

# An Individual Being the Identity of an Organization and Members Being Committed to that Identity

MASTER THESIS EXPOSE

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**Abstract for discussion, must say what type of commitment people feel- or there is no point of showing the model**

**Go through for all of the et al, and for the first one put all of the names**

Title: Member Ability to be Committed to the Identity of an Organization

Keywords: Organizational commitment, Organizational Identity

Introduction: Organizational identity is a rather new topic of theoretical research compared to other like categories, but it broadly refers to **how people see the organization they are a part of and how they believe others see the organization**, while commitment means to be dedicated to something. This thesis will deal with the idea that an individual person may be able to be committed to the identity of an organization.

Purpose: The purpose of this thesis is to further research the theories of organizational identity and commitment in a new way that has previously been left untouched. The study is looking to see if there is evidence of the interviewees being committed to the identity of the organization.

This will further the understanding of both separate topics, and begin the research into the topics as they relate to each other. This will then lay a foundation for the research to be tested empirically to evaluate the conclusions of the paper.

Methodology: To uncover information in this study, the research will be done through an interview process to understand the interviewees true feelings and behaviors. The interviews will be done through a semi-structured approach, and then from there, the data will be analyzed for patterns that proves to be pertinent to the study and each interview will be adapted slightly according to the person being interviewed.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Justification for case and research, explain problem why ken wants people committed to the identity and not him, talk about other businesses and how when they lose their leader, they are lost (papa johns, and wendys)

Organizational identity is a slow changing identity that encompasses the members of the organization and influences their own thinking and actions, but also how people that are not members view the organization (Hatch and Schultz, 1997). Organizational identity is built over a long period of time by events and decisions in the history of the organization, but it also has many outside influences that affect the perception of the identity (Albert and Whetten, 1985). It is focused on less by outsiders than the image or corporate identity, because it is less publicized and seen unless you are in the organization (Hatch and Schultz, 1997). The identity of the organization is however is one of the focuses during a merger, acquisition, and a spin-off, because the identity can have a large impact as to whether or not the change in the organization will be successful (Corley, 2004) (Drori et al., 2013). Commitment, in general, involves being pledged to someone or something, and for most people do not come lightly or without reasons, though those reasons will be different for everyone. Organizational identity is similar to individual identity, in that even though the act of commitment is done by the individual or organization, the decision is influenced by outside forces (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

## 1.2 Contribution

The goal of this thesis is to look for evidence that people are committed, not just to the organization itself or the leaders, but to the identity of the organization. This paper looks to explore the theoretical possibility that the identity of an organization could be a person and to add to the theoretical base for the two topics in a different aspect than previously studied, but to also have the potential to develop its own model on how individuals become committed to an organizational identity. This can be relevant knowledge for companies in regards to acquisitions,

hiring new employees and retaining employees.

### 1.3 Structure of the Paper

The structure of this paper is organized starting with an explanation of the domain of research and explaining different studies that have taken place in the field. Next, there will be an introduction to both organizational identity and organizational commitment in the theoretical framework section. The section will focus on explaining the two different theories and then differentiating them from several similar theories in the same domain. A review of related literature and empirical studies will follow in order to explain the focus of past research in the area. From there, the paper will then explain the method undertaken during the interview phase of the research.

## 2. Research Gap/Problem Statement

The research relying on both the three-component model of commitment and Albert and Whetten's model for identity has grown, but has been focused on a group of categories including multiple aspects for each of them separately, but never a study that will look to see if there is an overlap between the two. Based on previous empirical studies and decades of research, there is no doubt the important role commitment and identity have within an organization, but the previous research was not testing whether a person could become committed to an identity, and what outside influences may affect this possibility (Tarigan and Ariani, 2015). The organization that will be the focus of the study has a long-standing identity and has an even mix of lengths of membership to the organization, so this will allow for the research to uncover a previously untapped area of knowledge.

Change to talk about not just committed to identity, but also whether a person can be the identity of a company.

## 3. Theoretical framework

More for commitment, use it as a starting point, the types of commitment and then use it to move in to identity

They talk about the types of commitment and then move into where you anchor your identity, as a group or a person

During the course of this research project, I will be building the framework using the theory of organizational identity and the theory of organizational commitment. This section will first concentrate on explaining the concept the three-component model of commitment in a way that will allow the reader to understand the focus of research during the discussion portions. From there, I will switch topics over to explaining briefly the theory of organizational identification. The last main topic will be to explain organizational identity and the different research angles that past papers have taken. After this, I will move on to the other related research fields that can be commonly associated with organizational identity to differentiate them. Once the theories are understandably separated, different views and research studies on the matter will be analyzed. Finally, I will work to tie the theories together to create a base that will be for the specific area of study that is the interest of this paper.

### 3.1 Organizational Commitment

The three-component model of commitment is a model that focuses on why people are committed to the organization that they belong to. People can be committed for many different reasons, but the model narrows it down to 3 different categories for why people will stay with the organization, and these reasons can be either positive or negative reasons for staying. The model argues that, "commitment, as a psychological state, has at least three separable components reflecting (a) a desire (affective commitment), (b) a need (continuance commitment), and (c) an obligation (normative commitment) to maintain employment in an organization." (Meyer and Allen, 1991, p. 61).

#### A. Desire (affective commitment).

The first component of the model deals with members who have an emotional connection (Meyer and Allen, 1991) to the organization and want to be a part of the organization.

