Organizational Commitment and Employee Performance during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence from a BPO Company

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Abstract

The pandemic necessitated remote workplace setup, and as employees’ homes doubled as their workplaces, it became difficult to distinguish between the two. With this reality came the challenge of enhancing employee performance and organizational commitment. This study investigated the correlation between organizational commitment and employee performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study involved 158 employees of a Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) company situated in Quezon City, Philippines. Non-parametric statistical testing such as Mann–Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests were employed to examine the significant differences in the respondent’s ratings when their demographic profiles were considered. Spearman’s rank correlation was used to measure the strength of the relationship between the constructs of organizational commitment and dimensions of employee performance. Results of the study revealed a high positive relationship between continuance commitment and employee performance. Furthermore, this study also explored organizational commitment along four demographic variables, resulting in the detection of significant differences in the perception of continuance commitment on account of gender, age, civil status, and length of service. A significant difference was also detected in affective commitment considering the length of service. Single, married, and widowed respondents also differed in their opinions on normative commitment. While research on organizational commitment exist, few studies have explored the role of demographic factors in shaping employee responses to pandemics. This study demonstrates value by examining the influence of demographic variables on organizational commitment and employee performance during the pandemic, adopting an intersectional perspective, and offering practical implications for organizational management, theoretical advancement, and future research directions.

Keywords: Affective Commitment; Normative Commitment; Continuance Commitment Employee Performance; BPO Employees

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has been recorded as the fifth documented pandemic since the 1918 Spanish Influenza pandemic (History, 2020). COVID-19 is caused by SARS-CoV-2, and infected people typically exhibit symptoms such as fever, cough, fatigue, malaise, and other respiratory problems, which can lead to pneumonia and death (Mohan & Vinod, 2020). Many regions around the world became involved in the fight against COVID-19. In the Philippines, the first case was recorded on January 20, 2020, in a 38-year-old female Chinese national who was travelling in the Philippines with a companion for vacation purposes (Department of Health, 2020). Since then, it has quickly spread in the country, affecting health, spiritual, economic, social, and cultural activities. The organization setup was not spared from the spread of the virus, and numerous changes had to be put in place when the Philippine government placed different parts of the country in community quarantine last March 2020 (Presidential Communications Operations Office, 2021). Private businesses situated in areas that are categorised as under strictest community quarantine have resorted to skeleton workforce and work-from-home (WFH) arrangements to ensure that proper social distancing measures will be observed at all times (Ilas-Panganiban, 2020). In the Philippines, efforts were taken to kerb the spread of the COVID-19 virus, but it did post several issues and concerns to the employers and employees. The sudden implementation of the work-from-home (WFH) setup caused several problems, including but not limited to mental health challenges,
distractions at work, communication problems, collaboration difficulties, technical challenges, and unbalanced work-life (Clark, 2021). The disruptive effects of the pandemic brought about the need to devise New Ways of Working (NWW). According to Cornelis and Febriansyah (2023), NWW is a new form of human resource practices that is intended to enhance organizational agility. As organizations respond to the challenges of developing new products, processes, and NWW, employee performance is one of the many factors that remain in question. The requirements in WFH, as argued by Doyle (2021), may be harmful to employee performance. As the employees’ homes doubled as their workplaces, it became difficult to place a distinction between the two. With this reality came the challenge of maintaining Organizational commitment.

Employee commitment to the organization is undoubtedly one of the most sought after positive employee attitudes by employers. The ever increasing trend in competition in the business arena makes it imperative for businessmen to secure employees who are not just qualified for the job but, most importantly, someone who believes in the purpose or reason for the existence of the organization and have intentions to continue working for the organization. Organizational commitment pertains to how employees relate to the organizations’ goals and their intention to stay loyal for a very long time (Medina, 2011). It refers to the ties that employees have with the organization (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). It is the bond that makes the employees feel a genuine connexion with the organization. Being committed to the organization makes the employees feel that they fit in and that they are one with the former in its quest to attain the prescribed goals of the company. Organizational commitment is the “intensity of the employee’s affect in an organization to which he is currently employed” (Porter et al., 1974). Employees’ Organizational commitment reflects their belief in the mission of the company and their willingness to contribute to the attainment of the specific goals of the organization.

