998). To be more effective, consultants at all levels require continuous training to update their skills and knowledge (Adams & Zanzi, 2004). Firms

should consider modifying hour-tracking practices to take into consideration time for learning new skills or improving existing skills. For example, firms might lower utilization targets to allow time for training or maintain current targets and provide credit for training hours.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations of this research study should be considered. First, this study was non-experimental and utilized a correlation approach; thus, no reliable conclusions regarding causation can be drawn based on the findings. Second, given the relatively small sample size, generalizability of the findings to other populations is limited. Finally, this study investigated the relationship between training opportunities and commitment. Therefore, the findings are applicable to training opportunities as an individual variable and cannot necessarily be generalized to other training variables or training in general.

Summary

This study investigated the relationship between consultants' perception of training opportunities and their affective commitment. It also examined the moderating effects of age and organizational support as a mediator of the relationship. The study found that training opportunities were significantly related to affective commitment, and there was a strong positive correlation between training opportunities and organizational support and between organizational support and affective commitment. In addition, the results revealed that organizational support fully mediated the relationship between training opportunities and affective commitment. Age was not found to moderate the relationship; however, the relationship between training opportunities and commitment

was found to be negatively correlated with age. These findings can help consulting firms understand the impacts of training on employee commitment in order to make more informed decisions regarding funding for training and firm training strategies.

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APPENDIX A:

SURVEY

Survey of Training in Consulting Firms

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study #050915 under the direction of Dr. Andrea Casey of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, George Washington University (GWU). Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary.

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of training in the management consulting industry. Specifically the study will investigate how employee perceptions of training opportunities might impact commitment to the organization and if the significance of training differs according to the employee's age.

You are being asked to take part in this study because the population being studied in this research is the population of management consultants specializing in change management, human resources and organizational development in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area.

If you choose to take part in the survey it will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The questions will focus on training opportunities offered by your firm, organizational support, and your commitment to the organization.

There are no known risks associated with participating in this study and you will not benefit directly from your participation in the study. However, your participation in this research may have benefits to management consulting firms in the future by helping to provide insight to better understand the nature of employee commitment, and the impacts of firm training investments.

Your employment status will not, in any way, be affected should you choose not to participate or if you decide to withdraw from the study at any time.

We will do our best to keep your information confidential. All data will be stored in a password protected electronic format. Access to raw data will be tightly restricted to only those individuals directly involved in data analysis.

You will not be asked for your name. Responses to the online survey are anonymous and will not be associated with your name or the name of your firm. All data will be used in a form that will make it impossible to determine the identity of the individual responses. If the results of this research are reported, the survey response will be reported in the aggregate and those who participated will not be named or identified.

If you have questions about this research please contact Dr. Andrea Casey at 202-994-1152 or Yvette Robinson (doctoral student) at telephone number (717) 569-1585. If you want further information about your rights as a research participant, contact The Office of Human Research of George Washington University, at telephone number (202) 994-2715.

By choosing the "NEXT" button, I acknowledge that I voluntarily agree to participate in this study

Page 1

Survey of Training in Consulting Firms

* **Are you a non-executive consultant employed by a firm with >1000 employees with an office in the Washington, DC metropolitan area?**

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

* **Are you in a client-facing role specializing in change management, organizational development or human resources?**

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Survey of Training in Consulting Firms

Section A: Training Opportunities

In this section, we are interested in your perception of training opportunities and programs offered by your company.

Training includes formal in-house structured educational activities and learning events offered to employees, to increase existing skills, prepare for new job requirements or develop the employee for future career needs. Training also includes employer-provided educational assistance for general training offered by external organizations and institutions. Informal and on-the-job training activities are not included in the definition of training for this study.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by selecting the appropriate response for each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills at this company through education and training programs.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have had sufficient job-related training.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My supervisor helped me acquire additional job-related training when I have needed it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I receive ongoing training, which enables me to do my job better.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am satisfied with the number of training and development programs available to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am satisfied with the quality of training and development programs available to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The training and educational activities I have received enabled me to perform my job more effectively.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Overall, I am satisfied with my training opportunities.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please provide any additional comments on training opportunities offered by your company

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Survey of Training in Consulting Firms

Seetion B: Commitment to the Organization

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by selecting the appropriate response for each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please provide any additional comments on your commitment to the organization

Have you seriously considered leaving your current job in the past year?

