

# Organizational Commitment versus Normative Independence?

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## Abstract

This study examines the relationship among organizational commitment, normative independence, self-knowledge management, employment opportunity, and intention to quit the job. 1416 employees from two companies of a corporation which is one of the top airline companies in Turkey have participated in this study. After applying a confirmatory factor analysis to the scales used in the research, the relationship between research variables has been analyzed via the structural equation model (SEM). According to research results, between organizational commitment and the turnover intention, a negative relationship has been identified. The normative independence of Company A employees (4.42) has been found to be higher than the normative independence of Company B employees (2.56). Company A employees were found to be deeply attached to self-knowledge management (4.97), and between self-knowledge management and intention to quit the job, it was found there is a significant relationship. In contrast, for Company B employees (2.06), and there was not a significant relationship. The relationship between employment opportunity and intention to quit the job was significant, and both Company A employees and Company B employees have showed similar characteristics.

**Keywords:** organizational commitment, normative independence, self-knowledge management, employment opportunity, intention to quit the job

## 1. Literature Review

*‘‘History is more or less bunk. It's tradition. We don't want tradition. We want to live in the present and the only history that is worth a tinker's damn is the history we make today.’* When Henry Ford said these words, the biggest problem in the Ford Automobile factory was the annual turnover rate of traditional structure's craftsmen, which had reached a rate of 370% (Zuboff, 1988). Ford believed the future success of his business depended on stability of workers and workers needed to be disciplined according to the necessities of the company.

Modernism had seen the organization and individual as two complementary parts. But priority within these two pieces had belonged to the organization and modernism had built the life of the individual as a discipline process in order to fulfill needs of the organization (Steward, 1994). To do so, modernism built a discipline process, starting from the childhood of the individual and ongoing into adulthood, which is suitable for the needs of the organization (Caille, 2007). The attitude and behavior of the member candidate of the organization had been decided and it was aimed to be stable to serve a specific purpose (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). During the classic modernism age, the market life span of products had been long because of slow change in production knowledge and technology. In this age, the organization management had seen that the stability of the organization's product and service production depended on the stability of workers and had aimed for workers to stay longer in the organization. For this reason, according to Zuboff, in the classical modernism period, an individual had been trained to do a task defined for him/her again and again, and had not been trained to differentiate (1988). The individual had had a business identity dependent on the long-term knowledge and relationship network, which was earned through job experience (Hiltrop, 1996). The individual, who had stable knowledge, about the business and relationship network, had adopted an organizational identity and his/her organizational commitment would occur (Brown & Duguid, 1998).

The acceleration of knowledge production and globalization, caused the beginning of a new era; the postmodern era. New knowledge and technologies used in production, transportation and communication caused a fragmentation in all processes, especially in production. This new system eliminated the necessity of collecting product and service production to a geographic location, and this led to a network production system that composed organizations located in different geographic locations, instead of a single organization. The acceleration of knowledge production and change along with the increase in competition in the network production system led the organization management to develop strategies for managing the change instead of creating stability and maintaining it. Therefore, the relationship between the organization and member has been re-defined and it has entered a new era. From this point on, the organization has been working on getting away from a self-commitment centered relationship and improving its flexibility feature. The individual is disciplined for independency instead of commitment within this new system. The organization, individual and the organization-individual relationship is re-defined according to newly occurring conditions.

### 1.1. Organizational Commitment

Becker saw commitment as the stability of an individual's attitude and behavior (1960). Kanter defined organizational commitment as a situation that was created as a result of behavior patterns, which described a

social structure, related to individual needs and benefits that occur as the individual's natural behavior (1968). Organizational commitment was defined by Wiener, as acting in a specific way and style as a result of the discipline process in order to realize organizational targets (1982). However, Allen and Meyer defined organizational commitment as the psychological set up for connecting people to the organization (1990). Curriuan underlined that the organizational commitment is an attitude extent from organization membership (1999).

