

Perceived Support and Work Attitudes among Korean Fitness Club Employees

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between perceived support and affective commitment and the impact of affective commitment on work effort and intention to leave the organization among Korean fitness club employees. In addition, the moderating role of collectivism on the relationship between affective commitment and work outcomes was also examined. The data provided by 330 Korean fitness club employees were analyzed using structural equation modeling and regression analyses. The results of confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling showed that the proposed model fit reasonably well. Perceived Support explained 76% of variance in Affective Commitment and, along with Affective Commitment, explained 42.6% of variance in Work Effort. In addition, Affective Commitment by itself explained 62.9% of variance in Intention to Leave. Finally, regression analyses showed that collectivism moderated the relationship between affective commitment and work effort. Practical and theoretical significance of these results are discussed.

Keywords: perceived support, affective commitment, work effort, intention to leave, collectivism

1. INTRODUCTION

As the world has been globalized, many organizations have expanded their businesses overseas and now operate on a multi-national basis. This is true in the case of sport business as well. Many private sport businesses, such as sporting goods companies and fitness organizations in the U.S., have expanded their businesses in other countries. For example, Nike has its offices in 160 countries and employs approximately 48,000 people worldwide including retails and part time employees [1]. In addition, fitness organizations, such as Bally Total Fitness, Curves, and California Fitness that are based in the United States, have expanded their businesses to have their branches in many Asian countries. The positions in these foreign branches are filled with local employees who may differ in many respects from North American workers. Understanding these differences among employee groups is crucial for the success of managing those differing employees.

One factor that sets apart people from one country from another is the differences in the culture and the cultural values of the respective countries. It has been shown that different cultural values have an influence on an individual's cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioral systems [2]. Also, research has shown that national culture has an impact on employees' work attitudes and organizational behaviors [3]. According to Hofstede [4], people perceive the same situation differently because they are conditioned by different education and life experiences, which are formed by culture. The current study attempts to examine if the established relationships among the work related constructs in the U.S. are applicable in another cultural settings (i.e., South Korea) that holds different cultural values, and if the cultural values have an impact on the employees' work attitudes and behaviors.

The model to be tested in the Korean context focused on commitment of employees to the organization which has been studied extensively in the North American context [5]. The extant research indicates that commitment to the organization is related to greater effort by employees and their willingness to continue to work for the organization [5]. Further, commitment to the organization is said to be fostered by support the employee gets from the organization, the supervisor, and the coworkers [6]. In the following sections, we review the literature on culture and its impact on organizational dynamics and the variables of the model to be tested.

1.1 Culture

Culture "consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values" [7]. Similarly, Hofstede's [8] definition of culture states that culture is the collective programming of thinking, attitudes, and skills that result in distinguishing the members of one group from another in the aspects of their beliefs, attitudes, and skills. Both definitions imply that culture shapes an individual's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in a certain way through collective learning.

1.1.1 Individualism and Collectivism

One of the cultural dimensions that is frequently discussed in relation to work attitudes and outcomes is individualistic and collectivistic orientations. Many researchers have claimed that individualistic and collectivistic orientations are most relevant to work attitudes and behaviors of employees [9, 10]. Individualism and collectivism are closely related to one's psychological processes which lead to the formation of one's attitudes [11].

Individualism occurs when "the self is defined as independent and autonomous from collectives. Personal goals are given priority over the goals of collectives" and collectivism is manifested when the self is "defined as an aspect of a collective; personal goals are subordinated to the goals of this collective" [12]. In other words, how we define culture as individualistic or collectivistic depends on how the self is construed. That is, self is viewed as independent in individualistic cultures, whereas self is viewed as interdependent in collectivistic cultures [10]. In addition, individualism and collectivism indicate the extent to which a society values social framework [4]. In an individualistic culture, the emphasis for social framework is weak; therefore, individuals are expected to take care of only themselves and their immediate family. On the other hand, in collectivistic culture, the emphasis for social framework is strong and, therefore, group values are promoted and each individual is expected to take care of larger in-group members.