Employee performance is well researched in the field of human resources because it plays an integral role in developing and achieving the goals of an organization (Nursiti et al., 2022). It refers to how employees fulfil their duties, accomplish assigned tasks, and behave as a member of the organization. It pertains to how well employees conduct the duties and responsibilities assigned to them (Donohoe, 2019). Employee performance is typically measured by employee productivity. There are several ways of evaluating employee performance, including work quality, quantity of work, and knowledge or creativity of the employee in accomplishing the assigned tasks (Muda et al., 2014). However, restrictions and challenges triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic abruptly changed the way employees work (Harter, 2020). The challenge for most organizations is to maintain a high level of employee performance despite COVID-19’s work implications.

Several studies have found that organizational commitment is correlated to employee performance (Rafiei et al., 2014; Hafiz, 2017; Krishnanathan & Mangaleswaran, 2018; Galih & Bagus, 2022). Employees who are exhibits organizational commitment are more likely to have a higher level of employee performance, have higher job satisfaction, and are more likely to stay in the organization.

This study determines the relationship between organizational commitment and performance of 158 employees in a BPO company during the pandemic. Furthermore, it also aims to identify significant differences in the perceptions of employees on the constructs of organizational commitment and variables of performance considering demographic profile such as gender, civil status, age, and length of service.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Industry

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) is dubbed as the fastest growing industry in the Philippines today. It has recorded a relatively stable growth in revenue with a 9% yearly average
and covers approximately 10%–15% market share in the global outsourcing market arena (David, 2019). The BPO industry is the single largest sector providing direct employment to 1.15 million Filipinos spread across approximately 700 outsourcing companies, and it is poised to grow to reach 1.8 million by 2022 (Magellan Solutions, 2020). The BPO industry has played a vital role in providing jobs to many Filipino workers. However, because of the high attrition rate experienced by this industry, increasing organizational commitment is becoming a trend among players to improve employee performance and retain competent employees. The BPO sector ranks first in terms of employee attrition and turnover rates across the globe. In 2019, before the pandemic, the Philippine BPO industry accounted for an 18% mean attrition rate of full-time agents, whereas the mean attrition rate of part-time agents was 24% (Magellan Solutions, 2020). A high attrition rate incurs cost to the organization. To find a qualified replacement for an employee who is to leave the organization, it would cost roughly around 20% of the employee’s salary (Son, 2016).

Organizational Commitment

The commitment of employees to the company plays a crucial role in fulfilling organizational goals (Adula et al., 2023). Organizational commitment relates to the feelings held by employees towards their organization (Suryawan et al., 2021). It pertains to the bond between the employee and the employing organization (Mowday et al., 1982). Its effect includes employees’ loyalty to the organization, their ability to identify the congruence of personal goals to the organizations’ goals, and their dedication to the attainment of these goals (Khaliq et al., 2016). Literature suggests that employees who possess organizational commitment are more likely to exhibit willingness to adhere to the policies of the organization, have excellent performance evaluation, have good attendance records, and have lower turnover rates. The model of organizational commitment of Allen and Meyer (1990) is composed of the following constructs: affective commitment; continuance commitment; and normative commitment.

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is considered the most valuable antecedent of employee performance as it is linked to the feeling of engagement one has over an organization (Lei & Cheah, 2023). Employees who are affectively committed typically believe in the values held by the organization. Affective commitment is related to the emotional attachment employees have to the firm. The affection that employees have towards the company is activated once an employee feels a strong sense of attachment to his work. It is an attitude towards work involving positive feelings of employees for the organization (Morrow, 1993). Affective commitment resonates with employees’ identification and involvement with the organization (Mowday et al., 1982). It is an attitude exemplified as “an orientation towards the organization, which links or attaches the identity of the person to the organization” (Sheldon, 1971). Employees who possess affective commitment are considered a perfect fit for the organization, they take pride in their job and are normally satisfied with their work. According to Beck and Wilson (2000), if an employee exhibits this commitment, their “personal employment relationship is viewed as aligned to the values and goals of the organization”. These employees exhibit loyalty to the organization and would take its problems as their own, enjoy talking about the organization with other people, and feel like they are a part of a family. (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Literature suggests dependability, role clarity, personal importance, job challenge, goal clarity and difficulty, and participation are some of the factors that influence organizational commitment (Allen & Mayer, 1997).
Continuance Commitment