The general acceptance for organizational commitment, individual is to behave according to organization's goals and targets and to continue organization membership. This process, which is led by management (Abhinanda & Reeta, 2013), is shapes attitudes and behaviors in a stable way serving to specific goal via disciplining organization members (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). As one of the sources of organizational stability, organizational commitment has been seen as associated with the desire to remain in the organization, and the individual who shows commitment to the organization has been described as an ideal employee (Allen & Meyer, 1990). A strong relationship between the intention to quit the job and weak organizational commitment has been found and it has been stated that the individual with high organizational commitment will have low intention to quit the job (Wong, Hui, Wong, & Law, 2001; Egan, Yang, & Barlett, 2004; Wright & Bonnett, 2007; Thevarajah & Ratman, 2014).

Organizational commitment may not always be positive in nature. For example, according to Penley and Gould's model, the individual may not be satisfied with the relationship he has with the organization and can still choose to continue his membership even he/she does not feel belongs to the organization. Even if the relationship is negative, there is still organizational commitment, which is foreigner commitment. Even if there is foreigner commitment, individual's behavior serves goals, targets and benefit of organization and the membership of individual still continues, there is organizational commitment and organizational goals are being realize (1988).

Joo and Park emphasize that organizational commitment is made up of an individual's feelings towards the whole organization. For this reason they stated it could be inferred from the relationship between the intention to quit the job and organizational commitment level, whether the employee will continue or discontinue his/her organization membership. (2010). Lane and Parkin (1998), William and Livingston (1994) have drawn attention as well to the idea that the employees with high organizational commitment will have low intention to quit the job.

However Falkenburg and Schyns stated the distinction between organizational commitment and the intention to quit the job is not clear in the postmodern age as it was assumed to be by the classical approach (2007).

### *1.2. Normative Commitment Versus Normative Independence*

Modernism, according to Iverson and Buttigieg, has disciplined the individual to be suitable for normative commitment during the training process of preparing him/her to organization membership and has brought commitment as a basic personality trait (1999). Ray and Reed described normative commitment as a 'loyalty habit' (1994). Zuboff stated that the modern individual is being disciplined to have a commitment towards the organization in the pre-organization training process and nowadays middle aged and above individuals are being disciplined for normative commitment (1988). In support of this view, Theo and Sungur identified in their research that both individuals who grew up in a socialist system in Bulgaria and above middle aged individuals who grew up in Turkey had high normative commitment (2004).

Lee, Terence, Brooks, Mc Daniel, & Hill stated knowledge and technology production have accelerated and this re-shaped the structure of the organization, although economic and financial crises gained continuity and this has wide and deep negative effects in terms of the organization-member relationship (1999). The changes in terms of the organization-member relationship, cause employment methods, which cannot be considered within the scope of commitment. One of the most important thing for an organization is not what it owns, but is having an effective network that provides reachability and usability opportunity to the temporary employees (Funk, 2009). 95% of Fortune 1000 companies already indicated that they are purchasing services through external procurement and 32% of the companies will extend external service procurement in the following 12-month period (Dominguez, 2006). Bauman states that in an environment where the number of employees were reduced, creating commitment between organization and employees is impossible (2001).

Therefore, the motto for organizations and individuals nowadays days is flexibility. The underlying factor of this motto is the capitalists' willingness of not to affiliate to workforce. At the core of this want, there is willingness to rapidly adapt the organization to changes in knowledge and technology, which the organization uses, and market conditions. The acceleration of change in every field, instability in the organization's structure and applications, uncertainty and new organizational structures lead individuals to avoid commitment instead of commitment and employment probability. (Muijen & Kolpman, 1994). In the postmodern era, the acceptance of the commandment has been maintained as 'there is no rescue by organization' as well as the realization of this commandment (Bauman, *The Individualized Society*, 2005). From this point on the universal rule for the individual is 'you are worthy if you can do something by yourself and if you can turn yourself a product' (Funk, 2009). In the classic approach, the individual is accepted as passive and ready for commitment in his/her career

management (Joo & Park, 2010), however, commandment nowadays in the individual is forced to be active not passive and to make himself/herself as a product for the organization. The individual is the one who plans his individual development, and he is responsible on the outside as much as the inside of the organization and he has all the responsibility (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999).

