The Commitment Anchoring Model (CAM): Strengthening Organizational Relationships in an Era of Emotional Volatility

Adam M. Charles[1]* Africanus C. Sarwatt[2] & Luhuvilo Lupondo[2]

[1]*Department of Arts and Social Sciences, The Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy, Tanzania*

[2]*Department of Rural Development and Regional Planning, Institute of Rural Development Planning, Tanzania*

**Corresponding author:charlesadam.ac@gmail.com*

Abstract

Organizations today are operating in environments marked by emotional volatility, rapid technological change, and rising uncertainty, which makes sustaining stability more challenging than ever. Although traditional organizational behavior models emphasize emotion-driven engagement and job satisfaction as key predictors of performance, these affective states shift quickly and often fail to provide durable stability. This paper addresses this gap by introducing the Commitment Anchoring Model (CAM), a conceptual framework developed through an integrative review and synthesis of literature in organizational behavior, psychology, and relational ethics. CAM positions commitment not emotion as the central stabilizing force in organizational systems. The model proposes that while emotions act as dynamic currents shaped by internal and external pressures, commitment provides the enduring anchor that holds organizational relationships steady. By reframing stability as a function of value-driven dedication rather than fluctuating emotional states, CAM offers a fresh theoretical contribution for understanding resilience, retention, and organizational cohesion. The paper outlines the model's core assumptions, presents testable propositions, and highlights its implications for leadership, culture building, and workplace resilience, calling for future empirical studies to validate CAM across diverse organizational contexts.

Keywords: Commitment Anchoring Model, Emotional Volatility, Organizational Resilience, Employee Stability, Leadership, Organizational Behavior

Background

Modern organizations operate in environments that feel increasingly unstable. Technological disruption, shifting workforce expectations, and the rise of hybrid and remote work have reshaped how people interact and cope with job demands. These changes, combined with heightened emotional labour, create workplaces where stability can quickly erode (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017). Employees now navigate uncertainty on multiple fronts from fluctuating economic conditions to fast-moving organizational decisions which often places additional strain on wellbeing, collaboration, and long-term engagement.

For decades, scholarships in organizational behavior have emphasized emotions and job satisfaction as central drivers of performance and retention. Classic perspectives argue that employees who feel connected to their work perform better and stay longer (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Yet recent evidence complicates this assumption. Emotional states, while important, shift easily as workloads intensify, leadership styles change, or structural transformation unfolds (Elfenbein, 2023). Research also shows that emotional exhaustion and incivility tend to rise during periods of organizational change, which in turn weakens commitment and increases turnover intention (Zhu et al., 2023; Jia et al., 2022). These patterns highlight a growing problem: emotion-based engagement may energize employees in the moment, but it rarely provides the stable foundation organizations need to sustain performance over time.

This unresolved tension reveals a clear gap in existing models. Much of the current literature highlights the benefits of emotional engagement, yet it gives limited attention to the vulnerabilities that accompany emotion-driven approaches particularly in volatile work environments. As workplaces continue to experience what Cupać (2020) describes as an emerging "age of anxiety," organizations require a stabilizing mechanism that is less reactive to the ebb and flow of emotional intensity. Recent studies suggest that commitment offers this form of durable anchoring, especially when it is rooted in shared values, purpose, and accountability (Zahirah & Satrya, 2024; Al Halbusi et al., 2021).

Against this backdrop, the Commitment Anchoring Model (CAM) is proposed as a conceptual response. Developed through theoretical synthesis across organizational psychology, behavior, and ethics, CAM argues that commitment—not emotion—serves as the core stabilizing force within organizational systems. Emotions continue to play a meaningful role, but they function as dynamic currents shaped by internal interactions and external pressures. Commitment, by contrast, is intentionally chosen, value-driven, and more resilient under strain, making it a far more reliable anchor during instability (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Blaique et al., 2023). CAM therefore reframes how organizational stability is understood by positioning commitment as the mechanism that ensures continuity even when emotional climates fluctuate.

