

# **Can organizational commitment be experienced by individuals pursuing contemporary career paths?**

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**CAN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT BE EXPERIENCED BY INDIVIDUALS  
PURSUING CONTEMPORARY CAREER PATHS?**

**ABSTRACT**

This study attempts to analyze the relation between the underlying dimensions of protean (self direction and values driven) and boundaryless (boundaryless mindset and organizational mobility preference) career attitudes (Briscoe et al., 2006) and organizational commitment, within today's unstable and uncertain business scenario. Drawing on a sample of 150 professionals, research results suggest that self-direction in managing one's own career and vocational development and embracing a boundaryless mindset contribute positively and significantly to individuals' emotional attachment to their organizations. Moreover, organizational mobility preference is significant in predicting the commitment mindset associated with the perceived cost of leaving the organization. Furthermore, the study suggests some future research lines that could draw more light upon the hypothesized relationships.

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, a growing consensus recognizes that traditional orderly and hierarchical careers are increasingly losing ground to new career conceptualizations, such as boundaryless and protean perspectives, which better capture the realities of a changing scenario (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Bridges, 1995; Golzen & Garner, 1990; Handy, 1994; Herriot & Pemberton, 1995; Waterman, Waterman, & Collard, 1994). These two perspectives suggest that the individuals become the sculptors of their own careers (Bell & Staw, 1989), which are less bounded to a single employment setting (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996).

Researchers have argued that new realities of the current economy, among which changes in psychological contracts and a diminished sense of job security, require a further re-examination of the organizational commitment concept (Baruch, 1998), as commitment cannot be viewed in the same way as it was when employees could expect to spend their entire career with a single company (Meyer, Allen, & Topolnytsky, 1998) While under the relational contract, workers exchanged loyalty and commitment for job security, under the transactional contract, workers exchange performance for continuous learning, marketability and future employability (Mirvis & Hall, 1996; Rousseau, 1989; Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1995). It has been noted that organizational commitment is losing relevance, in the favor of career commitment and job satisfaction, as individuals pursue more emotionally satisfying lives through the discover of their *vocatus* (Gratton & Ghoshal, 2003). As organizations can no longer promise life-time employment and individuals increasingly experience inter-organizational mobility, is organizational commitment no longer related to new career orientations?

This study attempts to examine the extent to which protean and boundaryless career attitudes, encompassing self-direction, predisposition to make choices based on personal

values, openness to the exterior and individual inclination to organizational mobility (Briscoe, Hall, & DeMuth, 2006) affect organizational commitment mindsets reflecting desire (affective commitment) and perceived cost of leaving (continuance commitment). The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: section 2 provides a global overview upon the theoretical framework, by defining the key concepts used in this study that will further enable the formulation of the research hypotheses, in section 3. Section 4 highlights the method: the sample characteristics, data collection, and the scales used for the measurement of the variables. Section 5 presents the research results, and finally section 6 draws some conclusions, presents the main limitations and recommends future research lines to overcome these limitations.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Boundaryless and protean careers and their corresponding attitudes**

Until recently, the majority of the empirical research on careers presumed environmental stability, emphasizing the objective perspective on careers that prevailed over the subjective one (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). In this context, traditional career models were conceived as linear progression in one or two companies and evolving through a series of interconnected stages for climbing the organizational ladder (Levinson, 1978; Super, 1957). However, during the last decades, researchers (Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1999; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 2002; Sullivan, 1999; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006) have argued that in response to substantial changes induced by today's unstable and hypercompetitive knowledge driven context, careers increasingly become more boundaryless (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) and individuals develop protean mindsets (Hall, 1976, 2002) for successfully navigating the current business scenario. As opposed to the paternalistic perspective that characterized

traditional careers, boundaryless and protean orientations emphasize the active role of the individual in managing his own career and professional development, for enhancing opportunities for continuous learning, future marketability and psychologically meaningful work.

A boundaryless career is viewed as "independent from, rather than dependent on, traditional career arrangements" (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996:6), as it transcends the boundaries of a single employment setting. In spite of the fact that some authors have approached boundaryless careers uniquely considering physical changes in work arrangements (Jones, 1996; Saxenian, 1996), Sullivan and Arthur (2006) emphasize the complexity of the boundaryless career concept and thus the need of viewing mobility as measured along two continua (physical and psychological), in order to fully capture the meaning of career boundarylessness. In an extensive review of the empirical research conducted on the changing nature of careers, Sullivan (1999) asserted that the majority of studies examined mobility across physical boundaries, while neglecting psychological mobility and its relationship with physical mobility. In that sense, the physical mobility prevailed over the psychological one mainly due to the difficulty arisen when measuring individuals' perceptions of their capacity to make transitions (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006).