○ Yes

○ No

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Survey of Training in Consulting Firms

Seetion C: Organizational Support

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by selecting the appropriate response for each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My organization really cares about my well-being	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My organization strongly considers my goals and values	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My organization shows little concern for me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My organization cares about my opinions	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Help is available from my organization when I have a problem	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If given the opportunity, my organization would take advantage of me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please provide any additional comments regarding organizational support

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Survey of Training in Consulting Firms

Section D: Organization Training Policies

I can get monetary assistance from my organization for external job and career-related training.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

I can get tuition assistance for college courses from my organization.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

I can get time off from my job to participate in or study for external training courses.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Please provide any additional comments regarding your organization's training policies

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Survey of Training in Consulting Firms

Section E: Demographic Information

In this final section, select the answer which best describes you.

In what year were you born?

What is your gender?

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female

What is your education level? (indicate the highest level completed)

- ◯ High School
- ◯ Some College
- ◯ Associate Degree
- ◯ Bachelor's Degree
- ◯ Masters Degree
- ◯ Doctoral Degree

How many years have you been employed in the consulting industry?

- ◯ Less than 1 year
- ◯ 1 - 5 years
- ◯ 6 - 10 years
- ◯ 11 - 15 years
- ◯ 16 - 20 years
- ◯ 21 - 25 years
- ◯ 26 - 30 years
- ◯ More than 30 years

Survey of Training in Consulting Firms

How many years have you been employed as a consultant in this company?

- ◯ Less than 1 year
- ◯ 1 - 5 years
- ◯ 6 - 10 years
- ◯ 11 - 15 years
- ◯ 16 - 20 years
- ◯ 21 - 25 years
- ◯ 26 - 30 years
- ◯ More than 30 years

Do you hold a professional certification that requires training for recertification?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Survey of Training in Consulting Firms

Survey Complete

That completes the survey. Your participation is appreciated.

APPENDIX B:

COMMUNICATION FOR FIRM SAMPLE

Communication 1: Initial E-mail

To:
Subject: Upcoming Consultant Study

Our organization has agreed to participate in a study conducted by The George Washington University, which will investigate commitment of staff and the need for training in the management consulting industry.

Within the next few days you will receive an email requesting your participation in a short online survey. The purpose of this survey is to solicit your views and opinions based on your experience with training.

When you receive the note, please take a few minutes to complete the survey and provide your feedback by the requested deadline. All responses will be anonymous, and no record will be kept of employees receiving or completing the questionnaire. Only group statistics will be prepared from the survey results.

While participation is voluntary, I encourage you to respond with your input, which will be used to provide insight to our organization and other consulting firms into the relationship between training and the commitment felt by employees and may assist our firm in understanding the impacts of training investments.

The attached information sheet provides additional details about the research. [*Optional sentence:* If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact (insert firm contact here) at xxx-xxx-xxxx.]

Thank you for taking the time to participate.

Communication 2: Distribution E-mail

To:
Subject: Consultant Study – Invitation to Participate

Our firm has agreed to participate in a study that will investigate commitment of staff and the need for training in the management consulting industry. You are invited to participate in a short web-based survey designed to solicit the views and opinions of consultants based on their experience with training.

Managers in our organization will not be aware of individual responses. Your responses to the survey are anonymous and all data received will be summarized. Please complete the survey as soon as possible, but no later than [Date]. The survey is brief and should only take about 5-10 minutes to complete.

To complete the survey, click on the link below or copy and paste the URL into your browser and follow the instructions on the website:
[Insert Survey Link]

The results will be used to provide insight into the relationship between training and the commitment felt by consultants, and may assist our firm in understanding the impacts of training investments.