Continuance commitment, otherwise known as fear of loss, relates to the degree to which employees feel they should stay in the organization. Employees who possess continuance commitment stay in the company because of the notion that they cannot afford to leave. According to Allen and Meyer (1997), employees who exhibit continuance commitment have complete awareness of the costs they would incur if they leave the company. They would normally weigh the advantages and disadvantages of leaving the company. They would stay if the cost of leaving their current employer was higher than the benefits of the new job. The two factors of continuance commitment according to Allen and Meyer (1990) are “the magnitude of investments (side bets) employees make and a perceived lack of alternatives”. Employees’ side bets can be in the form of loss of salary and attractive benefits, loss of seniority status that normally leads to priority in terms of promotions, loss of privilege attached to long years of service, and in extreme cases, loss of friendship that employees were able to secure within the duration of their stay in the organization (Mind Tools, 2018). According to Becker (1960), these employee investments are considered “sunken costs”. Sunk costs can be categorised as employee salary and benefits, social relationships, and lost opportunities, among others (Lambert et al., 2013). Computing for the loss one will incur and the benefits one is to gain, employees are likely to stay. This dimension of the Allen and Meyer (1997) model contends that the computed economic gain is what would make employees stay committed to the organization (Beck & Wilson, 2000). In this type of commitment, the material benefits and rewards are the basis of employee performance and loyalty (Tetrick, 1995). Employees stay us primarily for economic reasons rather than emotional involvement in the organization.

Normative Commitment

Normative commitment, the third dimension of the organizational commitment pertains to employees’ obligation to stay with the organization for moral or ethical reasons (Medina, 2011) (Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999). It involves a sense of being socially responsible towards the organization (Lo et al., 2024). Employees who are normatively committed feel obligated to continuously remain in the company because it is morally right to do so. Employees exhibit behaviours dictated by influential individuals in the company because they feel that this is morally and ethically right. Normatively committed employees feel pressured to continue their employment because they are morally responsible to the organization. Employees manifesting normative commitment feel the need to stay because of the things the organization has done for them. Its foundation is built upon a sense of duties and values, and employees feel that they are morally obligated to stay.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is considered a vital factor in the overall success of an organization (Shiferaw, 2022). Employee performance pertains to the manner in which employees perform their duties, accomplish assigned tasks, and behave as a member of the organization. It pertains to how well a person executes his or her job duties and responsibilities, which is vital to organizational success (Litmos, 2022). Bernardin and Rusell (2013) identified quality, quantity, timeliness, cost effectiveness, need for supervision, and interpersonal impact as the six criteria for measuring employee performance. Quality as a dimension of employee performance pertains to employees’ ability to perform assigned tasks in a way that meets expectations; quantity is the amount produced by employees because of completed activity cycles; timeliness is the ability of employees to finish the assigned tasks before the identified deadline; cost effectiveness is the maximised use of company resources with the highest results or reduced wastage; need for supervision is the ability of employees to complete tasks with the need for guidance from superiors; interpersonal impact is
the confidence of employees in dealing and working with co-employees (Anugrah & Priyambodo, 2022).

Figure 1. Research Paradigm

The constructs of organizational commitment that was used in this study are based on the affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment of Allen and Meyer (1990). Employee performance was measured using six dimensions: timeliness, quality, cost effectiveness, quantity, need for supervision, and interpersonal impact (Bernardin & Rusell, 2013). This study also aimed to identify significant differences in the perceptions of employees on the constructs of organizational commitment and variables of performance considering demographic profile such as gender, civil status, age, and length of service.

