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Workplace Commitment Profiles in Specific Employee Groups

Theses

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1. Importance of the topic

Employee commitment is an important research arena of management for several decades of history in the international literature. We can find commitment at many research fields, such as knowledge management, employee satisfaction and motivation to enhance the achievement of performance without increasing employee motivation tools direct, autonomous work, the key contribution of the voluntary organization, or improving the quality of individual work. The list may seem endless, because practically we can not identify any area of the human resource management directly or indirectly by the people certified workplace attitudes (commitment) do not interfere with the source or the result site. For example Demirel and Goc (2013) make a great importance to the commitment because it has a key role in the knowledge sharing and in the organization's intellectual capital growth by enabling a high degree of emotional commitment to contribute to the smooth internal information exchange. Employee commitment is also critical feature in companies of service industry sectors, because it affects the quality of service provided to the behavior showed to customers and internal climate of the organization as well (Little & Dean, 2006). Examining the political commitment, Foote et al. (2005) found that it influences positively the frequency of organizational citizenship behavior through conscientiousness and civic virtue, while individual attitudes and the role ambiguity impress on it.

Not only factors affecting the employee commitment and its benefits offer a diverse research opportunities, but the interpretation the concept of workplace / employee / organizational commitment as well. If we see the evolution of commitment models, we can notice that over time the interpretation of the commitment became more complex: from the one-dimensional perception (eg, Scholl, 1981; Porter et al, 1974) previously two (eg, Angle & Perry, 1981) and later three-dimensional models of commitment (eg, Meyer & Allen, 1991) followed each other, and the efforts to clarify and unify the interpretations are still going on today. It may cause problems that some people report only a perception of organizational commitment in relation to the employees' attitude when researching a human resource management issue, while others introduce new concepts which not fit into the existing models.

Until any form (a factor's strong value of the organization's commitment) of the organizational commitment can be consciously controlled with the employer motivational strategy, and the result of the committed attitude can be bounded to the organization itself, till the professional or occupational commitment may exist irrespectively of the organization's climate, culture, or

motivational tool may exist independently of the toolbar, while the result of attitudes can be related only to the specific organization like organizational commitment (Cohen, 2000; Chang et al, 2007).

The root cause is different, but the result is similar to the importance of organizational and professional commitment, so if we examine the value of commitment (organizational) side, the professional commitment may place in the employee commitment model, in addition to the interpretation of organizational commitment. The attitude may further increase the complexity of the formation of specific life situations. This could be for example an economic crisis in a region during a time when certain workplace behaviors are created deliberately, knowingly to avoid any perceived negative event. There can be an attitude of commitment (called deliberate commitment) when people let see themselves more committed to work by the limited opportunities of individual labor market which are spurring him/herself to try to maintain the illusion that he/she can hold it. The attitude is inner intention, which does not change the work-related judgment as the moral conviction nor, however, the result of conscious behavior is manifested in useful deeds for organizations, so it has value.

Thus employee commitment can be described in many ways, and maybe we can get a more accurate concept about it, if we can isolate multiple convergent dimensions, which are distinct from each other in the modeling process. Hungarian scientific researches were made in the topic related the work-family relationship system (Takács et al., 2012), job changes (Csillag, 2010), and business efficiency as a function of (Veres & Malzenicky, 2006), knowledge-based organizations (Toarniczky et al., 2011). But it has not been studied in relation to the recession, did not separate commitment profiles for any employee groups, and yet not explored the impact of commitment on the age and forms of employment. Three employee groups were distinguished in this work, having a handicap or property in the domestic labor market, which is why it may be important specific motivational tools designed for them, by their positions different kind of commitment pattern (= profile) may show than typical workers.

2. The aims and methodology of the research

The staff's commitment is decisive impact on workplace behavior, and ultimately the overall performance of the company through individual effectiveness. PhD work aims to present five factor model of employee commitment, which shows that the organizational commitment (affective, normative, continuous) factors affect the relevant organizational behavior and workplace attitudes as well the professional and deliberate commitment, that especially caused in Hungary the typical consequences of a prolonged economic crisis in 2008-2012.