[Optional sentence: If you have questions, or experience problems completing the survey, contact _____ at xxx-xxx-xxxx.]

Thank you in advance for your participation and for taking the time to give your perspectives.

Communication 3: Follow-Up E-mail

To:
Subject: Consultant Study – Survey Reminder

You were recently sent a request to participate in a survey designed to solicit the views and opinions of consultants based on their experience with training.

If you have already completed the questionnaire, thank you for your participation. If you have not yet had the opportunity, please take a few minutes to complete the survey at your earliest convenience by clicking on the link below or copy and paste the URL into your browser and follow the instructions on the website:

[Insert Survey Link]

The results will be used to provide insight into the relationship between training and the commitment felt by consultants and may assist our firm in understanding the impacts of training investments. Please note that your responses to the survey are anonymous and all data received will be summarized.

Thank you for your assistance with this study. [Optional sentence: If you have questions about the survey, please contact _____ at xxx-xxx-xxxx.]

Communication 4: Final E-mail

To:
Subject: Consultant Study – Final Survey Reminder

You were recently sent a request to participate in a survey designed to solicit the views and opinions of consultants based on their experience with training. This is the final reminder regarding the survey.

If you have already completed the questionnaire, thank you for your participation. If you have not yet had the opportunity, please take a few minutes to complete the survey at your earliest convenience by clicking on the link below or copy and paste the URL into your browser and follow the instructions on the website:

[Insert Survey Link]

The results will be used to provide insight into the relationship between training and the commitment felt by consultants and may assist our firm in understanding the impacts of training investments. Please note that your responses to the survey are anonymous and all data received will be summarized.

Thank you for your assistance with this study. [Optional sentence: If you have questions about the survey, please contact _____ at xxx-xxx-xxxx.]

APPENDIX C:

COMMUNICATION FOR REFERRAL SAMPLE

Group 1: Those Who Met Inclusion Criteria

To:
Subject: Consultant Study

I am a doctoral candidate at The George Washington University writing to request your assistance in completing part of my degree requirements. I am conducting a study that focuses on nonexecutive, client-facing consultants specializing in change management, organizational development, and human resources in firms (employees >1000) in the greater Washington, DC, area.

The study examines the relationship between employee perceptions of firm-provided training opportunities and employee commitment to the organization. It also explores the effects of age on employee commitment. The research findings will aid firms in understanding the impacts of training investments in order to make more informed decisions regarding training strategies.

I invite you to participate in a short web-based survey designed to solicit the views and opinions of consultants based on their experience with training. The attached information sheet provides additional details about the research.

Your responses to the survey are anonymous, and all data received will be summarized. Only group statistics will be prepared from the survey results. The survey is brief and should only take about 5-10 minutes to complete. Please complete the survey as soon as possible, but no later than date.

To begin the survey, click on the link below, or copy and paste the URL into your browser and follow the instructions on the website:
[Insert Survey Link]

Your assistance in promoting the survey to your colleagues in the consulting industry would also be appreciated. Once you have completed the survey, please forward this link to other consultants or respond to this e-mail with contact information of suggested participants.

Thank you in advance for your participation and for taking the time to give your perspectives.

Sincerely,

NAME OF RESEARCHER

Group 2: Those Who Might Be Able to Refer Participants

To:
Subject: Consultant Study

I am currently a doctoral candidate at The George Washington University. I am writing to request your assistance in completing part of my degree requirements. I am conducting a study that focuses on nonexecutive, client-facing consultants specializing in change management, organizational development, and human resources in firms (employees >1000) in the greater Washington, DC, area.

The study examines the relationship between employee perceptions of firm-provided training opportunities and employee commitment to the organization. It also explores the effects of age on employee commitment. The research findings will aid firms in understanding the impacts of training investments in order to make more informed decisions regarding training strategies.

I am soliciting consultants to participate in a short web-based survey designed to solicit their views and opinions of training. The attached information sheet provides additional details about the research.