This will benefit the organization because they will often have the same goals as the organization as a whole and will share the overall values (Meyer and Allen, 1991). This level of commitment lead to higher job satisfaction, and because the people are happy to be at their job or in the organization, they will be more committed to the organization

(Meyer and Allen, 1991) Meyer and Allen based their categorization of affective commitment on previous research that presented the predecessors of this level of commitment in the categories of work experience, personal, structural, and job-related characteristics (Mowday et al., 1982). The work experience component focuses on the satisfaction that people when they are comfortable or competent in the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The personal characteristics component is linked to all of the reasons associated with the demographics, needs, and compatibilities of an individual, but these forms of commitment are not consistent among individuals (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The structural aspect focuses on level of commitment that comes from people having a say in decisions that affect them (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

B. Need (continuance commitment).

This level of commitment will be for when people look at the benefits and drawbacks of being a part of the organization and have decided that things would be worse if they left the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The individual wouldn't necessarily feel like they wanted to stay, but instead feel like they have to stay because there would be more costs incurred by leaving the organization than if they stayed (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The losses that you have could be many different things, not just money, you could also lose the job ranking that you may have worked long and hard to get (Meyer and Allen, 1991). These feelings will intensify for the person over time because they will have likely moved up within the organization and there will be a lower and lower likelihood of them of moving on from the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991). In the model, these costs are labeled as "side bets" and will vary to a large degree among different individuals, because these are likely based on all of the different skills or other investments that will be lost if they leave the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

C. Obligation (normative commitment).

This form of commitment level has to do with thinking that you should remain with the organization, even if you are not satisfied with it, because it is the right thing to do for some reason or another (Allen and Meyer, 1991). There are many reasons that the member may feel the need to remain with the organization, including the amount invested

in them by the organization, or could have to do with the how the individual was raised (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

People are not limited to feeling only one form of commitment, but instead will likely encounter all three of them and it will differ for each individual, but each person can feel different amounts for each of the forms of commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1991). The model works to show all of the different factors that influence forms of commitments, and the outcomes that can come from the different forms of commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1991).

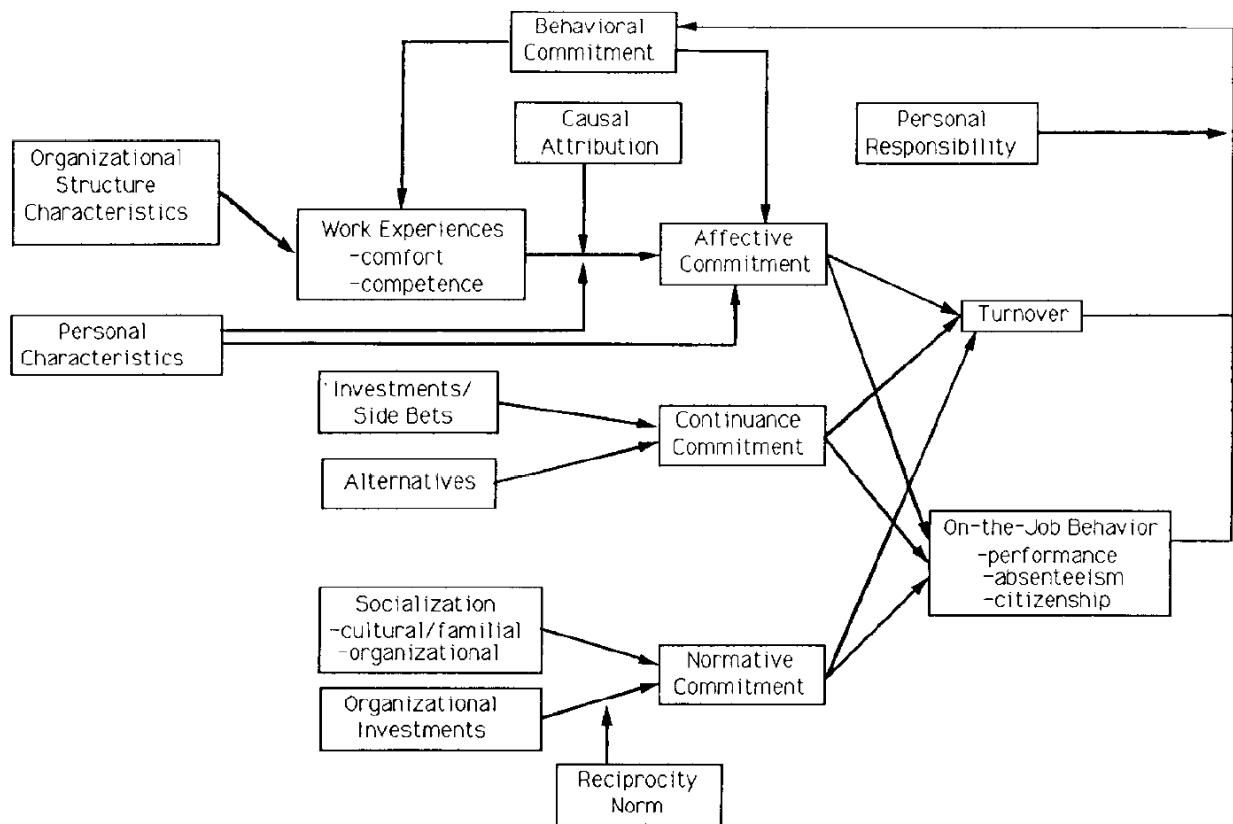


Figure 1: Three-component model of Organizational Commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1991)