Recognizing that a boundaryless career attitude is primarily psychological, Briscoe, Hall and DeMuth (2006) provided empirical evidence, supporting for the existence of two boundaryless career attitudes: boundaryless mindset (BM) and organizational mobility preference (OMP). Briscoe et al. (2006) defined a boundaryless mindset as a general attitude of transcending organizational boundaries, by feeling comfortable in interacting with people from different organizations and seeking out opportunities for experiencing new situations that result beneficial for the individual (e.g. providing the opportunity to enhance knowledge

and skills). Organizational mobility preference, on the other hand, refers to the strength of interest in remaining with a single or multiple employer(s) (Briscoe *et al.*, 2006). Thus, it is concerned with one's preference for job security, predictability and long-term employment arrangements.

Researchers and practitioners have argued that successful navigation of the current scenario requires the development of a distinct mindset, called protean orientation (Hall, 1976, 2002; Hall, 2004). Within the context of a protean career, individuals, rather than their employing organizations, become the architects of their own careers, development and vocational destiny. This orientation represents an internally driven and self-directed perspective in managing one's career that reflects values such as freedom and adaptability (Hall, 1976, 2002). Similarly, a protean career was described as a contract with oneself, rather than with the organization, as individuals take active responsibility in managing their careers and transforming their career path (Baruch, 2004). Thus, the hallmarks of a protean orientation are: freedom and growth, professional commitment, the attainment of psychological success, through the pursuit of meaningful work and the discovery of a "calling" (Hall, 2004; Hall & Chandler, 2005). Moreover, it has been argued that taking responsibility for managing one's career development can deliver positive psychological outcomes, including career and life satisfaction, enhanced self-efficacy and well-being, as well as extrinsic career progression if desired career outcomes are achieved (Crant, 2000; King, 2004; Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001).

Briscoe *et al.* (2006) identified two protean-career relevant attitudes: self-directed career attitudes (SD) and values-driven predispositions (VD), and developed scales for measuring them. As they remarked, a self-directed person takes an independent and proactive role in managing his or her vocational behavior, while individuals who hold values-driven

attitudes rely on their own values, instead of borrowing external standards, when making career choices.

The main focus of this study is to explore the relationship between boundaryless and protean career attitudes and individuals' affective and continuance commitment to their employing organizations. Establishing a relationship between protean and boundaryless career attitudes and organizational commitment would enable determining behavioral consequences of the different career attitudes, as commitment has been identified as one of the most salient predictors of turnover, organizational citizenship behavior, performance and attendance (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, & Jackson, 1989; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982a; Shore & Wayne, 1993). Moreover, in a context in which organizations are striving for winning the war for talent, fostering organizational commitment of key employees is essential for gaining and sustaining competitive advantages.

### **Organizational commitment**

Organizational commitment has been defined as “a force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to one or more targets” (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001:301). It has been argued that this force is experienced as a mindset that can take different forms, thus reflecting distinguishable components of the underlying commitment construct. Meyer and Allen (1991) developed a multidimensional model of organizational commitment, including three different mindsets: desire to remain in the organization (affective commitment), obligation to remain (normative commitment) and perceived cost of leaving (continuance commitment). This model has been subjected to the greatest empirical scrutiny and has arguably received greatest support (see Meyer et al. (1997) and Meyer et al. (2002) for reviews). From among these components, affective commitment (AC) and continuance

commitment (CC) were chosen as the focus of this study because they are most distinguishable from each other (Meyer et al., 2002). Normative commitment (NC) has been left aside because affective and normative commitments have not been as empirically differentiated as theoretically expected (Bergman, 2006). A recent meta-analysis (Meyer et al., 2002) found that affective and normative commitment are so highly correlated that their distinguishability is in question. These two components were found to be correlated at 0.63, which means that a substantial value of the variance (nearly 40%) in one is explained by the other. Therefore, further normative commitment conceptualization and scale development and validation are needed (Bergman, 2006).

As reflected in the organizational commitment definition, this concept makes reference to a binding force that induces behavior. Both Mathieu and Zajac (1990)'s meta-analysis and Meyer et al. (2002)'s subsequent research examined the most significant extant empirical research that explored and tested the consequences of organizational commitment. Among these consequences, it is important to highlight the extant literature related to employees' turnover (Gellatly, Meyer, & Luchak, 2006; Luchak & Gellatly, 2007; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982b) and/or turnover cognitions/intention to leave, which has been analyzed as a proxy. Moreover, absenteeism (Mowday et al., 1982b), job performance (Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 1996; Meyer et al., 1989; Somers & Birnbaum, 1998), organizational citizenship behavior (Gellatly *et al.*, 2006; Shore & Wayne, 1993), employee's health and well-being (Begley & Czajka, 1993; Reilly, 1994; Siu, 2003), or employee lateness (Koslowsky, Sagie, Krausz, & Singer, 1997) have also been identified as salient consequences of employees' organizational commitment.

## **PROTEAN AND BOUNDARYLESS CAREER ATTITUDES AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

Drawing on the regulatory focus theory, this section attempts to tackle the existence of a potential relationship between boundaryless and protean career attitudes and organizational commitment. Regulatory focus theory proposes that self-regulation in relation with strong ideals (i.e. what one wants to be) versus strong oughts (i.e. what other think one should be) differs in regulatory focus. Ideal self-regulation involves a promotion focus, concerned with advancement, growth and accomplishments, whereas ought self-regulation involves a prevention focus, concerned with security and safety (Higgins, 1998).