Purpose and Objectives of the Paper

To address this theoretical and practical gap, the paper aims to:
- Develop and clarify the Commitment Anchoring Model (CAM) as a conceptual framework for understanding how commitment stabilizes organizational relationships and performance.
- Identify the limitations of emotion-centered models and explain why emotions alone cannot sustain stability in contemporary workplaces.
- Present CAM's assumptions, structure, and theoretical contributions, situating it in relation to existing commitment theories and emotional engagement models.
- Offer testable propositions that can guide empirical research and future validation of CAM.

▪ Discuss practical implications for leadership, team dynamics, employee engagement, organizational culture, and resilience in high-volatility contexts.

Together, these objectives position CAM as a timely and necessary framework for understanding how organizations can maintain cohesion and direction in environments defined by uncertainty and emotional fluctuation.

Theoretical Background

Emotional Volatility and the Limits of Emotion-Based Organizational Stability

Emotions have long been recognized as central to organizational life, influencing how employees think, behave, and relate to one another. Research shows that affective experiences such as enthusiasm, frustration, trust, or anxiety shape day-to-day interactions and overall performance (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017). Yet these emotional states are inherently fluid. They shift in response to changing workloads, leadership behaviour, team dynamics, and broader socio-economic pressures. Contemporary studies highlight that this emotional volatility can increase burnout, disrupt collaboration, and weaken an employee's sense of connection to the organization (Elfenbein, 2023; Jia et al., 2022). Such fluctuations suggest that emotions, while influential, may not be a reliable foundation for long-term organizational stability.

Moreover, the growing expectation that employees regulate their emotions especially in high-touch or service-oriented roles has introduced new challenges. Emotional labour often requires workers to display positivity or empathy even when these feelings are not authentic, which can lead to emotional exhaustion and reduced psychological safety (Grandey et al., 2019; Mohamed et al., 2023). Studies show that when emotional expression becomes performative rather than genuine, employees are more likely to disengage, distrust leadership, and withdraw from organizational commitments. These findings expose the limitations of models that rely too heavily on emotional engagement as the main driver of workplace performance and retention.

Classic frameworks such as Affective Events Theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) provide valuable insight into how emotions shape work behaviour. However, more recent research suggests that emotional stability, rather than emotional intensity, is a stronger predictor of sustained engagement and performance (Tewfik et al., 2024). High emotional variability has been linked to increased turnover intention and reduced task performance (Zhu et al., 2023). This growing evidence underscores the need for organizational models that account for the unpredictable nature of emotions and offer mechanisms that can stabilize employee behaviour and relationships despite emotional shifts.

Given these limitations, it becomes necessary to examine constructs that are less reactive and more enduring than affective states. This need for stability creates the intellectual space from which the Commitment Anchoring Model (CAM) emerges.

Commitment as a Deliberate and Stable Anchor in Organizational Systems

Unlike emotions, which fluctuate in response to changing circumstances, commitment reflects a deliberate and value-driven decision to remain aligned with organizational goals. Organizational commitment is well established in the literature as a multidimensional construct affective, normative, and continuance each capturing different facets of why individuals stay (Meyer & Allen, 1997). What distinguishes commitment

from emotion-based engagement is its intentionality. Commitment does not depend on momentary feelings. Instead, it grows from shared values, ethical consistency, and trust between individuals and their organizations.

Recent scholarship reinforces this perspective. Studies show that commitment strengthens both individual performance and collective resilience, particularly in volatile environments (Blaique et al., 2023). Employees who are committed tend to maintain their focus and collaboration even when faced with setbacks or uncertainty, which helps buffer the destabilizing effects of emotional turbulence. Leadership also plays a crucial role in cultivating this form of commitment. Ethical and transformational leaders who communicate purpose and fairness consistently have been shown to foster higher levels of both affective and normative commitment (Breevaart & Zacher, 2019; Quadri et al., 2024). This suggests that commitment is not simply a personal orientation but a systemic resource, something that shapes and stabilizes the broader organizational climate.

