



## Organizational Commitment Among Employees in a Romanian Public Transport Company

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### Abstract

This study examines organizational commitment among employees of a public transport company in Romania, using the three-component model proposed by Meyer and Allen (affective, continuance and normative commitment). The research aims to assess the level and structure of organizational commitment and to analyze its relationship with turnover intention. A cross-sectional quantitative design was employed, based on a questionnaire survey administered to all eligible employees with at least one year of tenure. Data from 183 valid respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics and spearman correlations. Results indicate a high level of overall organizational commitment, with affective and normative commitment emerging as the dominant dimensions, while continuance commitment registered lower values. Age and tenure were positively associated with all commitment dimensions. A significant negative relationship was found between organizational commitment and turnover intention, particularly for normative and affective commitment. The findings support the validity of the three-component model in the context of public transport and highlight organizational commitment as a key resource for employee retention and institutional stability.

**Keywords:** *organizational commitment; public transport employees; intention to leave the organization*



## INTRODUCTION

In the literature on work and organisations, organizational commitment is widely regarded as a key explanatory concept for a phenomenon long examined by sociology: why individuals remain within an organisation, how they come to feel part of it, and what occurs when this bond begins to weaken. Underlying this concept is the idea that the employment relationship is not merely an economic transaction (“I work – I am paid”), but also a social relationship, imbued with norms, expectations, identity, and reciprocal exchange between employee and organisation. Early research sought to capture this relationship through stable and comparable measures, such as the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), widely used following the seminal work of Mowday, Steers, and Porter [1].

Over time, the focus shifted from the notion of a single “core” of commitment towards a more nuanced understanding, acknowledging that the reasons individuals remain with an organisation may differ. A major turning point was the three-component model proposed by Meyer and Allen [2, 3] which conceptualises commitment as a psychological state that binds the individual to the organisation through three distinct mechanisms: desire (affective commitment), need (continuance commitment), and obligation (normative commitment). This model was operationalised through measurement instruments and supported by an empirical research agenda that enabled the systematic testing of the antecedents and consequences of each component [2].

Affective commitment describes a situation in which employees remain with an organisation because they want to—because they feel emotionally attached, identify with the organisation, and experience a sense of belonging. From a sociological perspective, this component is closely linked to processes of identification and social integration, whereby the organisation becomes a reference point in the construction of professional and social identity. This is why studies comparing organizational identification and commitment show them to be related yet distinct constructs: identification pertains more directly to who one is in relation to the organisation, whereas affective commitment concerns the extent to which one wishes to remain and invest in the relationship [4]. In a similar vein, more recent research suggests that identity processes may function as a “bridge” for strengthening commitment, particularly in contexts where the meaning of work and a sense of belonging become important social resources [5].

Continuance commitment is more detached and structural in nature, reflecting a situation in which employees remain with an organisation because they need to. Here, the perceived costs of leaving—such as the loss of benefits, stability, or career investments—and the availability of alternatives on the labour market play a central role [3]. From a sociological standpoint, this dimension is particularly noteworthy because it may reflect dependencies and constraints: individuals may remain within an organisation without being genuinely involved, simply because exit is perceived as costly or risky.

Normative commitment refers to remaining with an organisation because one feels that one ought to do so. In this case, individuals experience a sense of moral obligation, duty, or loyalty towards the organisation. Sociologically, this dimension involves norms of reciprocity, organizational socialisation, and the broader culture of work. Across different cultural contexts, what is interpreted as “loyalty” or “duty” may carry different meanings and weights. For example, Wasti’s [6] research shows that cultural values, measured at the individual level, can alter the relevance of commitment antecedents, suggesting that commitment is not solely an “internal” phenomenon but one that is also culturally shaped.