Moreover, regulatory focus influences individuals' perceptions about their goals and the implications this has for goal-oriented behavior (Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004). Individuals with a promotion focus see themselves as working towards the attainment of their ideals, thus experiencing eagerness to attain advances and gains. On the contrary, individuals with a prevention focus are attempting to fulfill their obligations, and consequently they experience a state of vigilance to assure safety and non-losses. Therefore, Higgins (1998) argued that individuals with a strong prevention focus seek to satisfy minimum requirements for fulfillment, whereas those with a promotion focus seek to achieve the maximum level of accomplishment. In addition, building on the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), Meyer et al. (2004) proposed that on the one hand, employees with a promotion focus view their behavior as more internally driven, experiencing intrinsic, identified and integrated regulation. On the other hand, those experiencing a prevention focus perceive their behavior as more externally driven (external or introjected regulation).

Building on the concept of self-regulation and regulatory focus theory, Meyer et al. (2004) suggested that commitment should exert a direct effect on goal regulation, and the

different forms of commitment should have a significant impact on the corresponding forms of regulation. Subsequently, they argued that employees with a stronger affective commitment (AC) experience greater intrinsic motivation, more autonomous forms of external regulation and a stronger promotion focus.

Individuals who are self-directed in adapting to the performance and learning demands of their careers perceive their behavior as internally driven, reflecting “the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise their capacities, to explore and to learn” (Ryan & Deci, 2000: 70). Moreover, they are expected to exhibit a promotion focus, as they proactively manage their career development and thus see themselves as working toward the attainment of their ideals. Therefore, a self-directed attitude in career management is expected to be positively related with affective commitment.

The mindset associated with continuance commitment (CC) is very different from the psychological state associated with AC. CC was described as a cost-based form of commitment that is based on one’s belief that leaving the relationship would incur high personal sacrifices and / or available alternatives are limited or inexistent (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Instead of being motivated by a desire to remain, employees with higher levels of CC stay in order to minimize losses; in effect they stay because they believe they have little choice. Meyer et al. (2004) proposed that individuals with stronger continuance commitment experience greater external regulation (feel that their choices are controlled) and a stronger prevention focus. In the light of these considerations, we expect that:

*H1: There is a positive relationship between self-direction in career management and affective commitment.*

*H2: There is a negative relationship between self-direction in career management and continuance commitment.*

With regard to values-driven predispositions, we expect that a person who is not very clear on his or her values is more inclined to accept and adopt organizational values and for this reason he or she might be likely to develop affective bonds with the employing organization or in other words, he or she is expected to experience moderated to high levels of affective commitment. In addition, based on the regulatory focus theory, it can be asserted that high values-driven individuals experience greater external regulation and a stronger promotion focus, as they perceive themselves as working towards the attainment of their ideals. Therefore, we expect that:

*H3: There is a positive relationship between values-driven predispositions and affective commitment.*

*H4: There is a negative relationship between values-driven predispositions and continuance commitment.*

A boundaryless mindset is described as an opening attitude to the exterior, involving comfortableness and enthusiasm about creating and sustaining active relationships across organizational boundaries. It refers to enjoying job assignments that require working with people beyond the department or outside the organization, but also to a general attitude of feeling energized in new experiences and situations (Briscoe et al., 2006). By promoting and sustaining active relationships with people from different departments of the organization, individuals are likely to develop affective bonds with employees within the same organization, as they create extensive internal networks. Nevertheless, this openness to the exterior may help those uncovering assorted options (Briscoe et al., 2006). Based on these considerations, we expect that:

*H5: There is a positive relationship between holding a boundaryless mindset and affective commitment.*

*H6: There is a negative relationship between holding a boundaryless mindset and continuance commitment*

The second boundaryless career attitude makes reference to the inclination of the individual towards physical mobility. In that sense, organizational mobility preference describes individual's strength of interest of remaining with a single or multiple employer(s). A person high on such an organizational mobility attitude "would be comfortable with or even prefer a career played out across several employers" (Briscoe et al., 2006: 31). Individuals experiencing organizational mobility preference are not inclined towards the predictability that comes with working continuously for the same organization and do not prefer to stay in a company they are familiar with instead of looking for employment opportunities elsewhere (Briscoe et al., 2006). Therefore, they are not expected to experience continuance commitment that primarily rises out of necessity, due to side-bets or to the perceived scarcity of available opportunities elsewhere. Similarly, individuals with a low preference towards organizational mobility are more risk-averse and likely to experience a strong prevention focus, focused on security and safety, which is positively related with high continuance commitment (Meyer et al., 2004). Their predisposition to boundary-crossing may prevent these individuals to develop affective bonds with their current organization, and therefore we expect that:

*H7: There is a negative relationship between organizational mobility preference and affective commitment.*

*H8: There is a negative relationship between organizational mobility preference and continuance commitment.*

## SAMPLE AND METHODS

Research data were collected using a web-based survey. The questionnaire was sent to 434 graduate and post-graduate distance learning students. An introductory letter of invitation was sent by email to the study participants. This invitation letter explained the purpose and significance of the study, emphasized voluntary participation and anonymity, and provided a hyperlink that took the participants to the survey website. The participants were asked to visit the survey website to fill out the questionnaire. Some days later, a postcard reminder was sent to the emailing addresses of the participants. The postcard reminded potential participants of the survey and encouraged them to participate in the study by using the hyperlink provided in the postcard reminder. Finally, 167 surveys were submitted by the respondents, representing a response rate of 38.48%. After handling the missing data, 150 usable entries had been obtained.