I am requesting your help in promoting the survey to people you know who work in the consulting industry. I would appreciate it if you would forward this link to consultants in the Washington, DC, area that meet the study criteria (consultants in change management, organizational development, or human resources working in firms with >1000 employees), or respond to this e-mail with contact information of suggested participants.

Responses to the survey are anonymous, and all data received will be summarized. Only group statistics will be prepared from the survey results. The survey is brief and should only take about 5-10 minutes to complete. The survey should be completed no later than [date].

To begin the survey, click on the link below or copy and paste the URL into your browser and follow the instructions on the website:
[Insert Survey Link]

If you have any questions, I can be reached at 717-569-1585. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

NAME OF RESEARCHER

APPENDIX D:

STUDY INFORMATION SHEET

The George Washington University
WASHINGTON DC

Research Subject Information

Title of Study: Employee Training and Commitment in Management Consulting Firms
Study #: 050915

Study Researchers:

Principal Investigator, Andrea Casey, Ed.D.	Telephone: 202-994-1152
Sub-investigator, Yvette D. Robinson	Telephone: 717-569-1585

Invitation Summary:
You are invited to participate in a research study under the direction of Dr. Andrea Casey of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, George Washington University (GWU). Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary.

What is the purpose of the study?
The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of training in the management consulting industry. Specifically, the study will investigate how employee perceptions of training opportunities might impact commitment to the organization and if the significance of training differs according to the employee's age.

You are being asked to take part in this study because the population being studied in this research is the population of management consultants specializing in change management, human resources, and organizational development in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area.

What will my participation involve?
You will receive an e-mail asking you to participate in taking an online survey and including a link to the survey. If you choose to take part in the survey, it will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The questions will focus on training opportunities offered by your firm, organizational support, and your commitment to the organization.

What are the risks of participating in this study?
There are no known risks associated with participating in this study.

Are there benefits to taking part in this study?
You will not benefit directly from your participation in the study. However, your participation in this research may have benefits to management consulting firms in the future by helping to provide insight to better understand the nature of employee commitment and the impacts of firm training investments.

How will my confidentiality be protected?
We will do our best to keep your information confidential. All data will be stored in a password-protected electronic format. Access to raw data will be tightly restricted to only those individuals directly involved in data analysis.

You will not be asked for your name. Responses to the online survey are anonymous and will not be associated with your name or the name of your firm. All data will be used in a form that will make it impossible to determine the identity of the individual responses. If the results of this research are reported, the survey response will be reported in the aggregate and those who participated will not be named or identified.

What are my options?
Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to participate in this study if you do not want to**.** Should you decide to participate and later change your mind, you can discontinue participation without penalty. Your employment status will not, in any way, be affected should you choose not to participate or if you decide to withdraw from the study at any time.

If you agree to participate in this study, taking the online survey will indicate your willingness to participate. To ensure anonymity, your signature will not be required. Your willingness to participate in this research study is implied if you proceed with completing the survey, understanding that you can withdraw at any time.

Will I be paid for participating in this study?
You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

What if I have questions?
If you have questions about this research please contact Dr. Andrea Casey at 202-994-1152 or Yvette Robinson (doctoral student) at telephone number 717-569-1585. If you want further information about your rights as a research participant, contact The Office of Human Research of George Washington University, at telephone number 202-994-2715.

APPENDIX E:

PERMISSION TO USE INSTRUMENTS

Permission to Use Survey of Perceived Organizational Support

From: **Eisenberger, Robert W** <reisenbe@central.uh.edu>
Date: Thu, Sep 22, 2011 at 11:44 AM
Subject: RE: Request for Permission to Use Instrument
To: Yvette Robinson <ydr@gwmail.gwu.edu>

Hi Yvette,
It looks like an interesting study and I am happy to give permission to use the SPOS.
Cordially,
Bob
Robert Eisenberger
Professor of Psychology
College of Liberal Arts & Soc. Sciences
Professor of Management
C. T. Bauer College of Business
University of Houston
reisenberger2@uh.edu
(302)353-8151

From: Yvette Robinson [ydr@gwmail.gwu.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, September 21, 2011 12:33 PM
To: reisenberger2@uh.edu
Cc: ydr456@comcast.net
Subject: Request for Permission to Use Instrument

Dr. Eisenberger:

I am a doctoral candidate at The George Washington University, Graduate School of Education and Human Development. The title of my dissertation is *Employee Training and Organizational Commitment in Management Consulting Firms*. I am writing to request your permission to utilize the eight item short form of the *Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS)* in my research.