The results of the present study provide a coherent and empirically well-grounded picture of organizational commitment among employees of a public transport company in

Romania. The study highlights both the internal structure of commitment and its role in relation to organizational stability and employees' intention to leave their jobs.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of organizational commitment has undergone substantial theoretical and empirical development, establishing itself in the specialist literature particularly through the three-component model proposed by Meyer and Allen. The strength of this model lies not only in its conceptual coherence but also in its robust empirical support. For example, the meta-analysis conducted by Mathieu and Zajac [7] showed that organizational commitment is consistently associated with work experiences, job attitudes, and a range of relevant behavioural outcomes. Subsequently, Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnytsky [8] demonstrated, through a comprehensive meta-analytic review, that the three components of commitment are correlated yet distinct, with affective commitment being the strongest predictor of desirable outcomes such as performance and extra-role behaviours.

As the field has evolved, research has moved beyond an exclusive focus on the organisation as the sole object of commitment. In this regard, Meyer and Herscovitch [9] propose a more general conceptualisation, defining commitment as a 'force' that binds an individual to a course of action relevant to a given target, whether the organisation, the work team, or the profession. This approach allows for the integration of different forms of attachment and underscores the role of motivational 'mindsets' in explaining observed behaviours. Nonetheless, this conceptual broadening has also been accompanied by theoretical critiques, some questioning the coherence of the classic model itself.

An influential critique is advanced by Solinger, van Olffen and Roe [10], who contend that the three-component model conflates distinct attitudinal phenomena under the same conceptual label. The authors argue that only affective commitment reflects a genuine attitude towards the organisation, whereas continuance and normative commitment rest on distinct motivational bases. This perspective does not invalidate the model's empirical utility, but it draws attention to the fact that retention may conceal very different motivations—an observation sociologically relevant for understanding employment relations and organizational policies.

From a social exchange perspective, organizational commitment is built through employees' interpretations of how they are treated by the organisation. A central concept in this framework is organizational justice. The meta-analysis indicates that perceptions of distributive, procedural, and interpersonal justice are strongly associated with attitudes such as commitment and job satisfaction. Justice functions not only as a moral criterion but also as a mechanism for legitimising organizational authority, facilitating cooperation and the acceptance of rules [11].

Another major determinant of commitment is perceived organizational support (POS), defined by Rhoades and Eisenberger [12] as employees' belief that the organisation values their contribution and cares about their well-being. Studies show that POS is closely linked to affective commitment, a relationship explained by the norm of reciprocity: when employees perceive investment and concern on the part of the organisation, they are more inclined to develop attachment and loyalty. Moreover, the role of immediate leaders, introducing the notion of the supervisor's 'organizational embodiment', whereby the relationship with the line manager becomes a key channel for building commitment to the organisation [13].

The literature also highlights the role of human resource practices in shaping commitment. Paré and Tremblay [14] show that 'high-involvement' practices—such as development opportunities and fair procedures—are associated with higher levels of commitment and with reduced turnover intentions. A complementary analysis describe the



'black box' of employment relations, showing how justice, perceived support and trust mediate the impact of HR policies on commitment [15]. In addition, the longitudinal study by Panaccio and Vandenberghe [16] suggests that commitment, when built on genuine support, can also contribute to employees' psychological well-being.

Conversely, research on the psychological contract underscores the fragility of commitment when organizational promises are perceived to be violated. Psychological contract breach is associated with organizational cynicism, which in turn undermines commitment [17]. Similar results are reported by Ng, Feldman and Lam [18], who demonstrate longitudinally that perceptions of breach may intensify over time and lead to decreases in affective commitment. Taken together, these studies suggest that organizational commitment functions as an indicator of institutional quality and of social integration at work, being shaped by distinct cultural, occupational and institutional contexts [19, 6].

### **Determinants of Organizational Commitment**

Organizational commitment is anchored in three interdependent registers—individual, organizational, and contextual—which simultaneously shape its three components: affective (wanting to stay), continuance (needing to stay), and normative (feeling that one 'ought' to stay) [2, 3]. From an explanatory standpoint, meta-analyses indicate that the antecedents of commitment are multiple and heterogeneous, ranging from personal characteristics and forms of 'fit' to organizational practices and climates, all linked to attitudes and behaviours conducive to performance and retention [7, 8]. In addition, perceived organizational support (POS) and leadership quality (especially transformational leadership) amplify commitment -particularly affective commitment - creating the conditions for loyalty and discretionary effort [12, 20].