Based on the above distinction between individualistic and collectivistic values, Korean culture is considered to have a strong collectivistic orientation [4]. Bae and Chung [3] note that a) Korean employees' autonomy is low, b) social ties and group cohesion, which are the characteristics of collectivistic cultures, are promoted within the culture, and c) working towards group goals is viewed as a correct behavior in Korea. Thus, it is only appropriate to use South Korean employees to verify if the research findings from an individualistic culture (i.e., North America) are replicated in Korea.

1.1.2 Individual Differences

While countries may be contrasted on the basis of individualism or collectivism, people within any given country may differ in the extent to which they endorse and/or abide by the norms of individualism or collectivism. Specifically, while Koreans as a group can be differentiated from citizens of Western countries on individualism and collectivism, research has shown that there are individual differences within the Korean society in collectivism and individualism [13].

1.2 Affective Commitment

One of the constructs frequently discussed in organizational behavior is organizational commitment which refers to the strength of personal attachment toward the organization [14]. While there are three bases of organizational commitment--*affective commitment*, *continuance commitment*, and *normative commitment* [15], the current study focuses on affective commitment as it is most sensitive to cultural values of individualism and collectivism [16]. Affective commitment is defined as, "the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue employment in the organization because they *want* to do so" [15].

1.3 Support and Affective Commitment

The amount of support available at the workplace plays an important role in employees' overall work experience. Three different sources of support are frequently discussed in the organizational context, and they include coworker support, supervisor support, and organizational support [17]. Coworker support refers to the degree to which coworkers provide emotional, instrumental, and informational support to the employees [18]. Similarly, supervisor supports indicates emotional, instrumental, and informational support that comes from supervisors [18]. Finally, organizational support refers to employees' perception about the degree to which the organization recognizes and **appreciates their** contributions and cares about their well-being [19].

The relationship between perceived support at work and employee commitment is explained by social exchange theory. According to Blau [20], social exchange is based on a quid pro quo, which means 'this for that.' Thus, it is more likely that a person will provide support to the entity that provides support to the individual [21]. For example, if employees feel their supervisor is providing support to them, they would work for the supervisor's benefit, and this way, the supervisor would provide more support to the employees. Similarly, employees form their perceptions on how much the organization values their contributions and care about their well-being and respond to it with job attitudes and/or organizational behaviors that facilitate organizational success [22].

Previous literature has indicated a strong and positive relationship between employees' perceived support and affective commitment [22, 23]. For example, **Pack et al. [23]** found

that among student employees in a recreational sport department in a large university, perceived organizational support explained 46.2% of the variance in affective commitment.

Coworker support and supervisor support have also been found to be positively correlated with affective commitment [24, 25, 9]. Ahmad and Bakar [24] showed that supervisor support for training explained 52% of the variance in affective commitment among Malaysian workers. In addition, Ko et al. [25] found that supervisor support and coworker support were significantly and positively associated with employees' affective commitment. Similarly, Lee and Gao [9] found that coworker support and supervisor support both were positively associated with affective commitment among Korean employees. Based on the above, we propose the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1. Perceived support available at workplace will be positively related to Korean fitness club employees' affective commitment to the organization.

1.4 Affective Commitment and Work Outcomes

While many work related outcomes have been found to be closely associated with affective commitment such as absenteeism, turnover intention, job performance, work effort, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior, the current study included work effort and intention to leave as outcome variables of affective commitment. The positive links between affective commitment and work effort have been well established in the previous literature [9, 15]. For example, Lee and Gao [9] conducted a study on Korean retail employees about antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment and found that employees' level of affective commitment was strongly associated with work effort. The notion is that employees' emotional attachment to the organization impels them to work harder towards achieving the organization's goals. Similarly, if employees have high feelings of obligation to the organization, they are likely to exert more effort in their work with a view to repaying what they owe. Studies also have shown that intention to stick with the organization is a direct outcome of affective commitment [9, 26, 27]. For instance, Turner et al.'s [27] study found that desire to stay in the organization among student employees in a university recreational sport department increased as the level of affective commitment increased. That is, individuals who are highly committed to the organization intend to continue their employment with the organization. In line with the above, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2. Affective commitment will be positively related to Korean fitness club employees' work effort.

Hypothesis 3. Affective commitment will be negatively related to Korean fitness club employees' intention to leave the organization.