Since the model was developed almost 30 years ago, there has been research into many different aspects of the model, mainly seeing if there are techniques or other practices that can help grow the commitment individuals feel toward their organization and make sure that the values of the individual are as close as possible to the organizations (Rego and Cunha, 2007). One such



research project was done to see whether using the action learning approach would be able to build a higher commitment level for the participants (Krishna and Marquardt, 2007). Action learning is a practice where people are put in situations where they make action decisions in a problem-solving situation and reflect on the decisions to learn from them, and because of these techniques lead to the development of the people in the situations the study believed that there would be a correlation between the two (Krishna and Marquardt, 2007). The research done in this field has been very important to companies, because people who have a strong commitment to the organization will have an increase in the behaviors that are beneficial to the organization and will further increase the effectiveness of the organization as a whole (Krishna and Marquardt, 2007). For competent companies to grow and keep the employees that they have, they will need to keep them committed to the organization through different means, as each individual will have different needs (Keskes, 2013). The leadership personality is one such way to develop commitment, as research has shown that, “transformational leader creates meaning in otherwise mundane activities, a meaning that arrest subordinates' commitment towards the organization's goals” (Pradhan and Pradhan, 2015, p. 228).

“Commitment involves willingness of employees to exert higher efforts on behalf of the organization, a strong desire to stay in the organization, and accept major goals and values of the organization” (Krisna and Marquardt, 2007, p. 1). The level of commitment an individual will feel will vary on many different things, including how competitive the workplace is, and when people are being compensated well in that environment, the level of commitment can become stronger (Christiansen and Tett, 2014). The different forms of commitment are not all equal in the effectiveness of increasing the positive behavior or attitude of the members of the organization, affective commitment has been shown in most cases to be the most beneficial form of commitment for workers, though because of the nature of commitment, it is difficult to measure and quantify (Jaros, 2007). There have however been empirical studies to show that there is a compelling link between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Tarigan and Ariani, 2015).

Organizational commitment is an area with great need for study, not only because there will be different levels of commitment based on how long a person has been with an organization, but

also because as the workforce is changing rapidly and the factors that have led past generations to be committed to an organization are not necessarily the factors that are effective now (Valaei and Rezaei, 2016). The theory and model in its current form can be useful for managers and for organizations to predict different incidents and behaviors in employees, such as the turnover of employees (Meyer et al., 2002) (Solinger, Olffen and Roe, 2008).

### 3.1.1 Criticisms of the Three-Component Model of Commitment

Since the inception of the model almost 30 years ago, further research has come about and called into question different aspects of the model and challenged its validity and uses. Some researchers have created their own models, such as the model by Eagly and Chaiken in 1993, where they can be used as a more universal guide, that can be used to look at individual behaviors that have to do with commitment (Solinger et al., 2008).