RESEARCH METHOD
Research Methods Used

This study employed a descriptive correlational research design. Descriptive research typically gathers information often through surveys from a certain group to provide its current situation (Denscombe, 2017). It is a good research method to use as the study determines the situation of the participant employees during the pandemic. A correlational research design was used to determine the strength of relationship between organizational commitment and employee performance. According to Curtis et al. (2016), correlational research design is ideal for determining the strength and direction of the relationship between variables.

Description of the Respondents

The research respondents were 158 employees of a BPO company situated in Quezon City, Philippines. As the ICT capital of the Philippines with around 135 BPO establishments, Quezon City has the highest number of employees in the National Capital Region (Dili et al., 2022). The BPO company that became the subject of the study had 197 employees, and because the study is about organizational commitment, those who were recently hired in the past five months were not included as participants. There were 97 male and 61 female respondents whose age ranges from 25 to 50 years old, majority are single and married individuals who have been connected to the BPO company from 6 months to 5 years or more. The data was collected through a survey questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire adhered to the demographic profile of the respondents, and the second part was adopted from Allen and Meyer’s organizational commitment questionnaire under the dimensions of affective commitment; continuance commitment; normative commitment. The last part of the questionnaire is for the employee performance scale of Bernardin and Russel (2023), which includes six dimensions: quality; timeliness; quantity; need for supervision; cost effectiveness; and interpersonal impact.
Validation of the Survey Instrument

This study used a researcher-crafted survey questionnaire that was initially evaluated and validated by a group of carefully chosen experts. The instrument was pilot tested on a group with the same characteristics to determine the strength and consistency of the questionnaire items. The procedure yielded a value of 0.97, indicating excellent internal consistency. The result signifies that the questionnaire is appropriate for this study.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Data gathered was processed using SPSS version 23. The study utilised a frequency, weighted mean, and percentage to assess respondents’ demographic information and their level of agreement on the statements adhering to the constructs of organizational commitment and dimensions of employee performance during the pandemic. Nonparametric statistical testing such as Mann–Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests were employed to examine the significant differences in the respondent’s ratings when their demographic profiles were considered. In correlating the study’s variables, Spearman’s rank correlation was used to determine the relationship between the constructs of organizational commitment and dimensions of employee performance.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers gathered 158 responses from the employees of the BPO company that became the subject of the study. Based on the results of the data collected, there are more female than male respondents in the study, the majority of whom are in the age range of 26–46 years, and most are single and married individuals. They have been connected with the company for a period of less than 2 years to 5 years or more.

Table 1. Respondents’ demographic profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents' Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civil Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>57.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>36.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Service</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months to 1 year</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year to 2 years</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years to 4 years</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years or more</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results revealed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, continuance commitment or the “need to stay in the organization” generated the highest mean rating among the other organizational commitment variables. The results of this study are supported by Kasogela (2019), who posited that continuance commitment is a predictor of the job performance of employees. According to
Continuance commitment is related to the costs employees associate with leaving the company. Among the constructs of continuance commitment, the highest level of agreement of the respondents was identified on “it would be costly for me to leave the organization now”, “the serious consequence of leaving this organization is the scarcity of available alternatives” and “right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire. The results of this study are supported by Kaplan and Kaplan (2018), who posited that should employees leave their current jobs, it might be difficult for them to find another job. The pandemic forced many companies to lay off employees because they were operating at a reduced scale. The hiring process in most industries was halted, and most employees felt that they lacked alternatives in the labour market. The uncertainty of the labour market is a common reason why employees would be skeptical about being able to find jobs if they leave their current employment.

**Table 2.** Overall Mean and Standard Deviation for Organizational Commitment and Employee Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Variable</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuance Commitment</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Commitment</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent Variable</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Performance</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Affectively committed employees want to stay with their current employment, are satisfied with their work, feel their own place in the organization and they belong, and are good ambassadors of the organization (Werf, 2020). Affective commitment is present among employees if they have a “strong willingness to contribute to the attainment of the goals of the organization” (Ayensa et al., 2017). In this study, respondents revealed that during pandemic “they feel like a part of the family”, “they enjoy talking about the organization with other people”, and “they consider the organization’s problems as if its their own”. It is evident that in this study, the respondents showed a positive attitude and were emotionally attached towards the organization even in the presence of a pandemic.