The respondents (58.00% women and 42.00% men) were anonymous and they should have been working, as the questionnaire items were related to their current employment experience. The average age of the respondents was 30.95 years old. As regards the organizational size, most of them (44.00%) were working for small companies, whereas only a 13.33% were working in middle size companies and a significant percentage (42.67%) were employees of large companies. The average professional experience was 9.91 years ( $SD = 6.86$ ), with an average organizational tenure of 5.20 years ( $SD=5.44$ ).

Protean career attitudes (self-direction in career management and values-driven predispositions) were measured using Briscoe et al. (2006)'s 8-item scale (sample item: "*I am responsible for my success or failure in my career*") and 6-item scale respectively (sample item: "*I navigate my own career based on my personal priorities, as opposed to my*

*employer's priorities*”). As far as boundaryless career attitudes are concerned, they were also assessed based on Briscoe et al. (2006)'s measures, as follows: an 8-item scale was used to assess boundaryless mindset (sample item: *“I seek job assignments that allow me to learn something new”*) and a 5-item scale to measure organizational mobility preference (sample item: *“I like the predictability that comes from working continuously for the same organization”*).

The two organizational commitment mindsets that were chosen as the focus of this study were measured using Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993)'s 6-items affective commitment ( $\alpha$ : 0.904; sample item: *“This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me”*) and respectively continuance commitment scales ( $\alpha$ : 0.809; sample item: *“Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire”*).

Information on demographic and background characteristics was collected to gain a deeper understanding of the composition of the sample. Demographic and background characteristics that were considered relevant to the present study included: age, gender, sector, position, education level, years of professional experience, organizational tenure, and total number of employing organizations.

Data of this research was collected by means of a questionnaire sent to the sample study. As mentioned above, the original questionnaire items were constructed in English. Because the general language of the target population was Spanish, the questionnaire had to be translated into this language. To ensure the accuracy of the translation, we followed a back-translation procedure (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Moreover, five cognitive interviews were conducted in order to ensure an accurate interpretation of the questionnaire items, as this technique allows understanding how respondents perceive and interpret questions, and to

identify potential problems that may arise in prospective survey questionnaires (Drennan, 2003). Cognitive interviews permitted us interpreting which items are beyond the theoretical framework of the constructs to be analyzed (Collins, 2003; Jobe & Mingay, 1989). By means of verbal probing and thinking aloud (Drennan, 2003; Williamson, Ranyard, & Cuthbert, 2000) participants were asked to verbalize their interpretation of items and to paraphrase and/or comment on the wording of items in an effort to identify ambiguous or poorly worded questions. Once collected the data, they were processed following Miles and Huberman (1994)'s suggestions. More specifically, the interviewees were asked to comment on the clarity and readability of the each item by asserting why they assessed it with a certain punctuation, and which parts of the items they found difficult to answer or interpret. Based on their comments minor stylistic and semantic changes were made.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

### **Test of reliability and validity**

The validity and reliability of the constructs of interest were tested using factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha coefficient, respectively. The 14 items comprising the protean career attitudes scales and the 13 forming the boundaryless career attitudes scales were factor analyzed using principal component analysis followed by varimax rotation.

First, exploratory factor analysis was performed to examine the factor-structure of the protean and boundaryless career attitudes scales and select the items with high factor loading. Kaiser-Myer-Olkin statistic ( $KMO = 0.736$  for the protean career attitudes scale, and  $KMO = 0.835$  for the boundaryless career attitudes scale) indicated that the correlation matrixes were suitable for factor analysis. A principal component extraction was used, after which the number of factors was determined by eigenvalues ( $> 1$ ). This criterion suggested a four-factor

solution (eigenvalues 3.91, 2.048, 1.304 and 1.018) for the protean career attitudes scale and a three-factor solution for the boundaryless career attitudes scale (eigenvalues=4.69, 2.148 and 1.077).

The first four unrotated factors together accounted for 59.14% of the total item variance of the protean career attitudes scale. In the case of the boundaryless career attitudes scale, the first three factors accounted for 60.88 % of the total variance. Principal component analyses with varimax rotation are presented Table 1.