Organizations need flexibility for efficiently and effectively managing the change instead of establishing and protecting stability. The organization aims to keep the commitment to the employee at the lowest level. Along with these changes, normative independency in the postmodern era takes the place of normative commitment in pre-organization membership training process. But this new situation revives a lot of dependencies such as employment probability, ongoing improvement and career instead of commitment to an organization (Funk, 2009).

In the 1990's collectivist countries as China (Verburg, Drenth, Koopman, Van Muijen, & Wang, 1999), India (Ramamoorthy, Kulkarni, Gupta, & Flood, 2007), Poland and Hungaria (Gomez, 2003) have added classes to their education system that aims individualism, independency, competitiveness and innovation in order to fulfill the needs of global companies. In the research that has been conducted by Ramamoorthy at. all in 2007, it has been identified that independency is dominant in the work life of individuals even though they are ontological collectivists. Indians stated they can build a career in their organization, but at the same time they stated their intentions to quit the job and that they intended to do a job search for better salaries, development opportunities and promotion opportunities (2007).

In the research on a company undergoing a downsizing process that has been conducted by Fonner and Roloff, employees stated the psychological contract with the organization was violated by the organization, because the management moved independently without taking them into consideration. As a result of this, researchers identified employees are in ambiguity about their future and their organization commitment level had decreased. On the other hand, it has been found that the individuals employed as interns, on the contrary to employees, saw applications as downsizing that causes layoffs, external procurement or employing machines instead of humans. As the future's potential employees, interns indicated it is normal to encounter this kind of applications and to change jobs. It has been found that interns accepted the fact that the organization may provide them development potential which will not be permanent, nowadays there is no job guarantee and they will have to work in other organizations (2006). This can be interpreted as evidence that independence is taught as normative adversely to dependence and loyalty in the discipline process in the classical approach. Pink calls post-modern age as "independent employees' society" (1997). Castells describes this situation as 'the rise of net society' (2008).

### *1.3. Self- Knowledge Management*

Knowledge management is the process of developing talents, and retaining new knowledge and usage for individual. The individual, in the organization of classical modernism, acquired his/her knowledge and talents by doing the same task many times in a stable environment. Because of high stability and low change, this knowledge and talent kept its validity for long periods. Acquiring this knowledge was difficult and it is not lost easily as it maintains its validity for long period (Zuboff, 1988).

Acceleration of knowledge production, and the interpretation of knowledge from different areas and distributing it to other areas speeded up the change. Today's organizations, rather than managing the change, increase efficiency and effectiveness and use new knowledge; ways and methods to have competitive advantage instead of maintain the stability for long periods. The organizational structure is re-designed, job descriptions and knowledge and talents that an employee should have is changed as a result of changes in business processes. Nowadays, continuous change requires the organization member to have talents such as mental flexibility rather than experience, quick thinking and the ability to adapt (De Chardin, 1964).

In this new period, the individual is responsible for having new knowledge and talents, which are required by the change. Responsibility is transferred from the organization to the individual, and responsibility has been institutionalized with terms such as 'personal development' and 'lifelong learning' (Suutari & Makela, 2007). Any individual can have desired jobs and identities through learned new knowledge and talents.

As a result of this change, the individual, who pays attention to personal development, looks for ways to opportunities that may help to develop himself/herself in the inside and outside of the organization, ways for self-development and ways to be better in his/her job (Joo & Park, 2010). According to Foucault, this approach revealed a new way of rationality (1999). The individual takes the market as a reference point for his personal development rather than the organization which he works for. Employment probability and market demand is much more important than job guarantee for today's individual. (Günter, Chei, Paula, Jean, & Mami, 2009). Knowledge management which basically refers to the individual's development, is planned as market oriented rather than organization oriented. Due to this, an attempt to transform knowledge into a product is a transferable and marketable expertise (Foucault, Power, 2005). Furthermore, individual thinks that he/she can find job much easier, at least he/she will not be forced in finding a job, if he/she leaves the organization thanks to this self-investment he/she previously made. Flood defines this situation as 'learning in uncertainty' (2001).