Individual factors shape how employees construe their relationship with the organisation through demographic, dispositional, and axiological filters. Age/tenure and professional experience are, on average, associated with higher commitment—a regularity documented in classic syntheses [7]. Favourable dispositions (e.g., conscientiousness as reflected in core self-evaluations) are linked to higher satisfaction and involvement, with indirect effects on commitment [21, 22]. Moreover, congruence between personal and organizational values—person-organisation 'fit'—has robust effects on workplace attitudes and behaviours, including commitment [23].

Organizational factors are pivotal for strengthening the affective and normative dimensions. Perceived organizational support (comprising fairness, supervisor support, rewards, and favourable conditions) is closely tied to affective commitment and to positive outcomes for employees and the firm [12]. Transformational leadership—through vision, inspiration, and intellectual stimulation—enhances voluntary involvement and attachment to the organisation [20]. At the same time, inclusive cultures oriented towards collaboration and innovation, as measured and developed via the Competing Values Framework, sustain, in the long term, a climate of involvement and loyalty [24].

Contextual factors introduce constraints and opportunities that reconfigure the perceived costs of leaving and expectations regarding stability. Fair working conditions, competitive pay, and benefits packages act as 'hygiene' factors that reduce turnover intention and underpin continuance commitment [25]. Higher levels of satisfaction—also supported by job design—are associated with commitment, especially affective commitment [26]. In uncertain economic contexts, perceptions of risk and mobility costs can temporarily strengthen the continuance component and shape the dynamics of satisfaction around job change (the 'honeymoon-hangover' effect) [27, 28].



### **The Role of Commitment In Performance**

At the individual level, meta-analyses show that affective commitment is the most consistently associated with performance and with extra-role behaviours—organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB)—whereas continuance commitment has weak or even negative effects [8, 29]. Likewise, committed employees display greater resilience, bring their ‘whole self’ to work, and translate perceived support, value congruence, and core self-evaluations into tangible outcomes; from task performance to OCB [30].

At the organizational level, employee engagement correlates with superior business-unit outcomes—customer satisfaction, productivity, profit, and safety—whilst reducing turnover [31]. These effects also cascade to customers through the service climate [32] and psychological safety for learning [33]. Overall, by cultivating organizational support, transformational leadership, and an inclusive culture, organisations can convert commitment into a sustainable competitive advantage, strengthening both individual and collective performance [12, 20, 24], combined with a low intention to leave the organization [34].

### **Studies of Organizational Commitment in Romania**

Romanian research on organizational commitment has been consistently anchored in Meyer and Allen’s three-component model [2, 3].

In industrial settings, a structural model tested on a robust sample (N = 676) from two manufacturing companies (Harghita, Braşov) shows that organizational justice—procedural, distributive, and interactional—enhances commitment through the mediation of job satisfaction. Perceptions of fairness fuel everyday satisfaction, supporting affective commitment in particular; consequently, procedural consistency, respectful communication, and recognition of contributions operate as indirect yet powerful levers for raising commitment [35].

In public administration, the data indicate an erosion of the psychological bond with the institution when occupational stressors—deadline pressure, role ambiguity, workload—accumulate among employees. The negative relationships between stress and both affective and continuance commitment support the primacy of ‘organizational hygiene’ (role clarification, workload management, managerial support) as high-yield interventions for retention and the quality of public services. From this perspective, safeguarding the affective component is not an attitudinal luxury but a structural condition for institutional functioning [36].

At the level of ‘street-level bureaucracy’, the profile of front-line civil servants is ambivalent: high commitment, considerable autonomy and discretion coexist with low tolerance for uncertainty and a large power distance. In practice, this configuration sustains compliance with rules, but also goal-oriented flexibilities when the context so requires [37, 36].

In pre-tertiary education, differences between school types and generational effects are salient. Teachers in Adventist schools report, on average, higher levels of satisfaction and commitment than those in public schools, whereas emotional intelligence does not significantly distinguish the groups; an indication that organizational practices and climate (from governance to recognition mechanisms) weigh decisively in determining attachment [37]. Complementarily, generational affiliation (Gen X vs Millennials) modulates how job resources—autonomy, colleague support are converted into normative and continuance commitment, suggesting the need for differentiated policies: more autonomy and developmental feedback for younger staff, and consolidation of support networks and routes of recognition for more senior staff [39, 38].