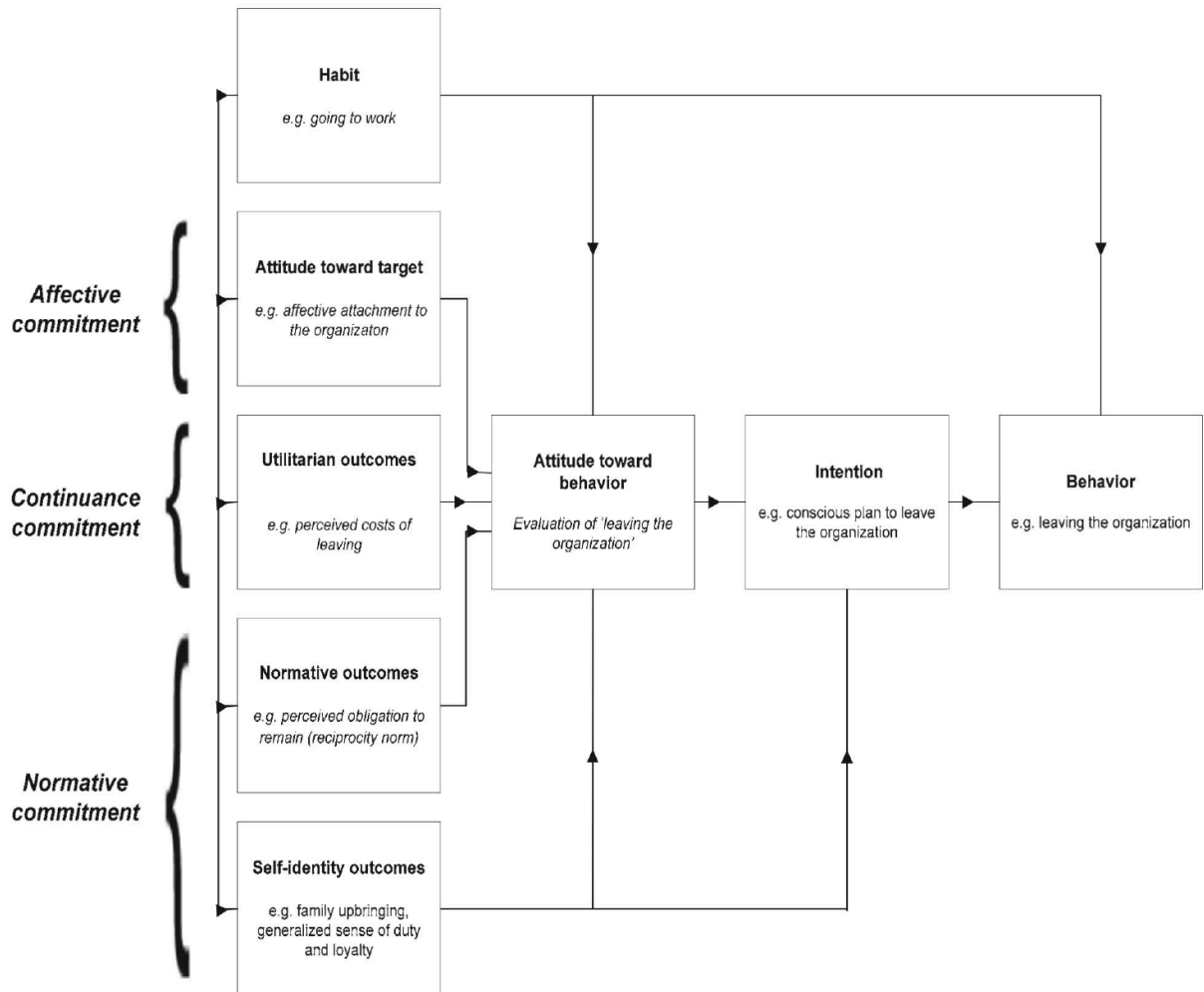


Figure 2: Beyond the Three-Component Model (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993) (Omar et al., 2008)

Figure 2 above shows how Solinger et al. have used the model to combine it with the original model of commitment to look at how the attitudes of individuals fit into the original model (2008). These researchers discuss in detail how the habits people have, coupled with how often they do them, can naturally create levels of commitment that people feel towards the organization, this is believed to come from the behavior of doing something over and over could possibly lead to the psychological feeling toward the organization (Solinger et al., 2008). The original theorists have also seen the need to elaborate and make changes to the original model, as modify the original model construct to be more influenced by motivations (Meyer and Hersovitch, 2001). One more aspect of the original model that is not addressed, is the idea that people may show their commitment in different ways, depending on the point of their career that they are in (Solinger et al., 2008)

### 3.2 Identification

The topic of identity has become intermingled with identification in the past, but the differences can be illustrated by, “identification reflects the self-definitional aspect of organizational membership whereas commitment does not, we propose that commitment is more contingent on social exchange processes” (Knippenberg and Sleebos, 2006, p. 571). Identification further gets misrepresented as identity in some previous research, “by using the term to describe something that the organization does (i.e., the organization identifies with some target)” (Corley et al., 2006, p. 88). Ravisi and Rekom continue to show the interrelation when they claim that identification is a part of identity and characterize it as the degree to which representatives of an organization absorb the important organizational identities into their own personal ones (2003). The results of the empirical research studies into whether the two topics are in fact recognizably different did confirm that the topics are differentiated (Guatam et al., 2004). The research has increased in both of the fields though, as Ravisi and Rekom have stated, the new advancements in the theory and the functional applications continue to make the areas more understandable and thus useful for managers (2003). Figure 3 shows a table created by Ravisi and Rekom to show how different parts of Identification and identity and how they differ.

The distinction between identification and commitment also needs to be made, because the amount of research showing the two topics being inter related is also growing, as Ravisi and Rekom further state that a central concern in the study of identification is contrast between the two topics (2003). Their research believes that identification looks to be primarily associated with a distinct “social group or organization”, while “commitment and job involvement” are more freely generalized to more organizations (Ravisi and Rekom, 2003)

|                         | Identification  | Organizational Identity   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Phenomenological nature | Emergent property (kin to climate, job satisfaction etc.) | General set of claims and sustainable stories about an organization |
| Source of information   | Respondents<br>Scales                                     | Informants (informed insiders)                                      |

|                 |  |  |
|-----------------|--|--|
|                 |  | Autobiographies<br>Interviews<br>Archival research         |
| Data Analysis   | Measurement (appraisal of 'a matter of 'more of less') | Description (search for characteristics, dimensions, etc.) |
| Validity issues | Statistical check                                      | An open issue  |

*Figure 3: A Comparison of Methodological issues in Identity and Identification (Ravisi and Rekom, 2003)*

### 3.3 Organizational Identity

Organizational identity is a theory that has gained prominence and understanding since it was established and simply put, it means who you are as an organization (He and Brown, 2013). The research into the topic has changed greatly as the ideas behind many topics in this area such as culture, identity and image have become blurred as hierarchical levels have begun to blend together in many organizations, and this as influenced the identity of said organizations (Hatch and Schulz, 1997). The topic encompasses how people both regard themselves inside an organization and how they see the organization as a whole, and these factors will be determined by the values of the organization (Albert and Whetten, 1985). The identity of an organization is a collective identity of over all of the members of the organization, and because of the way that it is developed, it is very slow to change in most cases (Hatch and Schulz, 1997). The three-criteria model of organizational identity that Albert and Whetten developed will be the base for the research. (1985)

- The first attribute level is claimed central character attributes, which are events in the history of the organization that are essential aspects of the decision-making process (Albert and Whetten, 1985).
- The second attribute level are labeled as temporal continuity and are attributes that are rooted deeply in an organization's past and have been there for a large portion of the time the organization has been around (Albert and Whetten, 1985).

- The Third attribute level is the claimed distinctiveness, which are important to the organization because these will differentiate the organization from their competitors (Albert and Whetten, 1985).

It is important to know that an organization doesn't just possess one attribute, but a mixture of all three of them (Albert and Whetten, 1985).