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 INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE  
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In factorial analysis, the relationship of an item to the underlying construct is determined by the factor loading. The higher the loading, the more the item is a pure measure of the factor. According to Comrey and Lee (1992), loadings of excess of 0.71 are considered excellent, 0.63 very good, 0.55 good, 0.45 fair, and 0.32 good. In the light of this consideration, we selected items which had factor loads higher than 0.63 (see the underlined items marked in bold, in Table 1). Furthermore, the measure of statistical adequacy (MSA) i.e. the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic ( $KMO=0.747$ ), reveals that the research lends itself to factor analysis. Thus, the selected items of protean and boundaryless career attitudes scales with high factor loading (SD01, SD02, SD03, SD05, SD07, VD10, VD11, VD12, VD14, BM16, BM17, BM19, BM20, OMP24, OMP25, OMP26 and OMP27) were factor analyzed using principal component analysis and varimax rotation. Four factors were selected representing 59.066% of the total items variance.

As reflected in Table 2, the self-direction, values-driven, boundaryless mindset and organizational mobility preference factors clearly loaded into factors 3, 4, 1 and 2 respectively. Based on the factor analysis results, we selected a sub-set of items (see Table 2), for measuring the underlying dimensions of protean and boundaryless career attitudes.

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INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE  
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Finally, the 12 items comprising the two scales of organizational commitment were factor analyzed with varimax rotation. Two factors emerged. Factor 1 was comprised of 6 items with an eigenvalue of 5.570. This factor included items related with an individual's emotional attachment to and identification with his or her employing company (affective commitment). The variance explained by Factor 1 was 46.417 percent. Factor 2 was comprised of six items that indicated individual's perceived cost of leaving their employing organization, due to either high personal sacrifices and /or scarcity of alternative options (continuance commitment). This factor had an eigenvalue of 2.00 and explained a variance equal to 16.665 percent. As shown in Table 3, affective commitment factors clearly loaded into factor 1, while continuance commitment factors loaded into factor 2, suggesting that affective and continuance commitment are distinct mindsets, as reflected in the theoretical framework.

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INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE  
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Internal consistency was measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient and our research results support Briscoe et al. (2006)'s reported coefficients. The reliability analysis yielded alpha coefficients higher than 0.70, excepting one construct – values-driven predispositions that reported an alpha coefficient of 0.67. Both the self-directed attitudes scale and the values-driven one revealed smaller consistencies (0.71 and 0.67 respectively) than that obtained by Briscoe et al. (2006) (0.81 and 0.69 respectively). With respect to boundaryless career attitudes, both dimensions, organizational mobility preference (0.77) and boundaryless mindset (0.90), yielded to similar internal consistencies as those reported by Briscoe et al. (2006) (namely 0.75 and 0.89 respectively). Finally, we performed reliability analysis for the two organizational commitment components selected, affective and continuance commitment, which both produced Alpha coefficients higher than .80. More specifically, the affective commitment scale reported an alpha coefficient of .904, while the continuance commitment scale produced an alpha coefficient of 0.817. These results are consistent with previous with those obtained in a large diversity of studies, which reported internal consistencies comprised between 0.70 and 0.90 (Gellatly et al., 2006; Luchak & Gellatly, 2007; Powell & Meyer, 2004; Somers, 1995).

### **Hierarchical regression analysis**

The hypothesized relationships between the underlying dimensions of boundaryless (boundaryless mindset and organizational mobility preference) and protean (self-direction and values driven) career attitudes were tested by means of hierarchical regression analysis. Prior to analysis, checks of the theoretical assumptions underlying multiple regression were undertaken, including normality, linearity, and homoskedasticity. These assumptions were met and indeed and hence it can be asserted that multiple regression is quite robust to any violations (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Table 4 below presents the means, standard

deviations, and Pearson's correlation coefficients between the variables in this study. As evident in Table 3, none of the independent variables considered in the regression models were correlated above .70, suggesting an absence of multicollinearity. The fact that none of the tolerance levels were found to be less than .1 and, therefore, that all of the variance inflation factors (VIF) were less than 10, provided additional evidence that the variables were not collinear (Pallant, 2001).

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INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

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Hypothesized relationships were tested using the hierarchical regression analysis. To compute the extent of additional variance explained by study variables, the regression analysis was performed by entering the control variables (demographic variables) in step 1, and protean and boundaryless career attitudes in step 2. Importance of embracing protean and boundaryless career attitudes in explaining affective and continuance commitment success can be demonstrated by examining the changes in  $R^2$  from step to step (Table 5 and Table 6).

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INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

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The first regression models were conducted in order to test the consequences of embracing protean and boundaryless career attitudes upon employees' affective commitment to their current companies (see Table 5). In predicting affective commitment, the control

variables – demographic factors – were entered into the regression equation in Model 1, followed by protean and boundaryless career attitudes (i.e. self-direction, values-driven, boundaryless mindset, organizational mobility preference) in Model 2.

Hypothesis 1 proposed that there will be a positive relation between self-direction in career management and individuals' affective commitment to their employing organizations. The  $\beta$  coefficient for self-direction is positive and statistically significant ( $\beta=0.164$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Accordingly, the data for this study indicate that self-direction in career management contributes positively to psychological career success. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is supported.