Another goal was to determine the commitment profiles in three specific groups of employees (previously unemployed, generation Y and teleworkers, as a case of atypical employment) with using the five factors of commitment after typing the relevant employees. The assessment of these categories of worker commitment is particularly important because these individuals need personal motivational tools required in light of the labor market situation. The resulting profiles of commitment were compared with the commitment profile of the reference group and I also examined and analyzed the influencing effect of age and employment forms.

Finally, I assessed by another empirical research that the national organizations' employers what kind of pattern of commitment demand from employees within the framework of the extended model and how it differs from the experienced attitudes. In summary, my research questions were the following:

1. Is it correct the deliberate commitment factor to get into the model of employee commitment, and can be examined the organizational and professional attitudes together?
2. How will be the commitment profiles in the chosen special groups, namely for which factors are these people the most susceptible, and which factors are strong, and which are the weakest in these groups?
3. Is there any influential effect (and if so, how) on the age or the employment form within the specific or the reference groups regarding the commitment attitudes?
4. How will be the expectations raised by employers towards workers from the commitment factors (ie which factor does represent the highest organizational value, which do represent a strong and the lowest expectations)?

In addition to the study of literature I performed two primary research. In the first I examined the commitment profiles of employee groups, as well as the influence of age and the of the

forms of employment, and in the other I measured the employer's expectations based on the extended model of commitment.

I excluded the people from the research who were not employed at the time of the survey, i.e. the economically inactives, the unemployed, and the self-employed. I classified the respondents for specific employee groups on the basis of general questions. Those people were selected into the previously unemployed group who had been unemployed for at least six months prior to the current work. Teleworkers and entrants were selected by the Hungarian law in force. Respondents were classified into the reference group, who was not member of any specific employee groups. Quantitative analysis of questionnaire survey was chosen as a tool for research. The data were collected between August 2012 and October 2012. The snowball method was used in order to increase the sample size. I carried out the survey in electronic and personally form, and I did my research to ensure the representation as much as possible in the capital, two large cities and some of the villages in four counties of Hungary. After cleaning the data I processed a total of 661 employee responses which means 138 answers from Generation Y entrants, 99 teleworkers, and 178 people were unemployed earlier (re-employment), so in the reference group were 246 people.

My employee commitment questionnaire included 8 items for each commitment factor, using a seven-point Likert scale where answers ranged between 1 („strongly disagree”) and 7 („strongly agree”). Affective (AC), continuance (CC) and normative (NC) commitment were surveyed according to the items used by Meyer & Allen in 1990 (the original version) and Meyer et al. in 1993 (Meyer & Allen, 2004). Items related to professional commitment (PC) were compiled as taken from the questionnaires by Aranya (1981) and Rothwell & Arnold (2007), while the questionnaire measuring deliberate commitment (DC) was created by myself. Items also included reverse-scored items in each category, whose data were transformed, thus providing for the consistent processing of the questionnaires. Only questionnaires from individuals who replied to each item were processed.

My tasks were to assess the justification of deliberate commitment and define the commitment profile for each employee group. First we established whether the responses given to the commitment factors defined separately for each employee group were normally distributed. Ehhez az egyének egyes elkötelezettségi faktorokra vonatkozó válaszainak összpontszámát vettem alapul. To calculate it, I took the total scores of the answers in every commitment dimensions.

Beyond defining the commitment profiles, analyzing collected data by the employee commitment questionnaire gave me many other options to the research. First, I examined the rank correlations between the factors of commitment in each employee group and the reference group. Then I determined the impact on the employment form for the strength of the commitment factors in each employee group, and finally, I measured the same factors by them age (generation cohorts) function as well. I had to sum the responses' scores in each commitment dimension for the first analysis (taking into account the reverse scales issues in an appropriate manner), and after that I determined the rank correlation coefficients between the total scores. The other two analyzes, I examined whether the employment and the generation cohorts cause a significant difference in the level of commitment in each specific groups of employees represented by the multitude. I used the Mann-Whitney and the Mood's median test to this analysis. For statistical analysis of the results, the Minitab 16.2.1 version software was used.