#### 1.4. Employment Probability

Employment probability is the perception of the individual's highness or lowness of opportunity to find a job when he/she leaves his/her job. If the individual considers his/her probability of finding a job as high, his/her intention to quit the job strengthens. If the probability to find a job is low, individual's chronic dependency strengthens.

Ramamoorthy et al. have identified in their research that Irish employees do have the intention to leave their jobs, but the employees' willingness to continue their jobs is stronger. They have explained the cause of this as the tightness in job alternatives outside of the organization due to the crisis in the Irish economy (2007). Ng and Feldman have stated that individuals with low employment probabilities due any reason have low intention in leaving their jobs (2009).

## 2. Theoretical Model

This study examines the relationship among organizational commitment, normative independence, self-knowledge management, employment opportunity, and the intention to quit the job. Organization commitment is taken as the independent variable whether it exists or not rather than its source effect, in contrast to the traditional approach. In the research setup, the relationship between the intention to leave the job and organization commitment has been examined. At the same time, the relationship between whether there is normative independency for individuals and the intention to leave the job, the relationship between individual's market oriented personal knowledge management and intention to leave the job, and the relationship between employment probability and intention to leave the job has been analyzed. Afterwards, employees of two companies of a corporation, who work in the same business environment with similar job descriptions, have been compared via the research model using the SEM multi-group analysis.

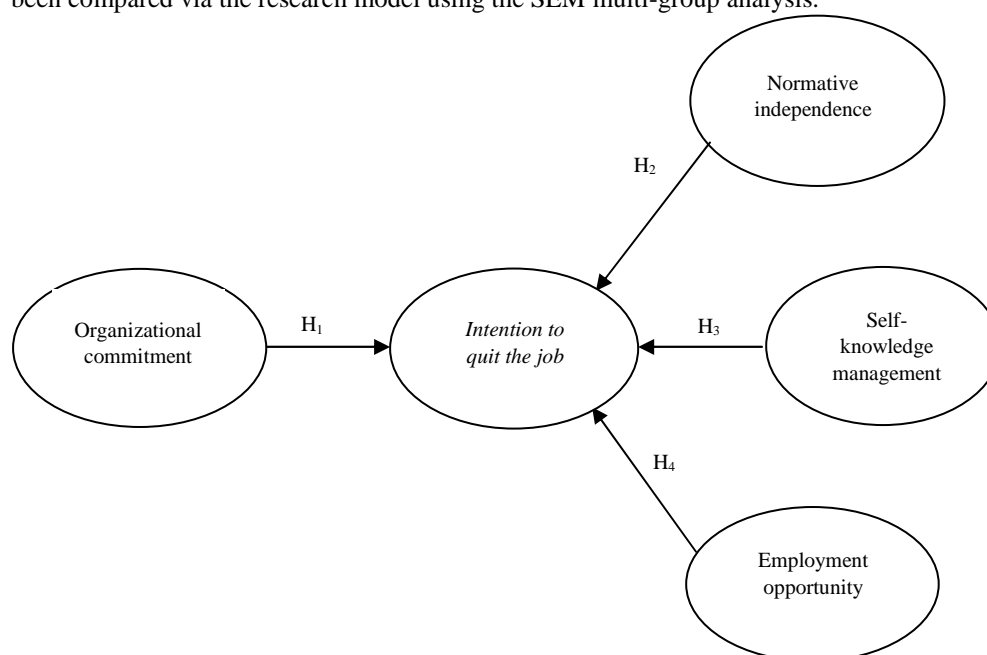


Figure 1. The theoretical model

#### 2.1. Hypotheses

**H<sub>1</sub>**: Organizational commitment will significantly and negatively correlate with the intention to quit the job.