Critically, existing commitment theories often position commitment as one variable among many, frequently subordinate to emotions or job satisfaction. Yet the increasing volatility of modern workplaces suggests that commitment may play a foundational role in sustaining cohesion. This shift in emphasis lays the groundwork for CAM by reframing commitment as the primary stabilizing mechanism rather than a secondary outcome of emotional engagement.

Relational Resilience in the Modern Workplace

The modern workplace has become what Cupać (2020) calls an "age of anxiety," characterized by uncertainty, rapid change, and heightened psychological strain. Employees increasingly face role ambiguity, job insecurity, and emotionally charged interactions that can disrupt relationships and weaken social cohesion (Bakker et al., 2014). These pressures create environments where emotional reactions can spread quickly across teams, amplifying instability. In such conditions, organizations must rely on relational resilience the capacity to maintain trust, collaboration, and shared identity even when circumstances are difficult.

Evidence increasingly shows that commitment is a central driver of this resilience. Studies on organizational resilience reveal that employees with strong commitment display lower stress reactivity and higher adaptability, enabling them to remain engaged despite challenges (Wut et al., 2022). Organizations with cultures rooted in shared purpose and long-term values also tend to outperform those relying primarily on emotional engagement initiatives or short-term incentives (Elcheroth & Drury, 2020). These findings point to a structural truth: stable relationships in organizations are built more on sustained commitment than on fluctuating emotional energy.

This recognition further strengthens the justification for CAM. If emotional volatility is inevitable and external pressures unavoidable, then organizations require a stabilizing anchor something that grounds relationships and sustains performance. CAM responds to this need by positioning commitment as the central element that holds organizational systems together, providing continuity even as emotional conditions shift.

Ethical Foundations of Commitment: Fairness, Justice, and Shared Responsibility

Commitment is not only psychological; it is also moral. Employees are more likely to remain committed when they perceive fairness, integrity, and mutual responsibility within their organizations. Research on organizational justice shows that perceptions of fairness in policies, decision-making, and interpersonal treatment significantly shape long-term commitment (Colquitt et al., 2014). Ethical climates that prioritize transparency and reciprocal care also enhance trust, which strengthens employees' willingness to stay and contribute meaningfully (Elcheroth & Drury, 2020).

Conversely, when workers perceive exploitation, inequity, or inconsistency between stated and enacted values, commitment erodes even if emotional engagement programs are in place (Al Halbusi et al., 2021). This underscores the ethical dimension of commitment: it thrives in environments where responsibility is shared, where values are lived rather than merely stated, and where relationships are grounded in justice.

Incorporating these ethical elements into the theoretical foundation of CAM expands the model beyond affective or motivational explanations. It positions commitment as a relational and ethical anchor that provides stability not just for individuals but for organizational systems as a whole.

The Commitment Anchoring Model (CAM)

Model Development and Conceptual Basis

The Commitment Anchoring Model (CAM) was developed through a deductive conceptual synthesis of literature in organizational behavior, psychology, resilience studies, and relational ethics. Insights from prior research on emotional labour, organizational commitment, and ethical leadership were examined collectively to identify patterns and mechanisms that contribute to stability within modern organizations (Grandey et al., 2019; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Elcheroth & Drury, 2020). This integrative approach revealed a consistent theme: while emotions play a significant role in shaping everyday workplace experiences, they are too volatile to serve as a foundation for long-term stability. Commitment, however, emerged across several bodies of literature as an intentional, enduring, and value-based construct that can sustain organizational cohesion even in turbulent environments.

The model therefore emerges not from empirical testing but from a theoretical consolidation of existing frameworks. Its purpose is to offer an updated lens through which to understand stability in contemporary workplaces characterized by emotional fluctuation, structural change, and external volatility.