The other empirical research was designed to examine whether the overall commitment profile coincides with employers' requirements of commitment factors. This research was carried out with questionnaires sent out electronically. For this I looked up in total more than 2,000 organizations (SMEs and large companies alike), whereof I got a total of 139 fully evaluable response. This questionnaire included five items for each dimension of commitment used a Likert scale from 1 to 7.

Special groups of employees examined in the research, the research orientation, as well as their context and logical methods used in the research are summarized in Figure 1.

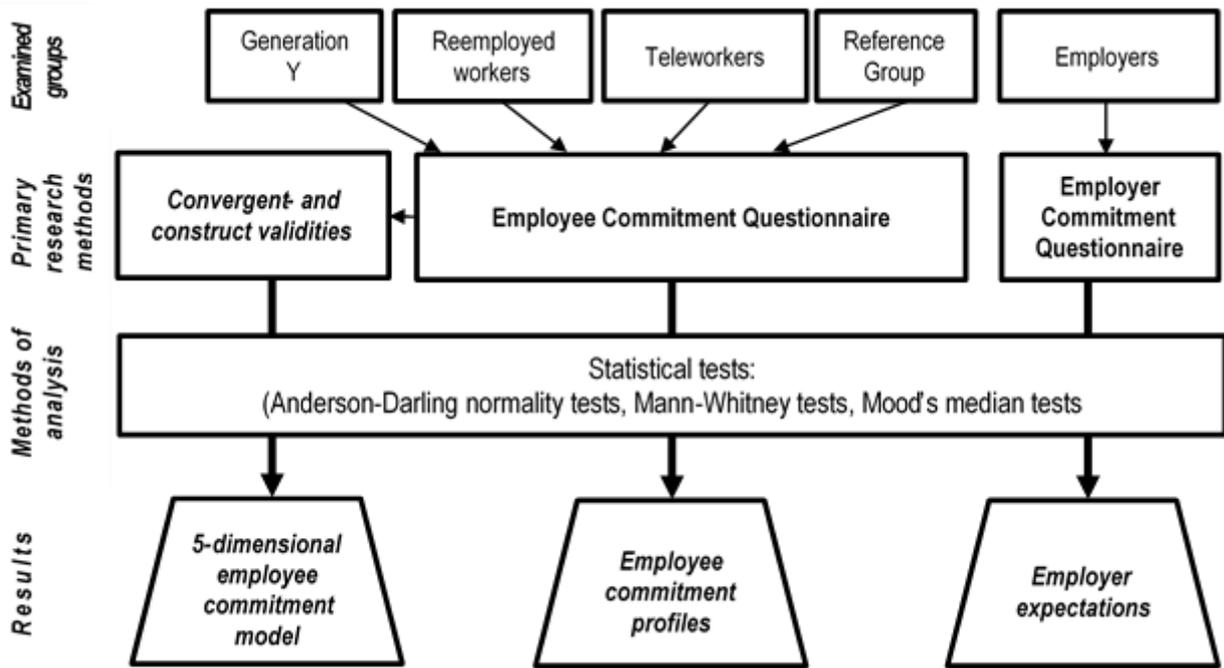


Figure 1: Focuses of the researches, methods and results

4. A new commitment dimension: The deliberate commitment

The employee attitude changes by the basis of fear of layoffs which can be caused in general the economic crises (and organizational transformations, mergers and acquisitions). We may find a new commitment form in situations of crisis, which dimension is far different from organizational and professional commitment dimensions. I call it as deliberate commitment. By the risk avoidance the organization's members are willing to tolerate lower wages, if not dismissed employers. However, this solutions in the long run is not worth it for the organizations, because the workers with lower compensations in such cases begin to look for another job simultaneously sooner or later, and as soon as possible and then just comes out of the labor force who is highly qualified and who could help recover for the organizations or obtain a competitive advantage in difficult business conditions (Hary, 2002).