**H<sub>2</sub>**: Normative independence will significantly and positively correlate with the intention to quit the job.

**H<sub>3</sub>**: Self-knowledge management Perceived supervisor support will significantly and positively correlate with the intention to quit the job.

**H<sub>4</sub>**: Employment Opportunity will significantly and positively correlate with the intention to quit the job.

## 3. Method

### 3.1. Participants

Data for this study came from the workers of two companies of a corporation (that will be called company A and B in this study) of the largest technical maintenance corporation in the Turkish aviation industry, which is at the top of the fortune 100 in Turkey. Participants who are employees of Company A or Company B are working in same work environment, on the same jobs with the same job descriptions.

Participants have been visited during work hours. During these meetings an overview of the purpose of the research was provided to the participants. 2600 questionnaires were distributed. A total of 1513 completed

questionnaires, 535 from Company A, and 978 from Company B were received in return. Eighty-seven of the responses were unusable. The response rate was 58%.

*Descriptive Statistics of Corporation:* The average age was 31.5 (SD 6.7). Participants' average tenure was 9.1 years (SD 4.4), and the average tenure in the organization was 6.1 years (SD 4.4).

*Descriptive Statistics of Company A:* The average age was 27 (SD 4.5). Participants' average tenure was 3.2 years (SD 2.4), and the average tenure in the organization was 1 year (SD 0.8).

*Descriptive Statistics of Company B:* The average age was 34 (SD 9.4). Participants' average tenure was 13 years (SD 6.4), and the average tenure in the organization was 9.3 years (SD 5.2).

### 3.2. Measures

*Organizational Commitment* as an attitude is measured with the Meyer and Allen's Organizational Commitment Scale (Meyer & Allen, 1991.). The scale is comprised of 6 items. Sample items are "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization" and "This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me".

*Intention to quit the job* was measured with a slightly modified version of Landau and Hammer (Landau & Hammer, 1986). The scale consists of 4 items, and the sample items are "I am actively looking for another job" and "If I am offered a job which pays me more money I will quit my job".

*The normative Independence* scale has been developed by researchers. The scale consists of 5 items and the sample items are "To work at the same company for a long time reduces the chances of finding a job" and "To work at the same company for a long time limits my skills".

*The self-Knowledge Management enhancement* scale has been developed by researchers. The scale consists of 5 items and the sample items are "My Company does not demand anything but I try to keep up with all new developments about to my work" and "If a knowledge is important in the job market, even if it is not used in my company, I usually learn it".

*Employment Opportunity* has been developed by researchers. The scale consists of 6 items and the sample items are "When I quit my job, I can find immediately a new one in another sector" and "When I quit my job I can find another one in a more reputable company which is in the same industry".

The scale has a total of 26 items. Participants indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each item on a 6-point scale, ranging from 6-strongly agree to 1-strongly disagree.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Scale Analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis was first conducted by using the AMOS 18 package to ensure separate and reliable scales were used for assessing the variables. Absolute fit indices which are chi-square ( $X^2$ ) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), non-normed fit index (NNFI), Tucker&Lewis index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI), and goodness-of-fit index (GFI) were checked.

The results were satisfactory, and confirmed the main set of variables comprised separate factors:  $X^2(1837.8) = 874.7$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  $X^2/df = 2.1$ ; RMSEA= 0.054; CFI= .94; GFI= .90; TLI= .93; NNFI= .92.

Next, a correlation matrix was produced in order to analyze the elementary relationship among the research variables. In table 1. The Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Intercorrelations represent the correlations among the variables along with the means, standard deviations, and coefficient alphas. The results are supportive of the hypothesized model.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Intercorrelations

	N		Company A		Company B		1	2	3	4	5
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD					
1 <b>Organizational commitment</b>	4.63	1.05	4.50	1.02	4.70	1.08	(.82)				
2 <b>Intention to quit the job</b>	3.44	1.38	3.60	1.49	3.20	1.31	-	(.89)			
3 <b>Normative independence</b>	3.51	1.01	4.42	.84	2.56	1.11	.50**	-.26*	.44**	(.92)	
4 <b>Self -knowledge management</b>	3.03	.92	4.97	.94	2.06	.90	.12	.19*	.25*	.25*	(.96)
5 <b>Employment opportunity</b>	4.11	.97	4.37	.99	4.03	.96	-.20*	.52**	.40**	.23*	(.87)

N=1426; Company A's sample size= 496; Company B's sample size= 930.