In SMEs, syntheses indicate that transformational leadership is associated with organizational commitment and related outcomes, such as satisfaction with the leader and



discretionary effort. The specificity of the Romanian entrepreneurial context—in which the owner-leader directly shapes the work climate—accentuates the return on investments in vision, inspiration, and people development as the psychological infrastructure of durable commitment [40].

A longitudinal study was conducted on former employees of the company that sought to invest in Roşia Montană. It shows that organizational commitment can be expressed towards the company's purpose even after employees have been laid off. This finding should be read in a context in which the organisation was perceived as 'a salvation' for former employees living in a disadvantaged area with few job opportunities [41].

### **Organisational Commitment in the Public Transport Sector**

Organisational commitment has also been examined in the context of public transport, a sector in which service quality depends to a considerable extent on the engagement and behaviour of operational staff, such as bus drivers and operations personnel. In public transport organisations, employees' level of commitment can influence workforce stability, service quality, and relationships with passengers. For this reason, several studies have sought to identify the factors that contribute to the development of organisational commitment among employees in this sector.

A study conducted in the United States analysed the organisational commitment of employees across five urban public transport systems. The research drew on a survey administered to employees and investigated the extent to which individual and occupational characteristics shape levels of organisational commitment. The findings indicated that variables such as age, educational attainment, organisational tenure, and the number of hours worked may exert significant effects on distinct dimensions of organisational commitment. The authors conclude that features of workforce structure and work organisation specific to public transport can influence how employees develop a psychological relationship with the organisation [42].

Other research in the public transport sector has highlighted the role of occupational factors specific to this field. For example, a study conducted in Australia on urban transport drivers examined the relationship between occupational stress and organisational commitment. The results suggest that factors such as role overload and limited participation in decision-making can have adverse effects on organisational commitment and increase turnover intention. Conversely, participation in decision-making and perceived organisational support may strengthen employees' commitment in urban transport companies [43].

The implications of these studies are pertinent to the management of public transport organisations. Investigating these aspects has become particularly salient in sectors characterised by high operational pressure and a strong sense of responsibility towards passengers.

In Romania, research on public transport focuses primarily on issues such as urban mobility, transport planning, sustainability, and user behaviour [44], as well as the distribution and frequency of routes that shape passengers' access within the urban area [45, 46], and the lack of access to this service among rural populations, which raises a question of spatial equity [47]. Other empirical research examines the use of public transport or shifts in mobility demand in Romanian cities, such as studies of public transport in Cluj-Napoca during the COVID-19 pandemic, which focus on user behaviour and the functioning of the transport system [48]. Collectively, these studies analyse the role of public transport in economic development and in structuring urban mobility systems, without addressing the organisational or psychological dimensions of work within transport companies.



This orientation of the literature indicates that the organisational dimension of public transport has been relatively underexplored in the Romanian context. In particular, there is limited research examining employees' attitudes and behaviours in public transport companies, including job satisfaction, occupational stress, and organisational commitment. The absence of such analyses constrains our understanding of how organisational factors and working conditions influence workforce performance and stability in this sector. Accordingly, investigating organisational commitment within a Romanian public transport operator is necessary to address this gap in the existing literature. Such a study can extend public transport research beyond technical or operational dimensions by integrating perspectives from human resource management and organisational behaviour. At the same time, the findings may offer actionable insights for the management of public transport companies by identifying factors that foster employee commitment and improve staff retention in a sector essential to the functioning of urban mobility.

### METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The aim of the present study is to analyse the level and structure of organizational commitment among employees of a public transport company in Romania, by examining the three dimensions conceptualised by Meyer and Allen—*affective, continuance, and normative commitment*—as well as their relationships with socio-demographic characteristics and turnover intention.

In line with this general aim, the following specific objectives were established:

O1. To identify the level of organizational commitment (*affective, continuance, and normative*) among the employees under investigation.