Under the recession does not only change the employees' attitude, but at the same time some management consultants directly offer this behavior for the people who afraid of losing their jobs. Article by Banks & Coutu (2008) shows a few practical strategies for employees in order to minimize the chances of dismissal.

Furthermore, I assume the existence of a fifth commitment dimension, rather similar in nature to continuance commitment, yet radically differing from it in another aspect. Continuously committed employees will remain loyal to their employers as long as loyalty pays off or other available job alternatives are not rewarding enough, e.g. changing jobs would result in losing established partnerships or contacts (Meyer & Allen, 1993).

Similar to other European countries, the global financial and economic crisis of 2008, still felt worldwide, has brought along a rise in unemployment rates in Hungary. The labor market has slowed down, the number of vacant jobs decreased and unqualified workers can by now clearly perceive the increasing importance of keeping their current jobs. In her analysis, Elek (2011) mentions that, based on a global survey by Ipsos Global @dvisor, Hungary is one of the few countries where respondents mention unemployment and job opportunities as one of the most important issues in these times first. For instance, in 2009, as first the financial, then the economic crisis was unfolding, trading volume dropped by 9% and FDI by a dramatic 40%. Macro-economic ramifications, which turned out rather significant in East and Central Europe, also fed through into employment (Balaton & Csiba, 2012). The rate of employment of the 25

to 64 age range declined by 1.3% in the EU between 2007 and 2011, with the corresponding figure of decline in Hungary amounting to 1.9%. Köllő (2010) argues that in the wake of the crisis businesses in Hungary decided to cut working hours and wages rather than to downsize. Economic downturn has led to a rise in the popularity of alternative forms of employment: the proportion of both fixed-term employment and part-time employment were increase (Koncz, 2012). This phenomenon requires management practices aimed at the creation of commitment and the continuous boosting of motivation to be revised. Such organizational changes may result in prolonged and permanent employee concerns about layoffs.

For the members of a large and continuously growing group of employees, changing jobs (continuance commitment) is not a relevant question since they have no real alternative available. This is why they will do whatever they can to stay with the organization and not to be laid off in case of redundancies (deliberate commitment). Deliberate commitment is presumed to have beneficial impacts on attitude-to-work in most cases. This type of commitment is probably more characteristic of certain employee groups than of others. Such a group may be the “previously unemployed” whose commitment attitude was tackled by several researchers (e.g. Creed et al., 2009; Shamir, 1985). Consequently, we may ask how various employee groups differ regarding their commitment profiles.

5. The five dimensional model of employee commitment

In the following I interpret the employee commitment as a five-dimensional concept, which is based on the Meyer & Allen's model of organizational commitment, complemented by the professional commitment and the deliberate factors. According to this theory, the new model is shown in Figure 2.