\*\*p < .01;

\*p < .05; Entries in the diagonal represent the coefficient alphas.

### 4.2. Structural Model

The structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypothesized model. Several fit indices were checked to determine whether the hypothesized model demonstrated an acceptable fit according to the data. The hypothesized model showed an acceptable fit to the data.  $X^2(715) = 1208.56$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  $X^2/df = 1.69$ ; RMSEA=

0.046; CFI= .95; GFI= .88; TLI= .93; NNFI= .96.

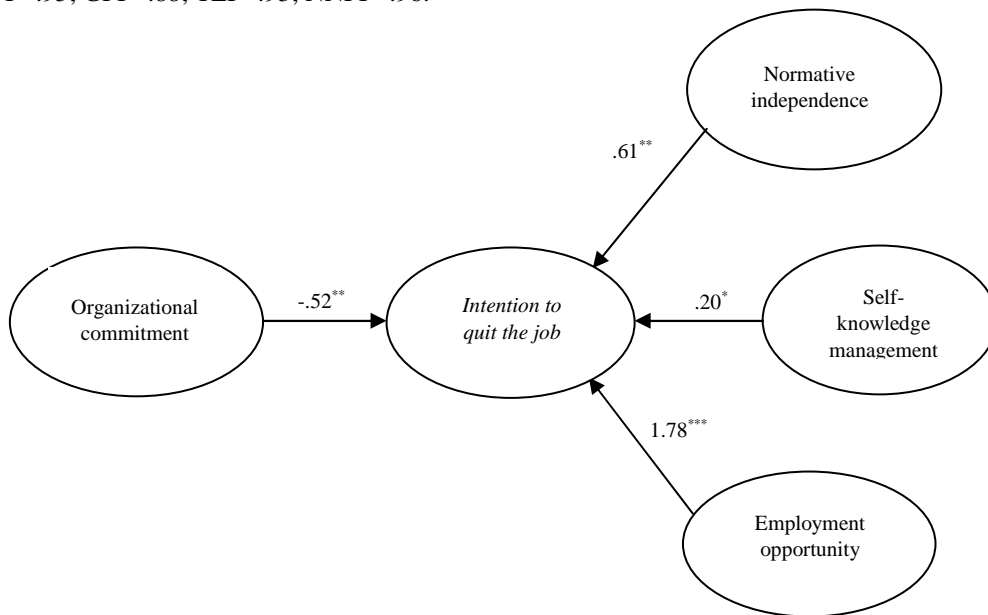


Figure 2. Antecedents and outcomes of types-structural model for the Corporation;  
 N=1426; \*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001

In accordance with hypothesis 1, the organizational commitment was strongly and negatively related to intention to quit the job (-.52,  $p < .01$ ).

In terms of hypothesis 2, normative independence was strongly and positively related to intention to quit the job (.61,  $p < .01$ ).

From the perspective of hypothesis 3, self-knowledge management was related with intention to quit the job (.20,  $p < .05$ ).

Hypothesis 4, employment opportunity was strongly and positively related intention to quit the job (1.78,  $p < .001$ ).

#### 4.3. Multi-Group Analysis of Structural Model

After hypothesis tests, a multi-group analysis was simultaneously made through the structural model. By this analysis the parameters were tested as to whether they differ across groups that are within the same population.