Hypothesis 3 predicted a positive relationship between values-driven predispositions and affective commitment, in the light of the regulatory focus theory. Nevertheless, the regression analysis presented in Table 5 illustrates that the  $\beta$  coefficient for values-driven is negative and statistically significant ( $\beta=-0.210$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), reflecting that strong values driven predispositions contribute negatively to experiencing affective commitment. Hence, hypothesis 3 does not receive support for this study.

Hypotheses 5 and 7 highlighted predicted relationships between boundaryless career attitudes and individuals' affective commitment. Regression analyses conducted to shed more light on these relationships reflect that both boundaryless career constructs are significantly related to individuals' emotional attachment to their employing organization. As can be seen in the table, boundaryless mindset is positively related to affective commitment ( $\beta=0.170$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), while organizational mobility preference is negatively related to the same outcome ( $\beta=-0.375$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Therefore, hypotheses 5 and 7 received full support.

Finally, regression analysis was conducted to explore the direct relationship between embracing protean and boundaryless career attitudes and individuals' continuance commitment to their employing organizations. Continuance commitment was first regressed

on the control variables (demographic variables) followed by the four career attitudes in Step 2. The results are shown in Table 6.

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The results indicate that continuance commitment had significant relationships with organizational mobility preference ( $\beta=-0.478$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and marginally significant with boundaryless mindset ( $\beta=0.131$ ,  $p<0.1$ ). The relationship between the two protean attitudes, self-direction in career management and values-driven predispositions, and the cost-avoidance commitment mindset were not significant. Therefore, H8 received full support, while H2 and H4, H6 were not supported.

Changes in  $R^2$  from Model 1 to Model 2 illustrate how much additional variance in affective and continuance commitment was explained by protean and boundaryless career attitudes ( $\Delta R^2=0.199$ , for affective commitment and  $\Delta R^2=0.217$ , for continuance commitment). Thus, the addition of career attitudes significantly explained more than 20% of affective and continuance commitment beyond what demographic variables explained.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

The present study attempted to provide an insight upon the influence of boundaryless and protean career attitudes upon behavioral outcomes, and more specifically upon individuals' commitment to their employing organizations, as to date, there has been little theoretical and empirical research testing proposed links.

As organizations move forward into a boundaryless environment, the ability to attract, engage, develop and retain talent will become increasingly important. Changes from transactional to transformational psychological contract highlight that individuals are now a less malleable resource for the organization and more active investors of their personal human capital (Gratton & Ghoshal, 2003), for enhancing opportunities for continuous learning, that will further ensure their future marketability. In a context in which employees perceive organizations as mere vehicles for their careers, we consider that an examination of the relation between new career orientations and organizational commitment is timely, as it provides novel insights for individuals and organizations and sheds more light upon labor relationships.

Research findings highlight the salience of protean and boundaryless career attitudes for individuals' affective commitment to their employing organizations. More specifically, self-direction in managing one's own career and vocational development and embracing a boundaryless mindset contribute positively and significantly to individuals' emotional attachment to their organizations. As explained in the theoretical framework, self-reliance and proactivity in managing one's career and vocational destiny reflect a promotion focus, concerned with advancement, growth and accomplishment of maximum job requirements and associated with high affective commitment. Moreover, holding a boundaryless mindset results into the enhancement of internal networks, which contributes to the development of affective bonds with one's colleagues and employing organization.

Furthermore, we have found a negative relationship between values-driven predispositions and affective commitment that determines the rejection of the hypothesis 3, albeit in the theoretical framework, we predicted a positive relationship between these two variables. This assertion was rooted on the consideration that a person who is not very clear

on his or her values is more inclined to accept and adopt organizational values and for this reason he or she might be likely to develop affective bonds with the employing organization. Nevertheless, research results point out that given the situation of an individual high on values-driven predispositions, it might be argued that the degree in which he or she experiences affective commitment depends on the extent to which his or her personal values match organizational values. Therefore, it seems that values-driven mindset *per se* cannot be directly related with affective commitment, as this relationship depends upon situational/contingent factors. However, it can be argued that a values-driven individual, who finds his or her ideal place in which to fulfill those values, is likely to develop a strong sense of “belonging” to the organization, and therefore, is expected to experience high affective commitment. Thus, the negative relationship between values driven predispositions and affective commitment, might be explained through the lack of value fit between individual values and organizational ones. Hence, future research is encouraged for examining the moderating effect of values-match upon the relationship between values-driven predispositions and affective commitment.

With respect to organizational mobility preference, research results illustrate a negative and statistically significant relationship with affective commitment, hence supporting hypothesis 7. Individuals inclined towards crossing organizational boundaries are not expected to create affective bonds with their employing organization, due to their high preference for physical mobility.