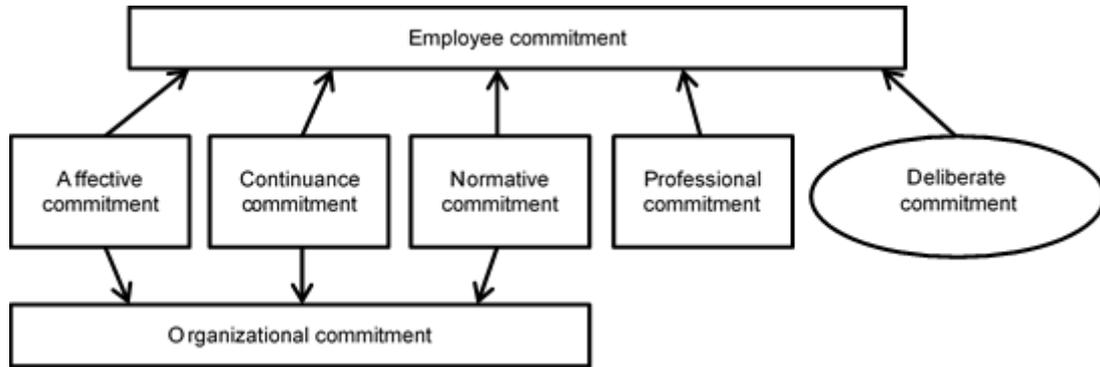


Figure 2: Employee commitment model

This model forms the basis of my research. I used this theory to define the employees' commitment attitudes and also to determine the requirements of the employers on workers to assess the expectations. Many factors affect the level of commitment, like most soft organizational variables, such as the leadership behavior, the used organizational structure, conflict management, so certainly it is impossible to take into account every influential aspect in similar studies. However, we have to consider the strongest factors showing dominance characteristics. This supports the need for rollout the organizational commitment. The new approach is verified by testing reliability and validity.

6. Results and theses

On the basis of the construct and convergent validity tests it is acceptable the five-factor employee commitment model reinterpretation. The rank correlation analyzes did not show strong correlations between the deliberate commitment (as a new commitment factor) and the other commitment dimensions in neither group. However, the two results can be highlighted. One is that, in the reference group the deliberate commitment correlates to the affective and professional commitments only weakly negatively, as expected on the basis of its nature, while the deliberate commitment shows a strong positive correlation to the continuance commitment factor in the employer survey. This can be explained by the deliberate and continuance commitment are calculatives, resulted by a conscious action, based on an individual assessment of attitudes. We can observe the *professional commitment* with the organizational commitment in a common model, because although the needed inputs of the to attitude (the occupation, content of the profession) are fundamentally different than in the case of organizational commitment (staff, institution or employer, moral beliefs, economic aspects), it has a value for the organizations in terms of the outputs of commitment similar to the other commitment factors. The research of determining the employer's commitment to the expectations had to draw up the hierarchy between the commitment factors.

T1. The organizational commitment (affective, continuous and normative) factors in addition to the professional commitment and deliberate factors can be interpreted in the employee commitment model. The resulting commitment model is suited to identify employees commitment profiles accurately in some specific employee groups where it is possible.

(Related publications to thesis 1: S1, S2, S3, S5)

I determined the commitment profiles in some specific employee groups by the model of employee commitment. Based on the results the commitment patterns related to the groups are summarized in Thesis 2 and part of its.

In the *Generation Y (entrants)* group the rank of commitment levels as indicated by the medians calculated from the samples is: $CC < NC = DC < AC < PC$ ($CC < NC$, $CC < DC$, $CC < AC$,

CC<PC, NC=DC, NC<AC, NC<PC, DC<AC, DC<PC, AC<PC¹). The result means that the professional commitment is the strongest factor, affective commitment is a strong factor, and the continuance commitment factor is the weakest dimension in the commitment profile.

In the *teleworkers* group the rank of commitment levels as indicated by the medians calculated from the samples is: AC < DC = PC = NC = CC (AC<DC, AC<PC, AC<NC, AC<CC, DC=PC, DC=NC, DC=CC, PC=NC, PC=CC, NC=CC). The result means that the deliberate, the continuance, the normative and the professional commitment are equally strong in the profile, and the affective commitment converts the employees' attitudes least.

In the *previously unemployed* group the rank of commitment levels as indicated by the medians calculated from the samples is: CC = PC = AC < DC = NC (CC=PC, CC=AC, CC<DC, CC<NC, PC=AC, PC<DC, PC<NC, AC<DC, AC<NC, DC=NC). The result means that the deliberate and the normative commitments convert stronger the attitude, while the continuance, the professional and the affective commitments convert weaker the behaviors.

T2A. In the commitment profile in Generation Y (in their first jobs) group the affective and the professional commitment factors have the highest degree, and the continuance commitment factor has the lowest rate compared to the other commitment factors.