##### 4.3.1. Company A's Analysis of Structural Model

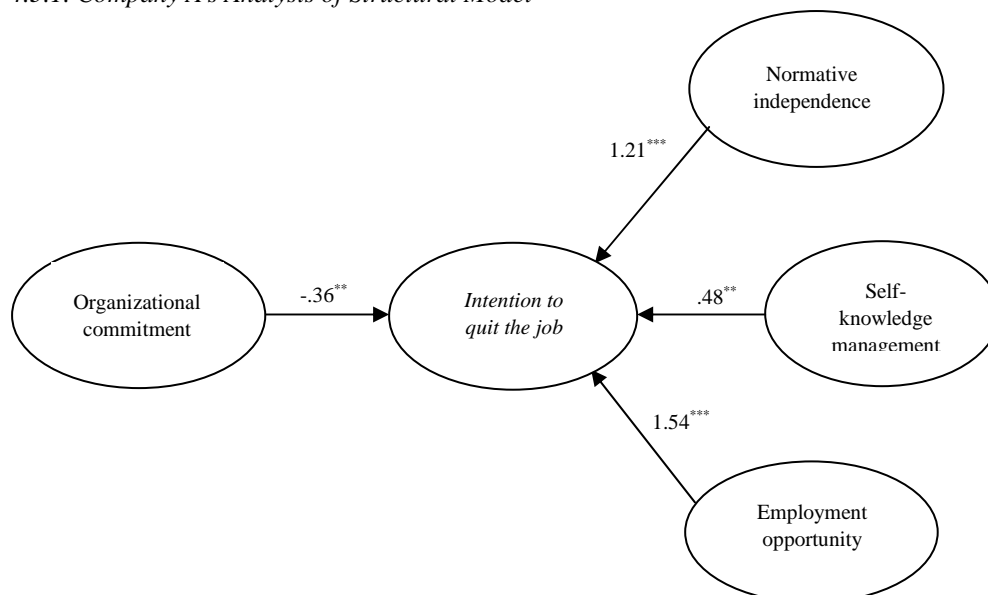


Figure 3. Antecedents and outcomes of structural model for Company A of the Corporation;  
 n= 496; \*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001

*Company A's Employees*; the organizational commitment was negatively related to intention to quit the job (-.36,

$p < .01$ ).

Normative independence was strongly and positively related to intention to quit the job (1.21,  $p < .001$ ).

Self-knowledge management was related to intention to quit the job (.48,  $p < .01$ ).

Employment opportunity was strongly and positively related to intention to quit the job (1.54,  $p < .001$ ).

#### 4.3.2. Company B's Analysis of Structural Model

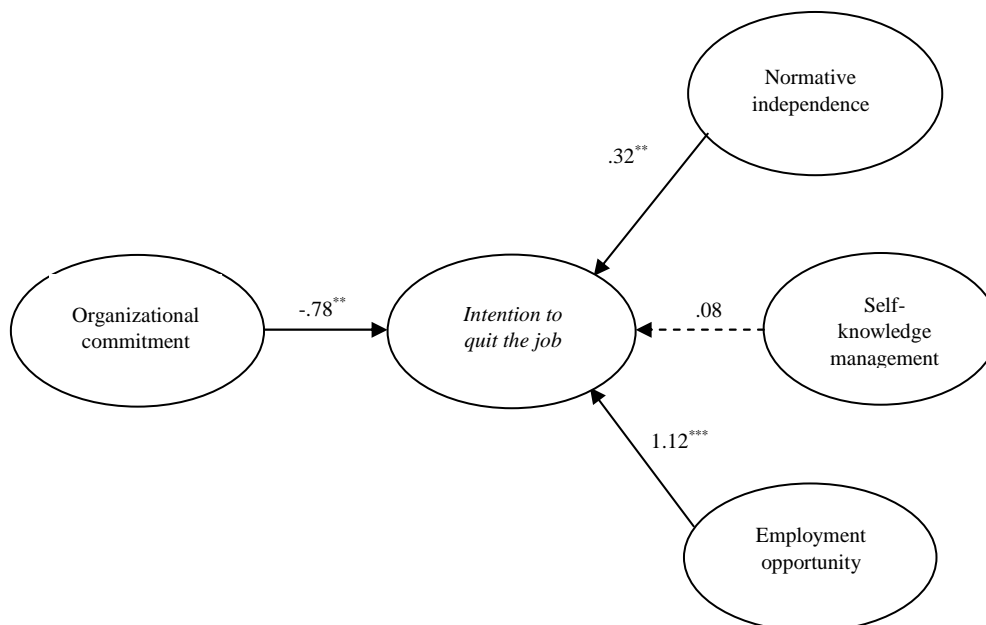


Figure 4. Antecedents and outcomes of structural model for Company B of the Corporation;  
 n= 930; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