1.5 Collectivism as a Moderator

Regarding the cultural impact on the relationship between affective commitment and its behavioral outcomes, no empirical studies have been conducted to look at the relationship. However, there is indirect evidence to suggest that the relationships between affective commitment and behavioral outcomes would be stronger for those who are high in collectivistic value [28]. For example, employees in collectivistic cultures tend to perceive work effort as part of their job definition because collectivistic cultures put emphasis on group goals [29].

This can be also explained by Confucianism which influenced the Korean culture and which emphasizes hard work as correct behavior [30]. Therefore, employees in collectivistic cultures tend to internalize these cultural values and perceive work as very important in their lives and perceive working toward group goals as correct behavior [3]. Therefore, work attitude is considered a stronger outcome of affective commitment for those who hold high collectivistic orientation. In fact, Ramamoorthy et al. [31] found that work effort was much higher in a collectivistic country than in an individualistic country.

As noted, while Koreans as a group can be differentiated from citizens of Western countries on individualism and collectivism, there are also individual differences within the Korean society in terms of collectivism and individualism [13]. Accordingly, we investigated the moderating effects of individual differences in collectivism on the relationships among perceived support on the one hand and affective commitment and intention to leave on the other. The foregoing discussion suggests the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4. Collectivism will moderate the relationship between affective commitment and work attitude.

Hypothesis 5. Collectivism will moderate the relationship between affective commitment and intention to leave the organization.

In summary, the purpose of the current study was to (a) statistically examine the structural relationships among the latent constructs (as shown in Figure 1) among Korean fitness club employees, and (b) to examine the moderating effect of collectivism in the relationships between affective commitment and work outcomes.

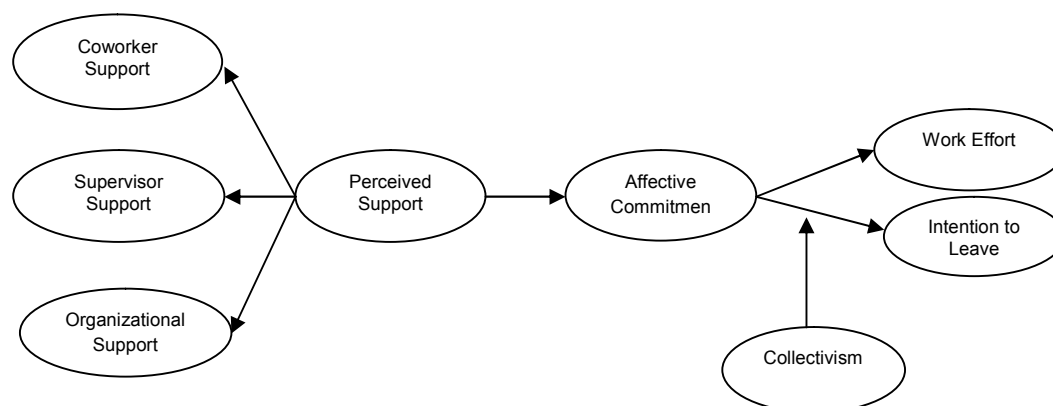


Fig. 1. Proposed model of support, affective commitment, work outcomes, and collectivism

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Participants

The target sample for the current study was Korean fitness club employees who hold various positions within the clubs. These positions include instructors, trainers, and administrative staff. Of the 376 Korean fitness employees recruited to participate in the study, 351 responded to the questionnaire representing 93.4% response rate. Of these responses, 330 were usable. The gender composition of the sample was 197 males (60.4%) and 129

females (39.6%). The majority of the participants were between the ages of 21 and 40 years. There were 257 full time employees (78.8%) and 69 part-time employees (21.2%). In addition, 196 (60.7%) of the respondents worked for profit organizations, and 127 (39.3%) of the respondents worked for non-profit organizations.

2.2 Instrument

The questionnaire included three sections: informed consent, demographic information, and 36 items that measured the constructs of the proposed model. Coworker support was measured by Woo and Chelladurai's [6] 4-item scale modified from Ducharme and Martin's (2000) 10-item scale. Supervisor support was measured by four items adopted from Anderson, Coffey, and Byerly's [32] 6-item scale. Organizational support was measured by eight items from Eisenberger et al.'s [19] 36-item scale. Affective commitment was measured by four items from Meyer et al.'s [33] affective commitment scale. Work effort was measured by Chang's [34] 3-item scale. Intention to leave was measured by three items adopted from Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth [35]. Finally Collectivism was measured by eight items adopted from Lam, Chen, and Schaubroeck's [36] scale, which included two dimensions of collectivism—vertical collectivism where people see themselves as interdependent but unequal, and horizontal collectivism where people see themselves as interdependent as well as equal. Some of the items in the original scales were not included in the current study due to their low factor loadings on the constructs in the previous studies. Response format for all items was a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree).