My study examines the relationship between employee perceptions of firm-provided training opportunities and organizational commitment in the context of U.S. management consulting firms. It also explores the effects of age as a moderating variable and perceived organizational support (POS) as a mediator.

I would be pleased to share my findings with you at the completion of my study. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at 717-569-1585.

I look forward to your response. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Yvette Delemos Robinson

Permission to Use Affective Commitment Scale

From: **John Meyer** <meyer@uwo.ca>
Date: Tue, Oct 18, 2011 at 11:42 AM
Subject: Re: Survey Permission Request
To: Yvette Delemos Robinson <ydr@gwmail.gwu.edu>

Dear Yvette,
You are welcome to use our commitment measures in your research. I hope all goes well.
Best regards,
John Meyer

----- Original Message -----
From: Yvette Delemos Robinson
To: Dr. John Meyer
Cc: ydr456@comcast.net
Sent: Monday, October 17, 2011 5:09 PM
Subject: Survey Permission Request

Dr. Meyer:

I am a doctoral candidate at The George Washington University, Graduate School of Education and Human Development. The title of my dissertation is "Employee Training and Organizational Commitment in Management Consulting Firms." I am writing to request your permission to utilize the six statement revised Affective Commitment Scale of the Three Component Model of Organizational Commitment in my research.

My study examines the relationship between employee perceptions of firm-provided training opportunities and organizational commitment in the context of U.S. management consulting firms. It also explores the effects of age as a moderating variable and perceived organizational support (POS) as a mediator.

I would be pleased to share my findings with you at the completion of my study. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please respond to this inquiry or call me at 717-569-1585.

I look forward to your response. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Yvette Delemos Robinson

Permission to Use the Knowledge Subscale of the High Impact Work Process Model

From: **Robert J Vandenberg** <rvandenb@uga.edu>
Date: Wed, Sep 21, 2011 at 1:59 PM
Subject: RE: Request for Permission to Use Instrument
To: Yvette Robinson <ydr@gwmail.gwu.edu>

You most certainly have our permission. Good luck in your research.
Sincerely – Bob Vandenberg

Robert J. Vandenberg
Terry College of Business
Department of Management
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602-6256
Voice: 706-542-3720 (Brooks: Tues.-Thurs.-Fri) or
706-542-4328 (Ramsey: Mon.- Weds.)
Fax: 706-542-3743
Home: 706-310-0906
Terry College: http://www.terry.uga.edu
Department of Management: http://www.terry.uga.edu/management/
Past Editor (08-10), Organizational Research Methods -- http://orm.sagepub.com
Fellow, William A. and Barbara R. Owens Institute for Behavioral Research --
http://www.ibr.uga.edu/
Fellow, Center for the Advancement of Research Methods and Analysis --
http://carma.wayne.edu/Default.asp

From: Yvette Robinson [mailto:ydr@gwmail.gwu.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, September 21, 2011 1:05 PM
To: Robert J Vandenberg
Cc: ydr456@comcast.net
Subject: Request for Permission to Use Instrument

Professor Vandenberg:

I am a graduate student in the Executive Leadership Doctoral Program at The George Washington University, Graduate School of Education and Human Development. The title of my dissertation is *Employee Training and Organizational Commitment in Management Consulting Firms*. I am writing to request your permission to utilize the Knowledge Subscale of the *High Impact Work Process Model (HIWP)* (Vandenberg, Richardson, and Eastman, 1999) in my research.

My study examines the relationship between employee perceptions of firm-provided training opportunities and organizational commitment in the context of U.S. management consulting firms. It also explores the effects of age as a moderating variable and perceived organizational support (POS) as a mediator.