As regards continuance commitment, our research findings illustrate that organizational mobility preference is significant in predicting the commitment mindset associated with the perceived cost of leaving the organization. Organizational mobility preference was found to be negatively related to continuance commitment, as already

predicted by the theoretical framework and the hypothesized links. This attitude makes reference to an individual's inclination towards physically crossing organizational boundaries, which may uncover him or her assorted options, which reduces the perceived scarcity of available alternatives on the external market.

Contrary to our expectations, boundaryless mindset ( $\beta=0.164$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) was found to be positively related with continuance commitment, and the relationships between self-direction, values driven and this commitment mindset were not significant, which led to the rejection of the hypotheses 2, 4 and 6. Boundaryless mindset reflects openness to the exterior and individuals holding this attitude are feeling comfortable or even enthusiastic in promoting active relationships with people from different organizations, or located beyond one's current department. The relationship between boundaryless mindset and continuance commitment could be moderated by the extent to which individuals succeed in enhancing their social capital, which would in turn provide them access to the resources and the information other people possess and therefore help them discover different opportunities beyond organizational boundaries. In that sense, the relationship between holding a boundaryless mindset and continuance commitment would be negative if an individual's approach to creating and sustaining active relationships across organizational boundaries led to the enhancement of his or her internal and external networks. The moderating role of social capital in reducing continuance commitment represents an interesting future research line, which could bring a greater insight into the nature of this relationship. The relation between values driven and continuance commitment was not significant either. As in the case of affective commitment, we believe that one can gain more insight onto the nature of this relationship when exploring the moderating role of individual-organization values fit.

A common concern in the organizational career management literature is whether providing career management interventions for employees leads them to be grateful and more committed to the organization, or whether in contrast it equips them to leave (Ito & Brotheridge, 2005; Sturges, Conway, & Liefoghe, 2005; Sturges, Guest, Conway, & Davey, 2002). Sturges *et al.* (2005) have argued that if organizations facilitate career self-management, the outcomes tend to be more commitment and less turnover. Our research findings are consistent with these assertions, at least with respect to affective commitment. The relationship between self-direction and continuance commitment was not statistically significant. Nevertheless, it is affective commitment that has been most often related with low organizational turnover.

## Tables

	FACTOR					FACTOR		
	1	2	3	4		1	2	3
<b><u>SD01</u></b>	0.311	-0.001	0.133	<b>0.646</b>	BM15	<b>0.507</b>	-0.047	-0.361
<b><u>SD02</u></b>	<b>0.676</b>	-0.111	-0.043	0.117	<b><u>BM16</u></b>	<b>0.775</b>	-0.157	0.027
<b><u>SD03</u></b>	<b>0.672</b>	0.045	-0.056	0.226	<b><u>BM17</u></b>	<b>0.737</b>	0.078	0.363
SD04	<b>0.597</b>	0.237	0.320	-0.086	<b><u>BM18</u></b>	<b>0.829</b>	0.128	0.087
<b><u>SD05</u></b>	<b>0.777</b>	-0.018	0.138	0.186	<b><u>BM19</u></b>	<b>0.878</b>	0.077	0.202
SD06	<b>0.538</b>	0.228	-0.100	0.158	<b><u>BM20</u></b>	<b>0.860</b>	0.128	0.168
<b><u>SD07</u></b>	0.173	0.071	0.022	<b>0.825</b>	BM21	0.199	-0.021	<b>0.833</b>
SD08	0.067	0.342	0.254	<b>0.521</b>	BM22	<b>0.473</b>	0.029	0.455
SD09	0.431	<b>0.523</b>	0.220	0.075	OMP23	0.086	0.379	<b>0.412</b>
<b><u>VD10</u></b>	0.052	<b>0.821</b>	0.025	0.031	<b><u>OMP24</u></b>	0.178	<b>0.663</b>	-0.011
<b><u>VD11</u></b>	-0.068	<b>0.871</b>	0.081	0.085	<b><u>OMP25</u></b>	-0.001	<b>0.729</b>	0.059
<b><u>VD12</u></b>	0.066	0.163	<b>0.862</b>	0.043	<b><u>OMP26</u></b>	0.023	<b>0.841</b>	0.059
VD13	0.145	<b>0.563</b>	0.415	0.188	<b><u>OMP27</u></b>	0.185	<b>0.780</b>	0.132
<b><u>VD14</u></b>	-0.050	0.076	<b>0.829</b>	0.202				

Table 1. Component matrix of the protean and boundaryless career attitudes scale

	FACTOR			
	1	2	3	4
SD01	0.087	0.108	<b>0.612</b>	0.153
SD02	-0.004	-0.038	<b>0.694</b>	-0.108
SD03	0.027	-0.116	<b>0.709</b>	0.012
SD05	0.087	-0.03	<b>0.783</b>	0.058
SD07	0.079	0.196	<b>0.553</b>	0.160
VD10	0.083	-0.016	0.031	<b>0.733</b>
VD11	0.077	-0.074	-0.046	<b>0.753</b>
VD12	0.094	0.185	0.110	<b>0.664</b>
VD14	-0.043	0.184	0.142	<b>0.620</b>
BM16	<b>0.754</b>	0.159	-0.018	0.072
BM17	<b>0.804</b>	0.083	0.033	0.162
BM18	<b>0.819</b>	0.100	0.245	0.030
BM19	<b>0.927</b>	0.052	0.045	0.057
BM20	<b>0.909</b>	0.107	0.057	-0.042
OMP24	0.156	<b>0.627</b>	0.050	0.171
OMP25	0.033	<b>0.735</b>	-0.015	-0.112
OMP26	0.037	<b>0.846</b>	0.003	0.091
OMP27	0.229	<b>0.779</b>	0.039	0.144