The importance of an organizational identity is never more apparent than when the organization is struggling to find their identity, because even though the landscape of the market is always changing, there is balance that is created by an organization's identity (Kjaergaard, 2009). People have an innate need for belonging and worker productivity and satisfaction will almost certainly go down once ambiguity is introduced to people who previously felt confident in their place in the organizational identity (Gorely, 2004). Identity can be important for people who have been in an organization for their whole careers, but can be just as important to someone who has just joined the organization, because as soon as someone becomes a member they are under the umbrella of identity that has been created over a long period of time (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006). Different researchers have questioned how permanent the identity of the organization is and how much that it changes over time (Anand et al., 2013). There is research to show that when an identity is changing, how the members view the organization and they believe outsiders view the organization will have a sizeable impact on the outcome (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006). The empirical research done by Schultz and Hernes came to the conclusion that the longer the time period increases the chances of the identity changing and an increase in the belief in how much the identity could change in the future (2013). While the change in time will affect the identity of the organization, during a merger of two companies, the base for the new identity will come from the identities of both of the previous companies can show how an identity can weather great changes (Drori et al., 2013). Knowing and understanding the identity of other outside organizations can be just as important as understanding your own, because when numbers alone cannot sway the decisions managers need to make, the identity of the organization can influence the management's decision to buy another company, if and where to create layoffs inside the organization, and which products to cut or launch (Hatch and Schulz, 2011).

The theory can be commingled with many others that are important to understanding the organization as a whole, such as image and culture depending on the impact of outside forces on the organization, because at an organizational foundation all decisions will be shaped by the goals and values that are the base for how a company has developed throughout its history (Hatch and Schulz, 2011). Organization decisions are influenced by their identity, just like individuals, an organization has both a public (what you convey to outsiders) identity and private (what is your self-perception) identity and the farther these are apart from each other, the more that an organization can suffer (Hatch and Schulz, 2011) (Brickson, 2013). There is even research into the development and maintenance of multiple identities within an organization and the benefits of the flexibility that come along with it (Elsbach, 2013).

Identity is a designation of one's self that establishes the individual as distinctly different than others around them (Hatch and Schulz, 2011). The first related topic is that of individual or personal identity and relates to what one specific person feels is their own identity (Gioia, 1998). The second is the corporate identity, which is the identity of the whole company and it is decided on by the company instead of developed over time (Riel and Balmer, 1997). The last of the related topics is social identity, which is the research topic that describes the identity of any group of individuals that are together (Gioia, 1998). While these topics can all be seen as similar, once you delve into them further they are very different from each other. The next section will begin to explain the differences between the different forms of identity.

### 3.3.1 Related models of Identity

#### *Individual Identity*

Individual identity is something that many people are more familiar with, because people have been studying and philosophizing "who am I" for thousands of years (Giola, 1998). A person's identity is just that, their individual identity that only governs themselves and is formed and changed by continuous social interaction with others (Giola, 1998). While the person may be a part of a group, these personality traits may not be shared by everyone around them and will only influence the decisions that the individual is making (Hogg, 2016). While the study has been

around for much of history, it is not the top level of identity that influences decisions, because individuals in most cases will be more influenced by the group than vice versa (Hogg, 2016).

### *Corporate Identity*

While organizational identity is created by events over a long period of time, a corporate identity will be based on the current decisions of the top management (Riel and Balmer, 1997). Corporate identity is seen by some as a way to characterize aspects of a company or organization, that could possibly be untrue (Ravisi and Rekom, 2006). As stated, the theories of identity, culture, and image are all in close related fields, research has shown that corporate identity is much more closely related to the image of the company, because the decisions that top management make on corporate identity are based on what they believe people outside of the organization will perceive (Hatch and Schulz, 1997). The corporate identity can also be said to be closely related to how a company brands itself in the market (Riel and Balmer, 1997). This identity changes much more rapidly, because it is based on decisions that are made at least every year and are based on the current market and environment (Riel and Balmer, 1997). Previous research has differentiated organizational identity from corporate identity by stating that corporate identity is based on beliefs and ideals that mold the image characteristics, while the latter is based on how behaviors and agreements effect how the organization is seen from the outside (Ravisi and Rekom, 2006)

### *Social Identity*

**Put things in relation when explaining what OI is not, like social identity theory is seen by many as a strong influence in identification and OI**

“Social psychology is commonly viewed as an analysis of intergroup relations between large-scale social categories, which rests on a cognitive and self-conceptual definition of the social group and group membership” (Hogg et al., 2004, p. 246). This theory focuses on individual's interactions inside of a group and specifies that group experiences are not explained solely by that of the individuals (Hogg, 2016). The group membership will trump the importance for the individual's own need for their identity according to social identity theory, because the need for a sense of belonging in the collective is a higher-level need. (Hogg et al., 2004) This will lead to the individual conforming to patterns of others (Hogg et al., 2004)