O2. To analyse the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention.

Accordingly, the following research hypothesis was formulated:

”Turnover intention is inversely proportional to the overall level of organizational commitment”.

The research was conducted in the spring of 2025 using a quantitative, cross-sectional design, based on a questionnaire survey. An exhaustive approach was adopted, targeting all eligible employees of the organisation. Eligibility was defined by a minimum tenure of one year within the public transport company.

Out of a total of 222 employees, 198 met the eligibility criterion. A total of 195 questionnaires were returned, of which 12 were excluded due to issues related to coherence or completion, resulting in a final sample of 183 valid respondents. This represents 92.4% of the eligible population of the company. All subsequent percentage references are reported in relation to the final number of respondents. The data was collected for research included in a dissertation paper. The section used in this study is used with the consent of the person who conducted the research.

The socio-demographic profile indicates a mature and stable workforce, characterised by a relatively high average age, a mean organizational tenure of 11.58 years, and an average total work experience of 25.34 years. The gender structure is imbalanced, as is typical of the public transport sector, with a predominance of male employees (79.2%).

Organizational commitment was measured using the Allen and Meyer (1991) scale, in its 18-item version, comprising six items for each dimension: *affective, continuance, and normative commitment*. Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), with higher scores indicating higher levels of commitment. A composite score of overall organizational commitment was also computed.



The internal consistency of the instrument was excellent: Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.907 for affective commitment, 0.859 for continuance commitment, 0.940 for normative commitment, and 0.926 for the overall scale, confirming the reliability of the measures in the present study.

Data were collected using a printed questionnaire distributed to employees through the human resources department. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and respondents were informed in advance about the purpose of the study, in accordance with ethical research principles. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics and Spearman's correlation, in line with the non-parametric distribution of the scores.

## RESULTS

The descriptive analysis revealed a high level of organizational commitment among employees of the investigated public transport company. The mean score for overall organizational commitment was  $M = 3.95$ , with a relatively low standard deviation ( $SD = 0.59$ ), indicating limited variability and a concentration of responses in the upper range of the scale.

Among the three dimensions, affective commitment recorded a high mean value ( $M = 4.18$ ;  $SD = 0.58$ ), suggesting the presence of a strong emotional bond between employees and the organisation. The distribution was slightly negatively skewed (skewness =  $-0.593$ ), reflecting a higher frequency of "agree" and "strongly agree" responses.

Normative commitment displayed an identical mean ( $M = 4.18$ ;  $SD = 0.69$ ), indicating a high level of loyalty and moral obligation towards the organisation. The pronounced negative skewness (skewness =  $-0.856$ ) and positive kurtosis (1.140) point to a strong clustering of high scores.

By comparison, continuance commitment registered the lowest mean ( $M = 3.49$ ;  $SD = 0.84$ ), suggesting that employees' decision to remain with the organisation is less strongly grounded in constraints or in the perceived costs of leaving, and more in voluntary attachment and loyalty.

Comparative analyses showed a clear tendency for commitment levels to increase with age and tenure. Employees in older age groups and those with more than 20 years of organizational tenure reported the highest scores across all dimensions, particularly for normative and affective commitment. The overall commitment score increased from  $M = 3.79$  among employees with 1–5 years of tenure to  $M = 4.31$  among those with over 20 years of tenure, indicating a progressive strengthening of the employee–organisation relationship.

Hypothesis testing using Spearman's correlation confirmed a statistically significant negative relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention. The strongest association was observed for normative commitment ( $\rho = -0.476$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), followed by affective commitment ( $\rho = -0.426$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and overall organizational commitment ( $\rho = -0.400$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Continuance commitment showed a weaker, yet statistically significant, relationship ( $\rho = -0.217$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ).