2.3 Procedure

As the original scales were written in English, translation of the questionnaire was necessary. Using the guidelines recommended by a number of researchers [4, 37], the survey instrument was translated into Korean by three bilingual individuals independently. After translating the English version into the Korean language, the three bilingual experts compared their individual translations. They discussed the discrepancies in the meanings of items and came up with one consensus version of the scales. Three other bilingual experts translated the consensus Korean version of the scale back to English. The authors compared the three back-translated scales with the original English version. As there were no differences in meanings between the original scales and the back translated scales, the Korean version of the questionnaire was administered to the Korean fitness club employees.

2.4 Data Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to verify if the proposed measurement model fit the data well. The average variance extracted (AVE) values were also estimated to measure construct reliability of the scales. AVE values greater than .50 are assumed to have good construct reliability [38]. In addition, the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of each subscale was calculated using SPSS 17.0. According to Nunnally and Bernstein [39], alpha coefficients greater than .70 are considered to be adequate in the field of social science. Discriminant validity of each construct was examined by looking at the correlations between the constructs. Correlations between constructs should not exceed .85 in order for the constructs to have discriminant validity [40]. However, according to Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black [41], correlations higher than .85 are acceptable if the constructs have been theoretically supported to be distinct from each other.

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was performed to test the proposed relationships among the constructs. AMOS provides Normed Fit Index (NFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI),

Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and chi-square value divided by degrees of freedom. According to Hair et al., [41], values greater than .90 for NFI, IFI, and CFI indicate a close fit. Yet, Cheung and Rensvold [42] state that the guideline of .90 must be used with caution as the goodness of fit indices are likely to be depressed as a function of model complexity. However, researchers do agree that RMSEA is the only goodness-of-fit index (GFI) that is not influenced by the number of items in each subscale and the number of factors in the measurement model [42, 43]. Therefore, RMSEA value was used to determine the model fit in this study. RMSEA values less than .06 indicate close fit of the model whereas values greater than .06 and less than .08 indicates a reasonable fit [44]. Values greater than .10 indicates a poor fit and the model should not be considered [42].

Finally, following Baron and Kenny's [45] guideline, the moderating effect of collectivism on the relationships between the constructs was examined using regression analyses. According to Baron and Kenny [45], moderating effect can be detected by examining the relationships between predictor and outcome variable, between moderator and outcome variable, and between the interaction of predictor and moderator on outcome variables.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Measurement Model

In the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the six factors and 34 items, the loadings of two of the items from the horizontal dimension of collectivism were low. As we were left with only two items to measure that dimension, we eliminated that dimension altogether from further analyses. The remaining six factors and 30 items, their loadings, alpha coefficients, and AVEs are presented in Table 1. Results shown in Table 1 indicate a reasonably fitting model (RMSEA = .069; CI = .064-.075; $p_{\text{close}} < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 990.43/384 = 2.579$, NFI = .825, IFI = .885, CFI = .884). The AVE values were over the recommended value of .50 [38] with three exceptions. Supervisor Support (.47), Organizational Support (.46), and Collectivism (.40) were slightly lower than the recommended value. However, following other researchers [46], these constructs were retained for further analyses. The alpha coefficients were good ranging from .71 to .85 for a mean of .80. The means, standard deviations, and correlations among the constructs are displayed in Table 2.