### 3.3.2 Criticisms of Organizational Identity Theory

Like three component model, the theory of organizational identity has been around for several decades, which has led to research into the validity of the model, and has led some researchers to mold the theory to their beliefs, and again, even for one of the original authors to, “distinguish analytically from related concepts” (Whetten, 2008) This additional research comes from the fact that reconciliation in regards to what organizational identity practically means was not agreed across the board (Ravisi and Rekom, 2006) One aspect that has been challenged is that the original model presupposes that members in the organization keep, “fairly unitary and stable beliefs and perceptions”, that are straightforward, precise and quantitative enough to prove about the organization (Alvesson and Robertson, 2016). There has also been discussion about how the information is collected during interviews, because the topic of organizational identity is not something that people think about often in their work life, and thus can often times find it difficult to express their feelings about the topic (Alvesson and Robertson, 2016) The last issue, but not the least important, is discussing who makes the declaration about what the identity of an organization is, in very few circumstances does an organic identity just appear out of nowhere, and usually the leadership will attempt to manipulate what the identity is and how their subordinates are supposed to interpret it (Alvesson and Robertson, 2016). The views of the members inside the organization may in reality be different from the people's views in charge or just interpreted differently, so the identity that the leaders are proclaiming could just show a wish for what they desire to be recognized as, instead of what is actually going on in the organization (Alvesson and Robertson, 2016)

#### **Tying commitment into identity and working with that to put Ken in the center**

The topics of organizational identity and commitment have been studied by many different researchers that have looked at different facets of each one separately. The research in this paper will focus on combining the two topics together in a way that will see how and why an individual can feel commitment to the identity of an organization. And if possible, see the effects of leaders on the combination of the two, as the leadership of an organization holds large influence over the commitment inside of the organization (Yahaya and Ebrahim, 2015). There can be strong forms

of commitment to all kinds of things or people to different degrees, but this paper will attempt to see if worker, either new to the company or there for an extended time, can be committed to just the identity of the organization that they are employed at.

#### **4. Literature Review Need to tie this in, and explain why it's here/ talk about the most important papers. I would delete the stuff here and add some other stuff from the papers that I used in the end.**

| NAME  | AUTHOR, YEAR,<br>PUBLISHER   | CONTRIBUTION   |
|---|--|--|
| Identity  |  |  |
| Guiding<br>Organizational<br>Identity Through<br>Aged Adolescence           | Keven G. Corley,<br>Celia V. Harquail,<br>Michael G Pratt,<br>Mary Ann Glynn, C.<br>Marlene Fiol, and<br>Mary Jo Hatch<br><br>Journal of<br>Management Inquiry<br>2006 | This review lays a strong base for the need for further research into different aspects of organizational identity, as it shows the huge changes that have taken place since the terms conception. This leads me to believe that there is a possibility for the research to discover new facets in the field that have not yet be found. |
| Organizational<br>Identity and<br>Identification: A<br>review of literature | Hongwei He and<br>Andrew D. Brown<br><br>Sage Publications<br>2013   | The article does an in-depth review of one of the key theory areas that are focused upon in my own paper, but it does not discuss the idea of organizational commitment, and it is just a review up until 2013. The emphasis of the research into organizational identity helps to   |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   |   | lay the base for hypothesizing that individuals will be able to commit to an identity, due to the importance of an organization's identity.   |
| Explaining Variation in Organizational Identity Categorization                          | Greta Hsu and Kimberly D. Elsbach<br>Organization Science<br>2008               | The study seeks to gain further research into managing the identity of an organization, and issues that can arise from there being multiple identities. This explains that leaders make choices to alter the identity based on the view of outsiders, so this makes me believe that the results of my interview process will show that the leader has a large role in the level of commitment to the organization.  |
| One Out of Many? Boundary Negotiation and Identity Formation in Post-merger Integration | Israel Drori, Amy Wrzesniewski, and Shmuel Eles<br>Organization Science<br>2013 | This paper looks at the identity change and development, but it focuses solely on the identity of a merger, which is constructed in large part, unlike the identity of a single organization that would be built over a longer period of time. This shows how the identity is created in a merger for an organization, and leads me to believe that people will be able to be committed to an identity, because the identity of the new company would be one of the things that they would work to develop as soon as possible. |
| Identity Ambiguity and Change in the Wake of a Corporate Spin-off                       | Kevin G. Corley and Dennis A. Gioia<br>Administrative Science Quarterly<br>2004 | This paper describes the changes that happen when part of a company is separated from a longstanding organization, and leads me to understand the need for the research into people joining the company with a strong identity. The findings that show how much the participants needed to get back to the  |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   |   | feeling of having an identity, and this leads me to believe that the newcomers to the organization with a strong identity will also become committed to the organization's identity, if the previous members are committed.   |
| Organizational Identity and Strategy: A Empirical Study of Organizational Identity's Influence on the Strategy-making process | Annemette L. Kjaergaard<br>International Studies of Management & Organization<br>2009 | Studying the results of this paper lead to the knowledge that influence that a strong identity can have on the behaviors of members. This gives another outlook on adapting to the change of an identity, which would most likely lead to the belief that it may be difficult for newcomers to become committed to the identity right away, contrary to the beliefs in previous articles. |
| Management Accounting systems in New Zealand Regional Family Businesses: Organizational Identity and Strategic Alignment      | Julia Wo, Ahsan Habib, and Joy Kuhns<br>Journal of Accounting & Marketing<br>2017     | This research paper enforces the base for how much of an influence a strong identity can be. The results lead to the thinking that the results of my own study will be confirming the individual's ability to become committed to a part of an organization that has such a large influence on the company.   |
| Responding to Organizational Identity Threats: Exploring the role of Organizational Culture                                   | Davide Ravasi and Majken Schultz<br>The Academy of Management Journal<br>2006         | This paper concludes that the identity of the organization lets new members know who they are as an organization, which leads to the next research step of whether those newcomers can become committed to the identity. Since new members receive an understanding from the identity of the organization, this leads me to believe that the  |