Employees are considered normatively committed if their stay in the organization is due to a certain standard of behaviour, compliance, or they feel that they have an obligation to stay (Hadi & Tentama, 2020). Results showed that respondents agreed on the statements adhering to feeling a sense of moral obligation to stay in the company, especially during the height of the pandemic. The study revealed that the respondents think that employees nowadays move from one organization to another rather frequently. Results of the study further revealed that the respondents stay in the company because they feel it is their moral obligation and they believe in the importance of staying loyal to the organization.

It can be gleaned from the table above that employee performance was perceived to be high even in the presence of the pandemic. Employee performance was measured considering variables such as quality, quantity, timeliness, cost effectiveness, need for supervision, and interpersonal impact. The pandemic disrupted the workplace as employees were forced to work from home, which naturally raises concerns about the possibility of lowering levels of employee performance. Companies tried devising strategies to ensure that employees will remain engage in the organization and productivity levels will not suffer. However, in this study, employees’ performance was perceived to be high during the critical stage of the pandemic. Results revealed that the workloads of the respondents were completed at the earliest time desirable or at least within deadlines. Further results of the study revealed that despite the pandemic, respondents ranked excellent in terms of the outputs produced on account of volume, neatness, and accuracy. It
was also found that the respondents could perform their respective tasks with little or at times no need for supervisory intervention. The results of this study are similar to those of the study conducted by Susilo (2020), which involved 330 Indonesian employees who were in a WFH setup during the COVID-19 pandemic. The said study revealed that the employees’ job performance was enhanced because they experienced enjoyment, satisfaction, and motivation in the WFH setup.

Table 3. Mann–Whitney U- Test for the Respondents’ Assessment on Organizational Commitment when Grouped According to the Demographic Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Organizational Commitment</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>p-value*</th>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Continuance</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>Reject the Null</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 and Table 4 reflect the respondents’ assessment of their level of organizational commitment when their profile is considered. Significant differences were detected in continuance commitment when gender, age, civil status, and length of service is considered. Female respondents have a higher level of agreement on the constructs of continuance commitment than male respondents. Married, single, and widowed respondents have different opinions regarding their level of continuance and normative commitment. Those who are married and have been married have noticeably higher levels of agreement on continuance and normative commitment than the single respondents. Those who have stayed in the company for more than four years have a higher level of agreement on the affective commitment constructs. Furthermore, those who have been in the company for 2 years or less have a higher level of agreement on the continuance dimensions.

Table 4. Kruskal–Wallis for Respondents’ Assessment on Organizational Commitment when Grouped According to the Demographic Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Organizational Commitment</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>p-value*</th>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Continuance</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>Reject the Null</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Status</td>
<td>Continuance</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>Reject the Null</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>Reject the Null</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Service</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>Reject the Null</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continuance</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>Reject the Null</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 reflects the correlation between organizational commitment and employee performance. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a high positive correlation was detected between continuance commitment or the need to stay in the organization and employee performance of the respondents. Affective commitment or the emotional attachment of the respondents has a moderate relationship with employee performance, whereas normative commitment has a slight correlation with the performance of the respondents. In a study conducted by Kuhal et al. (2020), which involved 120 Malaysian employees, it was revealed that affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment have a direct impact on employee performance. Organizational commitment is a valuable means for companies to achieve high employee performance before the pandemic (Rehman et al., 2012; Salman et al., 2011; Toban et al., 2014) and
even during the pandemic (Ratsanari, 2021; Anugrah & Priyambodo, 2022; Azmy, 2022).