Table 1. Items, Factor Loadings (β), Cronbach's Alpha (α), and Average Variance Explained (AVE) Values for the Modified Subscales

Factor and Item	β	AVE	α
Coworker Support		.51	.80
My coworkers really care about me	.79		
I feel close to my coworkers	.80		
My coworkers take a personal interest in me.	.61		
My coworkers are helpful in getting job done	.65		
Supervisor Support		.47	.78
My supervisor is supportive when I have a work problem.	.71		
My supervisor is understanding when I talk about personal or family issues that affect my work	.63		
I feel comfortable bringing up personal or family issues with my supervisor	.67		
My supervisor really cares about the effects that work demands have on my personal and family life	.72		
Organizational Support		.46	.86

The organization values my contribution to its well-being	.69		
The organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me	.65		
The organization really cares about my well-being	.57		
Even if I did the best job possible, the organization would fail to notice	.56		
Help is available from the organization when I have a problem	.75		
The organization cares about my general satisfaction at work	.77		
The organization shows very little concern for me	.62		
The organization is willing to help me when I need a special favor	.75		
Affective Commitment		.60	.85
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization	.80		
I do not feel emotionally attached to this organization	.80		
I do not feel like part of the family at my organization	.83		
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	.70		
Work Effort		.53	.77
I try to work as hard as possible	.74		
I intentionally expend a great deal of effort in carrying out the job	.73		
I am willing to exert a high level of work effort	.70		
Intention to Leave		.64	.83
I often think about leaving this organization	.75		
I am actively searching for an alternative to this organization	.80		
As soon as it is possible, I will leave the organization	.85		
Collectivism		.40	.71
If a coworker gets a prize, I would feel proud	.66		
The well-being of my coworkers is important to me	.70		
To me, pleasure is spending time with others	.48		
I feel good when I cooperate with others	.67		

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Subscales

	M	SD	SS	CS	OS	AC	WE	IL	COL
CS	5.10	.98		1					
SS	4.82	1.06	1	.78**					
OS	4.48	1.02	.91**	.69**	1				
AC	4.90	1.27	.76**	.73**	.86**	1			
WE	5.27	.94	.54**	.73**	.50**	.65**	1		
IL	3.04	1.44	-.60**	-.49**	-.66**	-.81**	-.50**	1	
COL	5.39	.89	.77**	.93**	.68**	.70**	.90**	-.48**	1

* Significant at .05 level ** Significant at .001 level

Note. CW = Coworker Support; SS = Supervisor Support; OS = Organizational Support; AC = Affective Commitment; WE = Work Effort; IL = Intention to Leave; COL = Collectivism.

3.2 Structural Model

The results of SEM showed that the model fit reasonably well (RMSEA = .078; CI = .072-.084; $p_{\text{close}} < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 877.85/293 = 2.996$, NFI = .820, IFI = .872, CFI = .871). Unstandardized and standardized regression weights for structural model are presented in Table 3. As hypothesized, Perceived Support had a significant and positive impact on Affective Commitment, and Affective Commitment had a significant and positive influence on Work Effort. In addition, Affective Commitment significantly and negatively influenced Intention to Leave. Perceived Support explained 76% of variance in Affective Commitment. Affective Commitment, together with Perceived Support explained 42.6% of variance in

Work Effort. Finally, Affective Commitment explained 62.9% of variance in Intention to Leave.

Table 3. Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Weights

	Unstandardized Regression Weight	Standardized Regression Weight	S.E.	C.R.	<i>p</i>
Affective Commitment ← Perceived Support	1.655	.872	.173	9.542	.000
Work Effort ← Affective Commitment	.418	.653	.046	9.114	.000
Intention to Leave ← Affective Commitment	-.825	-.793	.072	-11.415	.000

3.3 Moderating Effects of Collectivism

The predictor variable of Affective Commitment was significantly correlated with the dependent variable of Work Effort ($r = .65$; $p < .001$) and the moderator variable of Collectivism was also significantly associated with Work Effort ($r = .90$; $p < .001$). To test for the moderating effect of Collectivism, Affective Commitment, Collectivism, and the interaction term of Affective Commitment and Collectivism were entered in that order in successive steps of a regression analysis.

Regarding Intention to Leave, the predictor variable of Affective Commitment was significantly and negatively related to the dependent variable of Intention to leave ($r = -.81$; $p < .001$) and the moderator variable of Collectivism was also significantly and negatively related to the dependent variable of Intention to Leave ($r = -.48$; $p < .001$). Once again, to test the moderating effect, Affective commitment, Collectivism, and the interaction term of Affective Commitment and Collectivism were entered in that order in successive steps of a regression analysis.