## Determinants of Organizational Commitment in the Romanian Public Transport Sector

A primary analytical direction concerns the variation of commitment based on socio-demographic characteristics. Regarding age, the data indicate a general upward trend in the total commitment score: from 3.69 in the 23–34 age group, to 3.72 in the 35–44 group, 4.00 in the 45–54 group, and reaching 4.13 in the 55–73 cohort. While these differences are not extreme, they suggest an association between professional maturation and the consolidation of the organizational relationship. A similar trend is observed regarding tenure within the company. Total commitment increases from 3.79 for employees with 1–5 years of seniority to 3.91 for those with 6–10 years, 3.98 for the 11–20 years interval, and peaks at 4.31 for



employees with 20–45 years of service. At the level of total work experience, the scores confirm the same trajectory, with values rising to 4.25 in the 41–50 years category. These data suggest that professional experience and organizational stability are associated with higher levels of commitment, although the strength of this relationship must also be evaluated through correlational analysis.

Regarding the gender of the respondents, women record a higher total commitment score (4.16) than men (3.89). Differences are particularly notable in the normative dimension, where the mean is 4.48 for women compared to 4.10 for men, and in the continuance dimension, with values of 3.77 versus 3.42, respectively. However, these discrepancies should be interpreted with caution, as the gender distribution in the sample is unequal, with men representing the majority of respondents. In relation to educational attainment, variations exist but do not describe a clear linear structure. The highest total scores appear among individuals with higher education (4.08) and postgraduate studies (4.01), while the lowest value is observed in the post-secondary (non-university) category (3.82). Consequently, the data do not support a firm conclusion regarding the direct role of education level but rather suggest a limited differential effect.

A particularly relevant dimension for the public transport sector is departmental differentiation, where the most distinct internal contrasts emerge. Drivers exhibit the lowest total commitment score (3.77), followed by mechanical workshop employees (3.87), while the highest values are recorded among operational staff (4.29), administrative personnel (4.23), and bus station staff (4.19). This distribution is organizationally significant, as it suggests that the occupational core directly involved in service delivery (specifically drivers) represents the segment with the lowest level of commitment. Within the constraints of the available data, this finding does not permit direct causal inferences but points to a clear vulnerability within the central operational segment.

Correlational analysis complements these descriptive results and allows for the identification of factors most strongly associated with organizational commitment. Firstly, the perception of organizational culture correlates positively and significantly with all dimensions of commitment, including the total score ( $\rho = 0.538$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The relationships are particularly consistent for the affective ( $\rho = 0.571$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and normative ( $\rho = 0.560$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) dimensions, while the association for continuance is lower ( $\rho = 0.321$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This result suggests that an organizational climate perceived as coherent and functional primarily contributes to the internalization of organizational values and the development of psychological attachment to the institution.

Secondly, among all analyzed variables, the perception of development and reward opportunities emerges as the factor most strongly associated with organizational commitment. The correlation with the total score is  $\rho = 0.626$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), with the normative dimension  $\rho = 0.661$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), and with the affective dimension  $\rho = 0.600$  ( $p < 0.001$ ). Even regarding the continuance dimension, where the intensity of the relationship is lower, the coefficient remains significant ( $\rho = 0.398$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This profile indicates that the perception of professional development paths and adequate reward mechanisms represents the primary pillar of commitment in the analyzed public transport organization.

Thirdly, perceived management support correlates positively with the total commitment score ( $\rho = 0.481$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), showing stronger relationships with the normative ( $\rho = 0.556$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and affective ( $\rho = 0.477$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) dimensions than with continuance ( $\rho = 0.250$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This result suggests that the relationship with management operates primarily through mechanisms of legitimacy, recognition, and psychological reciprocity, rather than through instrumental constraints. In other words, managerial support appears to strengthen belonging and loyalty.



In contrast to these organizational predictors, company tenure shows a positive but substantially weaker relationship with total commitment ( $\rho = 0.227$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). Relationships with specific dimensions are also low:  $\rho = 0.164$  for affective commitment,  $\rho = 0.220$  for continuance, and  $\rho = 0.197$  for the normative dimension. These results indicate that while tenure matters, it is not a determinant of the same magnitude as professional development, rewards, organizational culture, or management support. Therefore, mere longevity within the organization does not, in itself, guarantee high levels of commitment; the quality of the organizational experience appears more relevant.