Table 2. Component matrix of the careers attitudes scales

	FACTOR	
	1	2
AC28	<b>,523</b>	,408
AC29	<b>,790</b>	,131
AC30	<b>,871</b>	,055
AC31	<b>,876</b>	,205
AC32	<b>,858</b>	,092
AC33	<b>,850</b>	,177
CC34	,480	<b>,521</b>
CC35	,510	<b>,582</b>
CC36	,307	<b>,727</b>
CC37	-,023	<b>,823</b>
CC38	,170	<b>,655</b>
CC39	-,001	<b>,747</b>

Table 3. Component matrix of the organizational commitment scale

	Mean	St. Dev.	SD	VD	BM	OMP	AC	CC
1 Self-direction	20.41	2.779						
2 Values-driven	14.32	2.813	0.163*					
3 Boundaryless mindset	15.89	2.827	0.128	0.162*				
4 Organizational mobility preference	14.25	3.225	0.081	0.198*	0.257**			
5 Affective commitment	18.13	5.476	0.152	-0.215**	-0.063	-0.372**		
6 Continuance commitment	14.78	4.535	-0.035	-0.195*	-0.004	-0.507**	0.507**	

\*p&lt;0.05; \*\*p&lt;0.01

Table 4. Correlations among the study variables

	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>β</i>
Gender	1,106	1,149	0,100	0,657	1,050	0,059
Agriculture	4,831	3,506	0,124	4,285	3,216	0,110
Building	2,230	1,822	0,119	2,499	1,662	0,133
Service	1,516	1,085	0,134	1,209	0,983	0,107
PosLow	0,278	1,112	0,025	0,407	1,004	0,037
PosHigh	0,099	1,583	0,007	-0,118	1,442	-0,008
Less than 50 employees	0,337	1,064	0,031	0,421	0,972	0,038
Between 50 and 150 employees	-0,037	1,523	-0,002	0,432	1,419	0,027
Professional experience	-0,019	0,110	-0,023	-0,009	0,099	-0,011
Tenure	0,154	0,138	0,153	0,099	0,126	0,098
No of companies	0,037	0,333	0,011	0,132	0,308	0,040
Preuniversity	1,306	1,286	0,119	0,596	1,183	0,054
Bachelor	-0,660	1,508	-0,049	-0,470	1,367	-0,035
PhD	1,506	2,345	0,062	2,442	2,124	0,101
R <sup>2</sup>						0,073
SD				0,324	0,165	0,164*
VD				-0,408	0,156	-0,210**
BM				0,328	0,157	0,170*
OMP				-0,636	0,142	-0,375***
R <sup>2</sup>						0,272
ΔR <sup>2</sup>						0,199
ΔF						8,944***

Note: .p<0.1; \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001

Table 5. Results of hierarchical regression analyses of demographic factors and protean and boundaryless career attitudes on affective career success

	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>β</i>
Gender	-0,133	0,915	-0,015	-0,525	0,816	-0,057
Agriculture	1,891	2,793	0,059	0,994	2,500	0,031
Building	-0,640	1,451	-0,041	-0,185	1,292	-0,012
Service	0,870	0,864	0,093	0,625	0,764	0,067
PosLow	-0,424	0,886	-0,047	-0,387	0,780	-0,043
PosHigh	-0,449	1,261	-0,036	-0,341	1,120	-0,027
Less than 50 employees	-0,043	0,848	-0,005	0,200	0,755	0,022
Between 50 and 150	1,371	1,213	0,103	1,563	1,103	0,118
Professional experience	-0,025	0,087	-0,038	0,006	0,077	0,008
Tenure	0,256	0,110	0,308*	0,168	0,098	0,202
No of companies	-0,170	0,265	-0,062	-0,022	0,239	-0,008
Preuniversity	0,068	1,024	0,007	-0,558	0,920	-0,061
Bachelor	-1,597	1,202	-0,143	-1,635	1,062	-0,146
PhD	-2,820	1,868	-0,140	-1,761	1,651	-0,088
R <sup>2</sup>						0,142
SD				0,064	0,128	0,039
VD				-0,180	0,121	-0,112
BM				0,210	0,122	0,131.
OMP				-0,673	0,110	-0,478***
R <sup>2</sup>						0,359
ΔR <sup>2</sup>						0,217
ΔF						11,069***

Note: .p<0.1; \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001

Table 6. Results of hierarchical regression analyses of demographic factors and protean and boundaryless career attitudes on affective career success

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