As shown in Table 4, the moderating effect of Collectivism was significant only in the relationship between Affective Commitment and Work Effort ($\beta = -1.074$; $p = .002$) explaining 1.5% of additional variance. The nature of the interaction (shown in Figure 2) was such that when affective commitment was high, those high on collectivism exerted more work effort than those with low collectivism. However, when affective commitment was low, those high on collectivism exerted much more work effort than those with low collectivism.

Table 4. Moderating Effect of Collectivism

Regression of Work Effort on Collectivism and Affective Commitment								
Step	Variable Entered	R^2	Adjusted R^2	ΔR^2	ΔR^2 Sig	b	β^a	Sig
1	Affective Commitment (AC)	.279	.277	.279	.000	.728	.984	.000
2	Collectivism (C)	.461	.458	.182	.000	1.019	.966	.000
3	ACXC	.477	.472	.015	.002	-.101	-1.074	.002
Regression of Intention to Leave on Collectivism and Affective Commitment								
1	Affective Commitment (AC)	.483	.481	.483	.000	-.628	-.554	.024
2	Collectivism (C)	.483	.480	.001	.557	.198	.122	.421
3	ACXC	.484	.479	.001	.514	-.032	-.225	.514

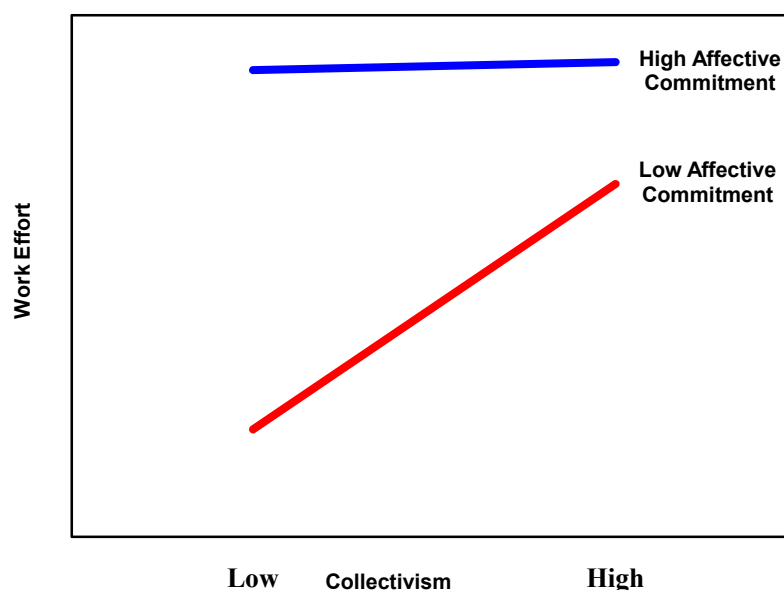


Fig. 2. Nature of Interaction

4. Discussion

The most important finding of the study is that the proposed model drawn from the research in the North American context is applicable to Korean fitness club employees. First, as in the case of American employees [22, 23], when Korean fitness club employees felt they were receiving support from coworker, supervisor, and/or organization, they were more affectively committed to the organization. In addition, as expected, employees with high level of affective commitment were more likely to put forth more effort in their work and more willing to stay with the organization. Second, the proposed model was drawn from research carried out with employees of conventional business [25] was found to be applicable to the fitness industry workers also. Thus, our findings show that the dynamics of the interplay of perceived support and employee reactions to such support is similar across national/cultural boundaries and across various industries.

As noted, these relationships can be explained by social exchange theory [20]. Those fitness employees who perceive that they are receiving support at workplace reciprocate the favorable treatment through positive work attitude (i.e., increased affective commitment) and work behaviors (greater work effort and decreased intention to leave the organization). In addition, as stated earlier, this reciprocation occurs voluntarily.

The finding that the relationship between affective commitment and work effort was moderated by collectivism can be explained by the influence of Confucianism on Korean culture [9]. As stated earlier, Confucianism puts emphasis on hard work as the correct form of behavior in society [30]. However, it must be noted that the effect size of the moderating effect was relatively small (1.5%). This indicates that although statistical significance of the moderating effect was found, the practical significance of the difference is not meaningful.