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|---|---|--|
|   |   | newcomers will not only be able to adapt to the new identity when they join, but also can become committed to that identity.   |
| A Temporal Perspective on Organizational Identity   | Majken Schultz and Tor Hernes<br>Organization Science                                       | This article goes into detail on the differences that take place in the perception of the organizational identity, when you look at a more long-term approach, instead of a short-term approach. This conclusion leads me to believe that there will be different results in my study based on the length of membership to the organization, when looking at the ability to become committed to an identity. |
| Commitment  |   |  |
| Workplace spirituality and Organizational commitment: an empirical study                    | Armenio Rego and Miguel Pina e Cunha<br>Journal of Organizational Change Management<br>2008 | This study is looking into topics associated with organizational identity, but looking just at their influence on different types of commitment, so it leads to the need for further research on different aspects of commitment.  |
| Job satisfaction and organizational commitment: An empirical investigation among ICT - SMEs | Naser Valaei and Sajad Rezaei<br>Management Research Review<br>2015                         | This study researches, among other things, whether or not the years of experience influence the level of commitment. These findings show that the years of experience influence commitment, so this will lead me to hypothesize that the newcomers to the organization may have different levels of commitment to the identity than the previous organization members.                                       |
| Empirical Study Relations Job Satisfaction,   | Veronica Trigan and Dorothea Wahyu Ariani   | The study findings that there is a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment shows the  |

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| Organizational Commitment, and Turnover Intention   | Advances in Management & Applied Economics 2015                                | importance for commitment to an organization, but leaves open the question of what parts of the organization that an individual can be committed to. Since there is a strong relationship between commitment and satisfaction, it leads me to believe that the effectiveness of leadership will have a significant importance to the level of commitment to an organization's identity. |
| Leadership Styles and Organizational Commitment: Literature Review  | Rusliza Yahaya and Fawzy Ebrahim<br>Journal of Management Development 2015     | The review creates a base for organizational commitment studies that have previously taken place, and highlights the need for more research. This further shows the theoretical research into organizational commitment, which will lead to the belief that commitment to an identity is possible.  |
| Organizational Identification versus organizational commitment: Self-definition, social exchange, and job attitudes | Daan Van Knippenberg and Ed Sleebos<br>Journal of Organizational Behavior 2006 | The base for the importance of commitment is further enforced, showing that it has a large impact on employee's satisfaction. This will lead me to believe that during my study the fact that an organization has a strong identity, will lead to the higher likelihood that the individual can become committed to an identity.  |

## 5. Study Framework

### Research Questions

- Q1: How are people's ability to be committed to the identity of an organization influenced by the role of the leader?

- Q1.1: How will the strength of the vision of the leader have an effect on the level of commitment members feel to the organization's identity?
- Q1.2: How does the leader have an, or in what way do they affect a member's perception of the organization's identity?

### Propositions

- P1: The ability for people to be committed to the organization will be formed by
- P2: The command and direction of the leader's vision will influence the member's ability to show commitment to the organization's identity.
- P3: The views of the person who brought a member onboard will influence the likelihood of that new member to show commitment to the identity.

## 6. Methodology

### 6.1 Personal Semi- Structured Interviews

The research will consist of eight personal interviews during a several week period of time. The interviews will have a set list of topics to discuss in a semi structured interview, with little to no set questions planned out in advance (Clifford, 2016). This will allow for more organic conversation to take place, and will work to not lead the conversation towards trying to prove or disprove any theory. The interviews are going to be used to uncover information that would not be able to be found with a direct questionnaire process (Turner, 2010). A semi-structured interview is an interview that does not have a set list of questions to ask, but instead just has a basic framework that allows for much more information to be uncovered (Clifford, 2016). The reason that this methodology makes the most sense for this paper is because there is no exact research on this topic, and as in previous studies, when looking at the identity of an organization, it likely will benefit the most from the use interviews with authorities in the organization, because they will typically possess the greatest amount of knowledge (Ravisi and Rekom, 2006) so the interview will allow for the research to be taken using one specific organization.

### 6.2 Sample

The sample will consist of workers at a national HVAC company in the United States. The interviews will take place with workers that have both worked there for an extended period of time and who are recent additions to the company. These people will represent different backgrounds of industry employment and in current company positions. The reason for wanting an array of different people is because there will be very different viewpoints. I have decided to use the technique of a judgement sample, which is choosing specific sample participants that will give an overview of all of the variables that will affect the information gathered and is based on familiarity in the field (Marshall, 1996). I used to work for this company, so it allows me to have a good understanding of the company and relationship with many of the workers. One of the main reasons this organization was chosen and identified as a valuable choice (Corley and Gioia, 2004), was because of the field access that I possess. The interviews will focus on the company owner and members of just one of the branches, including roles in senior management, middle management, and workers in the field and will include employment from differing amounts of time. The differing roles of the interviewees was important, because as the research of Ravisi and Rekom showed, if only one level of the company is interviewed, then the information uncovered will be very different than if you get information from each level and compare it (2006).