Looking at the results shows that the commitment profile of the Generation Y is vary from the reference group's commitment only with one factor strength. While in the reference group the deliberate, the normative and the continuance commitments both proved to be the weakest in the profile, the continuance commitment is the the lowest factor in Y generation. The result is interesting, because of this, the development of higher levels of normative commitment is absolutely not necessary over many years or decades spent working period, while the Y generation characteristically does not deal with exploring other job opportunities and the exchange of considerations. We can explain it with the fact young entrants are building their careers knowingly: while it is important for them to achieve a desired existence, but the initial stages of their careers it is less important consideration than to achieve professional excellence.

T2B. In the commitment profile in teleworkers group the deliberate, the continuance, the normative, and the professional commitment factors have a

¹ AC: affective, CC: continuance, NC: normative, PC: professional, DC: deliberate commitment

higher degree, and the affective commitment factor has the lowest rate compared to the other commitment factors.

To observe the results we can see that there separated only two levels in teleworkers commitment profile: the professional, the normative, the continuance, and the deliberate commitments brought together to a stronger level, and a weak level with the affective commitment. In their case we have to explain the degree of affective commitment. This is well supported by peculiarities of conditions of employment and by a weak connection to employer affiliation. Knowing the commitment results it is suggested a strategy for the management, which helps to increase the affective commitment. This can be for example to set up some corporate events, more active IT solutions to support the informal contacts, bringing them into trainings which needs teamworks.

T2C. In the commitment profile in reemployed group the normative and the deliberate commitment factors have a higher degree compared to the other commitment factors.

(Related publications to thesis 2: S1, S2, S4, S6, S8, S9)

Commitment profile underpins the expectations. The strength of deliberate commitment can be a way to avoid the re-unemployment, and the strength of normative commitment is in relation to an attitude as a gratitude for the new employer, which means an emerging a loyalty by the employee. In their case to re-integrate them into the work it is necessary to enhance the professional commitment. It is important to establish their interest in the profession and occupation, for example give them a participation in relevant new trainings, or providing workforce development programs and projects, as well as developer evaluations for the new achievements.

Examining the effect of employee commitment in the *form of employment* was found the continuance and professional commitments strength are weaker in the part-time worker teleworkers group (compared to the full-time worker teleworkers), and in the case of part-time entrants we can measure a higher level of professional commitment factor compared to full-time employment. The part-time employment also influences the pattern of commitment in the reference group in affective, continuance, and professional commitment as well (in *Generation*

Y entrants group $PC_{PT} > PC_{FT}$ with $p=0,013$; in *teleworkers* group $CC_{PT} < CC_{FT}$ with $p=0,000$, and $PC_{PT} < PC_{FT}$ with $p=0,011$; in *reference* group $AC_{PT} < AC_{FT}$ with $p=0,002$, $CC_{PT} < CC_{FT}$ with $p=0,005$, and $PC_{PT} < PC_{FT}$ with $p=0,006$)².

Examining the effect of *age* (generation cohorts) in employee commitment has been demonstrated that the continuance and the professional commitment strengths are weaker than those of the generation Y (at the employees borned between 1980 and 1995) than other generations without belonging to any specific employee groups (about accepting alternative hypothesis the total scores of medians of Generation Y are smaller (CC at $p=0,001$ and PC at $p=0,031$) than applicable commitment factors of Generation X and the Boomers – $CC_{Y-GEN}: 30,5$, $CC_{X-GEN}: 36$, $CC_{BOOMERS}: 37$; $PC_{Y-GEN}: 37$, $PC_{X-GEN}: 42$, $PC_{BOOMERS}: 41$).

We can offer the following theses on this basis:

T3. The forms of employment (part-time or full-time employment) and the age (the generation cohorts) are determining the commitment profiles of employees.

T3A. Levels of continuance and professional commitments are lower for part-time teleworkers than full-time teleworkers. For the career beginners of the generation Y the level of the professional commitment is higher for part-time workers than for full-time workers of the same generation. For the members of the reference group (who are not involved in any special groups of employees) the levels of the affective, the professional and the continuance commitments are also lower for part-time workers than for full-time workers.