A final significant result is the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention. The data indicate significant negative associations between the intention to leave and all dimensions of commitment:  $\rho = -0.426$  for the affective dimension,  $\rho = -0.217$  for continuance,  $\rho = -0.476$  for the normative dimension, and  $\rho = -0.400$  for the total commitment score (all statistically significant). These values demonstrate that the reduction of turnover intention is more closely associated with affective and normative attachment than with the continuance dimension. Consequently, retention seems to depend more on a sense of belonging and moral obligation toward the organization than on the perception of the costs associated with exiting the system.

Overall, the data support the conclusion that organizational commitment in the Romanian public transport sector is predominantly shaped by organizational and relational variables rather than exclusively by individual characteristics. Specifically, development and reward opportunities, organizational culture, and perceived management support emerge as the main factors associated with high levels of commitment. Simultaneously, the lower scores recorded among drivers, younger employees, and those with shorter tenure suggest areas of organizational fragility that may affect workforce retention and stability. Within the scope of the analyzed material, this constitutes the most robust interpretation supported by the available data.

## DISCUSSION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A first salient finding concerns the high level of overall organizational commitment, with a mean score close to the upper limit of the scale. This result points to the existence of a relatively stable organizational climate in which employees display consistent involvement with the organisation. Nevertheless, this high score should be interpreted with caution, given the possibility of socially desirable responding, as the questionnaire was distributed through the organisation's human resources department, even though responses were collected anonymously.

More specifically, affective and normative commitment emerge as the dominant dimensions, both registering mean values substantially higher than continuance commitment. This pattern suggests that employees' decision to remain with the organisation is driven primarily by emotional attachment and a sense of moral loyalty, rather than by external constraints or a lack of viable occupational alternatives.

The lower, yet moderate, level of continuance commitment is particularly relevant from an interpretative perspective. It indicates that employees do not perceive their continued membership in the organisation as being based solely on high costs associated with leaving, which may be regarded as a positive indicator of the quality of the employee–organisation relationship. Such a configuration is desirable from a managerial standpoint, as commitment grounded in constraints has been shown in the literature to be less strongly associated with performance, job satisfaction, or proactive organizational behaviours.

Comparative analyses revealed a systematic increase in commitment levels with age and tenure, both within the organisation and in overall working life, a trend observed across all



three commitment dimensions. This finding supports the assumption that organizational commitment consolidates progressively as employees accumulate experience, invest personal resources, and develop stable professional relationships within the organisation. In particular, the marked increase in normative commitment among long-tenured employees suggests the internalisation of organizational norms and the development of a strong sense of responsibility and loyalty.

The confirmation of the hypothesis regarding the inverse relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention represents one of the study's most significant findings. The statistically significant negative correlations, especially those observed for normative and affective commitment, indicate that the "internal" dimensions of commitment—loyalty and emotional attachment—play a crucial role in reducing employees' intention to leave. The fact that normative commitment exhibits the strongest negative association with turnover intention suggests that, within this organizational context, a sense of moral obligation and fairness towards the organisation constitutes a key driver of employee retention.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to strengthening the empirical evidence supporting the validity of the three-component model of organizational commitment in public or public-interest organisations, such as those operating in public transport. The very good psychometric properties of the measurement scale confirm its adequacy and relevance for future research conducted in similar organizational contexts in Romania.

From a practical standpoint, the findings hold considerable implications for the management of public transport organisations. The predominance of affective and normative commitment indicates that human resource strategies should prioritise the maintenance of a positive relational climate, the recognition of employees' contributions, and the reinforcement of a sense of belonging and organizational fairness. At the same time, the comparatively limited role of continuance commitment suggests that employee retention does not rely primarily on material incentives or external constraints, but rather on the quality of the relationship between employees and the organisation.

In a sector characterised by stability, social responsibility, and high operational demands, such as public transport, high levels of organizational commitment represent a critical strategic resource. The results of this study may serve as a starting point for the development of organizational policies aimed at fostering long-term retention, reducing turnover intention, and supporting sustainable performance.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite its informative value and methodological robustness, the present study has several limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting and generalising the findings.