I would be pleased to share my findings with you at the completion of my study. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at 717-569-1585.

I look forward to your response. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Yvette Delemos Robinson

APPENDIX F:

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Age Frequency

Age	Frequency	Percentage
25	1	1.4%
26	2	2.8%
26	1	1.4%
29	2	2.8%
30	1	1.4%
31	2	2.8%
33	1	1.4%
34	2	2.8%
35	4	5.6%
36	4	5.6%
37	4	5.6%
38	3	4.2%
39	3	4.2%
40	5	6.9%
41	1	1.4%
42	4	5.6%
43	2	2.8%
44	2	2.8%
45	2	2.8%
46	3	4.2%
47	1	1.4%
48	2	2.8%
49	1	1.4%
50	4	5.6%
51	2	2.8%
52	1	1.4%
54	3	4.2%
57	2	2.8%
58	1	1.4%
59	1	1.4%
60	1	1.4%
61	1	1.4%
62	2	2.8%
63	1	1.4%

Age Categories – Frequency

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
30 and younger	7	9.7
31–44 years	37	51.4
45 and older	28	38.9

Demographic Variables

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Industry tenure	74	3.92	1.46
Firm tenure	75	2.44	.889
Educational level	74	4.85	.634

Variables Entered / Removed[a]

Model	Variables entered	Variables removed	Method
1	Age Training Opportunities[b]		Enter
2	TOAGE[b]		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment
b. All requested variables entered

Regression for Moderation

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R_2	Std. error	R_2 change	F change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F change
1	.425[a]	.181	.157	7.220	.181	7.611	2	69	.001
2	.437[b]	.191	.155	7.229	.010	.835	1	68	.364

a. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Training Opportunities
b. Predictors: (Constant) Age, Training Opportunities, Training Opportunities*Age

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
1	Regression	793.714	2	396.857	7.611	.001[b]
	Residual	3597.664	69	52.140		
	Total	4391.379	71			
2	Regression	837.334	3	279.111	5.340	.002[c]
	Residual	3554.044	68	52.265		
	Total	4391.379	71			

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment
b. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Training Opportunities
c. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Training Opportunities, TOAGE

Age Categories – Frequency

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
44 and younger	44	58.7
45 and older	28	37.3

Regression – 44 Years and Younger

Variables Entered / Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Training Opportunities[b]		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

b. All requested variables entered

Regression Model Summary – 44 Years and Younger

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R_2	Std. Error	R_2 Change	F change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F Change
1	.457[a]	.209	.190	7.644	.209	11.104	1	42	.002

a. Predictors: (Constant) Training Opportunities

44 years and Younger - ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	648.929	1	648.929	11.104	.002[b]
	Residual	2454.415	42	58.438		
	Total	3103.345	43			

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Training Opportunities

Regression – 45 Years and Older

Variables Entered / Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Training Opportunities[b]		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

b. All requested variables entered

Regression Model Summary – 45 Years and Older

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R_2	Std. Error	R_2 Change	F change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F Change
1	.332[a]	.110	.076	6.614	.110	3.219	1	26	.084

a. Predictors: (Constant) Training Opportunities

45 Years and Older - ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	140.840	1	140.840	3.219	.084[b]
	Residual	1137.410	26	43.747		
	Total	1278.250	27			

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Training Opportunities

Regression for Mediation – Step 1

Variables Entered / Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Training Opportunities[b]		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

b. All requested variables entered

Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R_2	Std. Error	R_2 Change	F change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F Change
1	.408[a]	.167	.155	7.157	.167	14.609	1	73	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant) Training Opportunities

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	748.528	1	748.528	14.609	.000[b]
	Residual	3740.285	73	51.237		
	Total	4488.812	74			

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Training Opportunities

Regression for Mediation – Step 2

Variables Entered / Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Organizational Support[b]		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

b. All requested variables entered

Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R_2	Std. Error	R_2 Change	F Change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F Change
1	.698[a]	.487	.480	5.617	.487	69.256	1	73	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant) Organizational Support