### Table 5. Correlation Between Organizational Commitment and Employee Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Commitment</th>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Spearman Rank Correlation</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>p-value*</th>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.475</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuance</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.697</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Reject the Null Hypothesis</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.315</td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CONCLUSIONS

During the pandemic for the respondents who are in the WFH setup, the need to stay, which is usually brought about by the perceived costs of leaving the organization generated the highest level of agreement from the respondents among the other organizational commitment variables. Second in the rank is affective commitment, which has to do with the employees’ emotional attachment to the organization while the feeling of obligation to stay or the normative commitment generated the least level of agreement among the other organizational commitment variables.

The performance of the respondents in the WFH setup was perceived to be high despite the presence of the pandemic. The workloads of the employees were completed at the earliest time desirable or within deadlines. The employees performed excellently in terms of the outputs produced because of volume, neatness, and accuracy. Furthermore, employees could perform their respective tasks with little or at times no need for supervisory intervention.

The employees’ level of affective commitment varies in considering their length of stay in the organization. Employees differ on their opinions about affective commitment if they have stayed for less than a year, one year, two years, three years to four years or more. Respondents varied in terms of their opinions on their continuance commitment during the pandemic, and gender was considered. The result further indicates that significant differences in continuance commitment exist among single, married, and widowed employees. Ultimately, employees differ on their opinions on continuance commitment during the pandemic because of their age and length of stay in the company. There is a significant difference in normative commitment when civil status is considered. Married, single, and widowed employees differed in their opinions on normative commitment during the pandemic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a high positive correlation was detected between continuance commitment and employee performance. Affective commitment or the emotional attachment of the respondents has a moderate relationship with employee performance, whereas normative commitment has a slight correlation with the performance of the respondents.

The attrition rate has always been a big challenge in the BPO industry, and the situation has worsened now that the employees have returned to on-site work. The record high 50% attrition rate among its workforce is attributable to factors such as salary and benefits, workplace environment, and workload (De Jesus et al., 2023). It is of vital importance for managers to consider innovative HR strategies to inculcate organizational commitment and loyalty among BPO employees during and after the pandemic. The pandemic broadened the role of the HR department,
which includes employee engagement and employee turnover, among others (Lacap et al., 2023). To further enhance affective commitment, it is recommended that the company to initiate management practices where employees will feel a sense of belongingness. It will also be helpful if the management provides an atmosphere that supports the overall wellbeing of the employees. Increasing avenues where employees would have the perception of being supported by the organization and a healthy exchange relationship with one's supervisor can foster employee commitment (Vandenbergh et al., 2002). Employees could also be given autonomy in decision making to feel more involved, thus enhancing employee commitment. Employees who are affectively committed will work harder to contribute to the goals of the organization. Meyer and Parfyonova (2010) suggests that organizations tend to benefit greater in commitment that emanates from moral duty than from affective commitment. To enhance normative commitment, it is recommended that managers provide avenues to improve goal setting and self-leadership among employees. This will help employees align their personal goals with those of the organization thus enhance their commitment to the company. For continuance commitment, provisions for additional incentives in the form of health care and medical benefits for employees and their beneficiaries, paid time off in case employees are exhibiting symptoms of the virus, hazard pay for employees who will be required to return to the office, and transportation services for employees who will find it difficult to report to the office. Since the pandemic is reaching its pinnacle, it is also recommended to continuously monitor employees' mental health. The pandemic might be reaching its end stage, but the period of WFH, burnout, and isolation experienced by the employees could have a lasting effect on their overall well-being. Since this study focused on BPO employees during the pandemic, further study is recommended to explore organizational commitment and employee performance in other industries in the post-pandemic era.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH
Although this study provided valuable insights into organizational commitment and employee performance, there are some limitations that may impact the interpretation and generalization of the findings. The study is limited to 158 employees of a BPO company in Quezon City, Philippines. Furthermore, this study adopted a cross-sectional design where the data were captured at a single point in time. To address these limitations, comparative studies across different industries are recommended to identify varying levels of organizational commitment and employee performance. It is also recommended that longitudinal studies be considered to determine changes in the influence of organizational commitment on employee performance over time.

REFERENCES