A first limitation concerns the specificity of the organizational context. The research was conducted within a single public transport company in Romania, characterised by a particular occupational and demographic structure, including a high proportion of male employees, a relatively high average age, and long organizational tenure. This context restricts the generalisability of the results to other types of organisations or even to other entities within the public transport sector that may exhibit different workforce structures or managerial practices.

A second limitation derives from the cross-sectional research design. Data were collected at a single point in time, which does not allow for causal inferences regarding the relationships identified between organizational commitment and turnover intention. Although the observed correlations are statistically significant, they indicate associations rather than



causal directions between variables. Longitudinal studies would provide a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of organizational commitment over time.

Another important limitation concerns the exclusive use of self-report measures. Participants' responses may have been influenced by the desire to present themselves in a favourable light or by a tendency to provide socially acceptable answers, particularly within a stable organisational context characterised by long employee tenure. In addition, the distribution of the questionnaires through the human resources department may have amplified participants' perceptions that their responses could, to some extent, be associated with the organisation or with institutional evaluations. Although participation was voluntary and anonymity was explicitly guaranteed, this data collection procedure may nevertheless have generated an implicit pressure to conform to organisational norms or to present one's experiences in a more favourable manner.

From a methodological perspective, this potential influence of social desirability should be taken into account when interpreting the study's results, as it may lead to an overestimation of relationships between variables or to the reporting of higher levels of attitudes and behaviours perceived as desirable. In the literature, such effects are often discussed within the broader framework of common method bias, which may occur when variables are measured using the same method and at the same point in time. In the present study, however, the available data do not allow for additional statistical analyses to directly test the presence of this type of bias. Consequently, this limitation should be considered when interpreting the findings. Future research could address this issue by employing multiple data sources, including control scales for social desirability, or collecting data at different time points in order to reduce the risk of common method bias.

Furthermore, the unequal sizes of the analysed subgroups (for example, substantial differences between genders or across certain educational levels) constitute a methodological limitation. Such imbalances reduce the statistical power of comparative analyses and call for caution when interpreting observed differences between categories, especially in the case of subgroups with a small number of respondents.

Finally, the study focused primarily on organizational commitment and turnover intention, without incorporating other relevant psychosocial or organizational variables, such as job satisfaction, occupational stress, leadership style, or individual performance. The inclusion of these variables could have offered a more comprehensive perspective on the mechanisms underlying organizational commitment.

In conclusion, these limitations do not undermine the value of the findings, but rather highlight the need to interpret them within an appropriate contextual framework. They also point to clear directions for future research, including the expansion of the sample, the diversification of analysed variables, and the use of more complex methodological designs, aimed at reducing the likelihood of socially desirable responding.

## CONCLUSION

Data analysis indicates that the overall level of organizational commitment within the investigated sample is moderate to high, with a total mean score of 3.95 out of 5. Regarding its specific dimensions, a non-uniform distribution is observed. Affective commitment records a mean of 4.18, and normative commitment shows an identical mean value of 4.18, whereas continuance commitment is considerably lower, with a mean of 3.49. This configuration suggests that organizational attachment is primarily sustained by psychological identification with the institution and a sense of moral obligation toward it, rather than by the perceived costs associated with leaving the organization.



The results of the study indicate a high level of organizational commitment among employees of the analysed public transport company, predominantly characterised by affective and normative dimensions. Employees display a strong emotional attachment to the organisation and a pronounced sense of loyalty, while commitment based on constraints or perceived costs of leaving plays a secondary role.

The mature demographic structure of the workforce, together with long tenure in both employment and the organisation, is associated with higher levels of commitment, suggesting that professional stability contributes to the consolidation of the employee–organisation relationship. The confirmation of the hypothesis regarding the inverse relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention highlights the importance of commitment as a protective factor against employee turnover.

Overall, the study demonstrates that, within the context of public transport, organizational commitment is sustained primarily by emotional attachment and internalised norms of loyalty, and may therefore constitute a strategic resource for the stability and effective functioning of organisations in this sector. The findings provide a sound basis for future interventions aimed at maintaining and strengthening an organizational climate conducive to employees' long-term engagement.

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