The present study adds to the existing literature in two ways. First, this is the first study to the authors' knowledge that addresses the effects of perceived support in organizations in

the fitness industry, especially in the Asian context. Second, the study demonstrates that the dynamics of the interplay of perceived support, affective commitment to the organization, and intention to leave are the same in Korea as found in the North American business context [47]. This finding is significant because it contradicts the view that many of the theories that we use in the United States are culturally biased and may not be applicable in outside North American setting [4].

One explanation for the convergence of models pertaining to the variables of the study could be that most of the organizations we studied were profit-oriented businesses just like the businesses enterprises in the North American context. In fact, in the current data, the majority of the participants (60.7% Koreans) were employees of for-profit fitness clubs. It has been suggested that the processes of industrialization [48] and the performance requirements of industrialization impose certain common practices on the part of management and certain attitudes and behaviors on the part of employees [48]. From this perspective, managers of fitness clubs are expected to conform to certain common practices irrespective of the cultural context they are located in. By the same token and more germane to the present study, employees of fitness clubs from different cultural contexts are expected to have similar attitudes and react to organizational practices in similar ways. The findings of the present study reinforce this view.

Another explanation for the attitudes and behaviors of Korean fitness industry workers being similar to those of American workers stems from the process of globalization. That is, even as globalization makes management practices similar across cultural borders, it is also conceivable that even the cultural norms and beliefs and the behaviors thereof are also globalized. For example, Korea went through a major evolution of human resource management practices over the years [20]. This shift in management paradigm adapted from the US changed human resource management practices from a seniority-based to a performance-based and market like relationships. In addition, there is evidence for the infusion of foreign cultures into local cultures. For instance, the American culture of competition and consumption are spreading across the globe. More specifically, it has been shown that organizational cultures of foreign origin have a stronger effect than local cultures [49].

The current study also has several practical implications. First of all, the findings provide insights on what the managers in the fitness industry need to focus on in order to positively influence employees' work behaviors. The results suggest that managers need to increase employees' affective commitment in order to increase employees' work effort and decrease their turnover intention. Increasing employees' work effort is crucial in service organizations because it directly fosters customer satisfaction and re-purchase intentions [50]. As a result, the amount of effort the employees put forth will determine employees' service quality and therefore impact organizational performance. In addition, because turnover rate is quite high in fitness industry organizations [23], it is important to reduce employee turnover to increase organizational effectiveness. According to Boshoff and Allen [51], voluntary turnover has a detrimental impact on organizational performance because this form of turnover is unexpected, and therefore, disrupts the organization's operations. Therefore, fitness club managers should focus on increasing employees' work effort and decreasing intention to leave by increasing employees' affective commitment. The results of the current study also suggest that one of the most effective ways to increase affective commitment in the fitness club setting is through facilitating support from several sources in the workplace.

The current study has several limitations. First of all, the samples for the study were not randomly selected. Therefore, the findings of the study may not be generalized beyond the study groups. Secondly, the scale for collectivism also yielded somewhat low AVE indicating

that the items do not represent the construct well. Lastly, as the analysis used in the study is structural equation modeling which is based on the correlation technique, causation of the relationships proposed cannot be established.

Finally, the results of the current study point to many future studies. First, future studies should refine the collectivism scale to measure the construct properly. Secondly, future studies should investigate intra cultural difference using multiple-group analysis. In addition, previous studies have shown that the relationships between antecedents and organizational commitment and the relationships between organizational commitment and consequences of it differ based on occupations [52]. Following these studies, future studies may compare the applicability of the proposed model in different occupations within sports such as fitness employees, coaches, sport administrators, and so on.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study found that the proposed model drawn from the research in the North American context is applicable to Korean fitness club employees. It was demonstrated that perceived support provided by three sources (i.e., coworker, supervisor, and organization) was strongly associated with the employees' level of affective commitment to the organization in a Korean fitness club setting. In addition, affective commitment was highly and positively correlated with work effort, and highly and negatively correlated with intention to leave the organization. Thus, our findings show that the dynamics of the interplay of perceived support and employee reactions to such support is similar across national/cultural boundaries and across various industries. Furthermore, the current study found that the relationship between affective commitment and work effort was moderated by collectivism.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Boyun Woo designed the study, wrote the literature review, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the results and discussion, and prepared the manuscript. Packianathan Chelladurai contributed to discussion and edited the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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