T3B. Regarding the reference group (who are not involved in any special groups of employees) the level of the continuance and the professional commitment of the Gen Y is lower than of Gen X and even that of the Boomers.

(Related publications to thesis 3: S2, S3, S4, S7)

The relative strengths of the five commitment factors in the commitment profile of *employers' expectations* are the following: $DC < NC = CC < C < PC$. In the commitment profile of expectations the professional commitment is the highest, followed by the claim for affective

² PT: part-time working, FT: full-time working.

commitment, and the concern for the deliberate commitment is the weakest. On this basis, we can offer the following thesis:

T4. The professional commitment has the highest organizational value, and the affective commitment has a strong organizational value in the commitment profile of the employers' expectations based on managers and owners opinion.

(Related publications to thesis 4: S4, S5, S6)

Result of profile on expectations is interesting for several reasons. On the one hand is not the affective commitment is the strongest factor based on the expectations. To be excellent in occupation and to develop and be the best in professional with high performance are more important points of view for employers. Also interesting result is that the concern for the normative commitment became a same strength like the continuous commitment. Accordingly, in connection with the dual nature of continuous commitment the employers seem generally sympathetic, so despite the fact that the employee is considering other options for the labor market, as long as it does not happen, the employee is committed, and that commitment is valuable in similar level to the normative commitment, regardless of its source. Low levels of organizational expectations for the deliberate commitment is unequivocal, it follows its interpretation.

The relationship between research questions, hypotheses and theses is shown in the 1. table.

1. table: Relationships between research questions, hypotheses and theses

Theses	Related hypotheses	Numbers of formulated research questions
T1.	-	1.
T2A.	H1A., H1B.	2.
T2B.	H2A., H2B.	
T2C.	H3.	
T3.	H4., H5.	3.
T3A.	H4A., H4B., H4C.	
T3B.	H5.	
T4.	H6.	4.

7. Related publications

- S1. Krajcsák Z. (2014): A tudatos elkötelezettség szervezeti jelentősége, *Virtuális Intézet Közép-Európa Kutatására Közleményei*, 6(1-2), 187-196.
- S2. Krajcsák Z., Jónás T. (2014): Commitment profiles in special groups of employees in Hungary: the role of deliberate commitment, *Acta Oeconomica, megjelenés alatt*
- S3. Krajcsák Z., Jónás T., Gyökér I. (2013): Commitment factor analysis depending on generation and part-time working in specific employee groups, *Argumenta Oeconomica, under review*
- S4. Krajcsák Z., Gyökér I. (2013): How to increase workplace commitment?, *Periodica Polytechnica - Social and Management Sciences*, 21(1), 39-44.
- S5. Krajcsák Z. (2013): Attitűdök és elvárások az alkalmazotti elkötelezettség ötfaktoros modelljében, *Marketing & Menedzsment*, 47(4), 86-94.
- S6. Krajcsák Z. (2012): *Lojalitás különleges munkavállalói csoportokban*. In: Topár J. (szerk.): A műszaki menedzsment aktuális kérdései. Budapest: Műszaki Kiadó, 297-311.
- S7. Krajcsák Z. (2012): *A munkatársi elkötelezettség szervezeti szerepe*. In: Poór J., Berde Cs., Karoliny M., Takács S. (szerk.): Átalakuló emberi erőforrás menedzsment: Múlt - jelen - jövő. Budapest: Complex Kiadó Kft., 107-116.
- S8. Finna H., Krajcsák Z. (2011): Level of HR proficiency in small and medium sized organizations in Middle-Hungary Region, *Marketing & Menedzsment*, 45(1), 55-64.
- S9. Gyökér I., Krajcsák Z. (2009): Az alkalmazotti elégedettséget és elkötelezettséget befolyásoló tényezők vizsgálata, *Vezetéstudomány*, 40(különszám), 56-61.