### Case description?

The company is in the service industry employing over 400 employees across three U.S. states with further expansion planned. The company has been around for many decades, but current owner took possession a little over seven years ago. The company had a long-standing reputation for building high quality and long-lasting equipment, but during the last set of ownership before the current owner (George in this study), all of that reputation had been completely eroded and the company was left in a state of disarray. George has owned and operated several successful companies in the same field in the past. George set the company motto to be, "Do it the right way, not the easy way". Upon purchasing the company, it took several years to get the company in order, but the break through happened when the company began an ad campaign that took all of the previously internal identity that had developed and spread it through radio ads that were all done through personal stories in George's voice. **Not finished**

**In case description: talk about everything, kens role, and dales role and encompassing the slogan. Talk about morning meetings and all of the key players and what role and perspective they have, put before the interviews. Talk about commercials in his voice**



“in reasons for why chose case, say key informants, case selection process found it to be a good example, owner who has vision, and he wanted people committed to the vision, not him, for the legacy and last longer”

### 6.3 Limitations

The limitations of the research will come from the previous time spent employed with the company. This familiarity with each other can influence the questions asked, how the questions are asked, and objectivity of the questions or data analysis. The answers that are given by the interviewees can also be influenced by the previous relationships that were developed. The last limitation will be related to the type of interview in a certain area can give it a potential “lack of generalizability” (Wu et al., 2017, p. 9).

### 6.4 Reliability

The reliability of the results will be controlled by taking a transcript of all of the interviews to make sure that there cannot be any mistakes, while only cleaning up the transcripts to make them easier to read by removing filler words and repeated words. During the interviews, if there is anything said that is unclear or left up to inference, follow up questions will be asked to make sure there is no doubt in the meaning.

### 6.5 Qualifying Respondents

The method for qualifying respondents will be based primarily on a few different aspects, but the goal for several of them will be different, because the research process will try to get information from interviewees from different levels of the company, and who have been employed for different lengths. The interviews will be qualified through my previous knowledge, and knowledge gained through the first interviews, which will be with the managers of the branch. The goal will be to get people who are effective in the company, whether new or old, because this will give us a more accurate image of people who are committed to the company, than if the respondents are getting ready to terminate or be terminated. Since the interview pool will be

smaller, the goal will be to find key informants that can give a view of the whole picture (Lavrakas, 2008).

## 6.6 Interview Design

As stated earlier, the idea behind the structure of the interviews will be that of one that will allow the participants to talk freely, and lead the conversation (Clifford, 2016). The questions will be set up in broad topics, because the participants will be in different roles and in different levels of the hierarchy, so this will allow for the interviews to be slightly tailored accordingly (Clifford, 2016). The interview will begin with demographic questions to begin to get the interview participants talking, but there will not need to be a large amount of this due to the previous relationship with many of the participants. I will be the person in charge of the interview process, and they will take place in a one- or two-week period via skype. The interviews will be 30 to 60 minutes long.

Once the beginning questions have concluded, the question topics will first move towards generic questions in the organizational identity field, while not getting to specific. Then the questions will move to focus on the broad topic of commitment and to get their opinions on the concepts as a whole (Clifford, 2016). This area will focus on just getting an idea of what their feelings and understandings are on the topic to know how to effectively move forward in the next section, and to have the ideas of identity and commitment on their mind (Clifford, 2016).

Bringing up these topics early, while not asking direct questions, will work to tie in the topics to later questions.

The third section of the questioning will move towards more specific questions, in order to get an even better understanding now that I have moved through the basics of the topics (Clifford, 2016). The structure of these questions will be to ask specific questions about their feelings and behaviors in certain situations, and then ask more and more follow up questions to figure out the real reasons why these are made (Clifford, 2016). Depending on the role of the person, questions here will talk about reasons that they personally have joined the company and felt certain ways, but also why decisions were made inside of the company (Turner, 2010). One way to receive

candid responses will be to ask questions about how they feel about their competitors and to ask them to put themselves in others shoes and then explain their decision making (Turner, 2010). The questions will work to uncover real examples from the participants time in the company, while also drawing on past experiences.

The questions topics will come from the theoretical framework that is the base for the research project, questions on the topic based on the paper's propositions, and observations during the time of employment that require further clarification.

### 6.7 Data Analysis

The data will be analyzed with a software such as maxqda. The interviews will be transcribed onto the software platform and then analyzed for themes and information that looks interesting. The information patterns that are deemed to be of importance will be tagged, and coded together with similar information. After all of the data has been analyzed and organized, I will look through the data to find a theoretical framework to explain the reasoning in the data.

### 6.8 Plan of Work

| Dates      | Tasks            | Phases   | Stage of Completion |
|------------|------------------|--|---------------------|
| 6/21- 9/3  | Develop Topic    | Narrowing down the topic further to the final research area  | Completed           |
| 9/4- 9/30  | Final Expose     | Writing the introduction to the topic, developing the theoretical framework, and deciding on the methodology | Completed           |
| 10/1- 10/7 | Interview Design | Developing the interview topics  | Completed           |

|              |                           |  |           |
|--------------|---------------------------|--|-----------|
| 10/8-11/07   | Corrections and Additions | Will go through corrected expose and make all additional changes that need to be done                  | Completed |
| 11/8-12/8    | Conduct interviews        | Doing the interviews that the discussion portion of the thesis will be based on                        | To Follow |
| 12/9-12/24   | Data Analysis             | Transcribing the interviews, analyzing the data and coding the data                                    | To Follow |
| 12/25-12/26  | Free Days                 |  |           |
| 12/27- 1/05  | Write Final Report        | Writing down the findings and conclusions that come from the research                                  | To Follow |
| 1/6-1/12     | Free work days            | This will be to finish all small areas that still need work and to edit and go through it meticulously |           |
| January 13th | Thesis Due                | Hand in Finished Thesis  | To Follow |

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