*Company B's Employees*; the organizational commitment was negatively related to intention to quit the job ( $-.78$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Normative independence was positively related to intention to quit the job ( $.32$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Self-knowledge management was not related to intention to quit the job ( $.08$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

Employment opportunity was strongly and positively related to intention to quit the job ( $1.12$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

## 5. Conclusion

Some results of the study do not coincide with those of previous research. According to the results of the study between organizational commitment and turnover intention, a negative relationship ( $-.52$ ,  $p < .01$ ) has been identified. Organizational commitment of Company B employees who have higher company tenure (4.70) was high, and their intention to quit the job (3.20) was low, and between these variables a powerful and negative ( $-.78$ ,  $p < .01$ ) relationship was identified. However, Company A employees who have a few years company tenure, had strong organizational commitment (4.50), but their turnover intention was higher (3.60), and between these variables, a strong negative relationship ( $-.36$ ,  $p < .01$ ) was identified. Based on the research results, it can be said Company A employees had a pre-commitment to the corporation. As well, the normative independence of these individuals was high, and the commitment was not a normative commitment, and all participants had both organizational commitment and the intention to quit the job. The relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention today is not very clear. The existence of organizational commitment does not mean an individual has intention to sustain membership to an organization.

The normative independence of Company A employees (4.42) has been found to be higher than the normative independence of Company B employees (2.56). According to the literature, the middle-aged and older individuals who are Company B employees, have been disciplined according to normative commitment. Therefore, their normative independence must be low. The research results showed Company B employees who were disciplined according to normative commitment have developed a normative independence attitude. Baruch states, people who were disciplined according to normative commitment had been forced to live in the new system which shocked and forced them to protect themselves, and he called this generation the 'desert generation' (2004). The relationship between normative independence and intention to quit was significant, for the employees of Company A (1.21,  $p < .001$ ), and the employees of Company B ( $.32$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Company A employees with high normative independence can be seen as market oriented individuals.

The research results show a significant relationship between self-knowledge management and turnover intention ( $.20$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Company A employees are deeply attached to self-knowledge management (4.97), and between

self-knowledge management and intention to quit the job, it was found there is a significant relationship (.48,  $p < .01$ ). In contrast, for Company B employees, there was not a significant relationship (.08,  $p > .05$ ). These results coincide with those of previous research. Company A employees, as young individuals, have self-knowledge management which is market oriented and they are ready to put extra effort into gaining extra knowledge and new skills (Joo & Park, 2010). In contrast, Company B employees who have been working in the same job for a long time, care about organizational dynamics. They do not have self-knowledge management, and intention to gain extra knowledge or skill if it is not required by their job (Zuboff, 1988).

The employment opportunities of all employees was very high (4.11) and the relationship between employment opportunity and turnover intention was very strong (1.78,  $p < .001$ ). The relationship between employment opportunity and intention to quit the job, both for Company A employees (1.54,  $p < .001$ ) and Company B employees (1.12,  $p < .001$ ) showed similar characteristics.

As a results of this study, all members of the organization could have organizational commitment that is independent from the organizational tenure. An employee could indicate strong attitudes which are organizational commitment, normative independence, and intention to quit the job. However, organizational commitment does not mean an employee has the intention to continue the membership to the organization. And it can be said; the relationships among organizational commitment, and normative independence and the intention to quit the job are not very clear and well defined. The post-modern individual cares about the possibility of employment, and he manages his career and personal development, and acts accordingly.

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