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	2185.343	1	2185.343	69.256	.000[b]
	Residual	2303.469	73	31.544		
	Total	4488.812	74			

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Support

Regression for Mediation – Step 3

Variables Entered / Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Training Opportunities[b]		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Support

b. All requested variables entered

Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R_2	Std. Error	R_2 Change	F Change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F Change
1	.575[a]	.331	.322	6.048	.331	36.122	1	73	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant) Training Opportunities

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	1321.464	1	1321.464	36.122	.000[b]
	Residual	2670.548	73	36.122		
	Total	3992.013	74			

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Support

b. Predictors: (Constant), Training Opportunities

Regression for Mediation – Step 4

Variables Entered / Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Organizational Support[b]		Enter
2	Training Opportunities[b]		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

b. All requested variables entered

Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R_2	Std. Error	R_2 Change	F Change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F Change
1	.698[a]	.487	.480	5.617	.487	69.256	1	73	.000
2	.698[b]	.487	.473	5.655	.000	.010	1	72	.921

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Support

b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Support, Training Opportunities

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	2185.343	1	2185.343	69.256	.000[b]
	Residual	2303.469	73	31.554		
	Total	4488.812	74			
2	Regression	2185.663	2	1092.832	34.164	.000[c]
	Residual	2303.149	72	31.988		
	Total	4488.812	74			

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment
b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Support
c. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Support, Training Opportunities

Regression – Monetary Assistance
Variables Entered / Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Monetary Assistance[a]		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment
b. All requested variables entered

Regression Model Summary – Monetary Assistance

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R_2	Std. Error	R_2 Change	F Change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F Change
1	.252[a]	.064	.051	7.588	.064	4.960	1	73	.029

a. Predictors: (Constant) Monetary Assistance

Monetary Assistance - ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	285.599	1	285.599	4.960	.029[b]
	Residual	4203.214	73	57.578		
	Total	4488.812	74			

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment
b. Predictors: (Constant), Monetary Assistance

Regression – Tuition Assistance
Variables Entered / Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Monetary Assistance[a]		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment
b. All requested variables entered

Regression Model Summary – Tuition Assistance

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R_2	Std. Error	R_2 Change	F Change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F Change
1	.369[a]	.136	.124	7.328	.136	11.322	1	72	.001

a. Predictors: (Constant) Tuition Assistance

Tuition Assistance - ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	608.149	1	608.149	11.322	.001[b]
	Residual	3867.289	72	53.712		
	Total	4475.438	73			

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment
b. Predictors: (Constant), Tuition Assistance

Regression – Time off for Training

Variables Entered / Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Time off for Training[a]		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment
b. All requested variables entered

Regression Model Summary – Time off for Training

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R_2	Std. Error	R_2 Change	F Change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F Change
1	.124[a]	.015	.002	7.829	.015	1.125	1	72	.292

a. Predictors: (Constant) Tuition Assistance

Time off for Training - ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	68.980	1	68.980	1.125	.292[b]
	Residual	4414.153	72	61.308		
	Total	4483.133	73			

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment
b. Predictors: (Constant), Time off for Training

Recruitment Groups - ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Training opportunities	Between groups	726.065	2	363.032	2.585	.082
	Within groups	10110.800	72	140.428		
	Total	10836.865	74			
Affective commitment	Between groups	254.207	2	127.104	2.161	.123
	Within groups	4234.605	72	58.814		
	Total	4488.812	74			
POS	Between groups	236.036	2	118.018	2.262	.111
	Within groups	3755.977	72	52.166		
	Total	3992.013	74			

Themes and Categories of Write-in Comments

Theme	Number of statements
Lack of training opportunities	
Limited training opportunities	9
Lack of time for training	3
Ineffective training	4
Lack of time	
Lack of time for training	15
Unpopular billability, performance process	9
Limited funding	
Limited funding for training	12
Supportive firm	
Firm displays support for consultants	8
Consultant likes, values the firm	4
Commitment factors	
Factors contributing to employee commitment	9
Total	73