Operational Definitions of Core Constructs

To support future empirical validation, CAM defines its core constructs explicitly:

Commitment (Anchor)

A deliberate, value-based, and enduring psychological and ethical attachment to organizational goals, relationships, and shared purpose. Commitment reflects a chosen continuity of alignment even when emotional states fluctuate and includes moral responsibility, trust, and identification with organizational values (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Blaique et al., 2023).

Emotional Volatility (Currents)

The dynamic, fluctuating, and often unpredictable shifts in employee emotions influenced by leadership interactions, workload demands, social dynamics, and external stressors. Emotional volatility encompasses emotional highs and lows that can amplify instability, disengagement, or burnout within organizations (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017; Jia et al., 2022).

External Stressors (Environment)

Contextual pressures originating outside the individual or team, including economic uncertainty, technological change, pandemics, competitive pressures, or policy shifts. These forces generate emotional strain and structural disruption that test the resilience of organizational systems (Elcheroth & Drury, 2020; Wut et al., 2022).

These definitions position CAM as a framework capable of being operationalized, measured, and empirically evaluated.

CAM's Core Assumptions

CAM is built on four interrelated assumptions:
- Emotional volatility is inevitable. Workplace emotions fluctuate in response to shifting demands and contextual changes.
- Commitment functions as the stabilizing anchor. Intentional, value-driven commitment provides continuity when emotional dynamics become unstable.
- Resilience arises from deliberate investment. Sustainable performance and relational continuity depend more on consistent commitment than on transient emotional engagement.
- Ethical climates reinforce the anchoring effect. Fairness, justice, and shared responsibility strengthen commitment and thereby enhance stability (Colquitt et al., 2014; Al Halbusi et al., 2021).

These assumptions collectively frame commitment as an organizational stabilizer capable of buffering the turbulence introduced by emotional or structural fluctuations.

Model Structure: Anchor, Currents, and Environment

CAM conceptualizes organizations as ecosystems in which commitment functions as the anchor, emotions represent the currents, and external forces constitute the environment.

The Anchor: Commitment

Commitment is placed at the center of CAM as the stabilizing force that keeps organizational relationships intact. It reflects a long-term psychological contract based on shared purpose, ethical consistency, and relational trust (Meyer et al., 2012). Strong commitment mitigates emotional disruption, enabling employees and teams to maintain alignment even when emotional climates shift.

The Currents: Emotions.

Emotions are portrayed as dynamic currents moving throughout the system. They influence creativity, collaboration, and morale but lack structural permanence. CAM acknowledges that emotional currents are vital sources of energy and innovation, yet they become destabilizing when organizations rely on them as their primary binding force (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017; Elfenbein, 2023).

The Environment: External Stressors

External stressors represent forces such as organizational change, market volatility, crises, or technological disruption. These pressures can trigger emotional turbulence and threaten organizational cohesion. CAM argues that strong commitment absorbed at both individual and collective levels enables organizations to navigate these forces more successfully (Wut et al., 2022).

Together, these components form a structural representation of how stability is achieved: emotions move, external pressures push, but commitment holds.

CAM's Theoretical Contribution and Contrast with Existing Models

CAM makes a distinct theoretical contribution by repositioning commitment as the primary stabilizing mechanism in organizational life. Traditional models, such as Meyer and Allen's Three-Component Model (TCM), conceptualize commitment as comprising effective, continuance, and normative components that describe why employees stay (Meyer & Allen, 1997). These components are often treated as outcomes influenced by satisfaction or emotional attachment.

CAM reverses this logic. It proposes that commitment is not merely an outcome of emotional experiences but a stabilizing force that regulates and sustains emotional engagement. In other words, CAM shifts commitment from a dependent variable to a foundational mechanism. Emotions do not produce commitment; rather, commitment enables employees to manage emotions without disengaging or losing alignment during turbulence.

Furthermore, CAM expands beyond psychological definitions by integrating ethical principles such as fairness, justice, and shared responsibility. This broadened scope positions commitment not only as a personal orientation but as a collective ethical anchor that strengthens organizational systems (Colquitt et al., 2014; Al Halbusi et al., 2021)
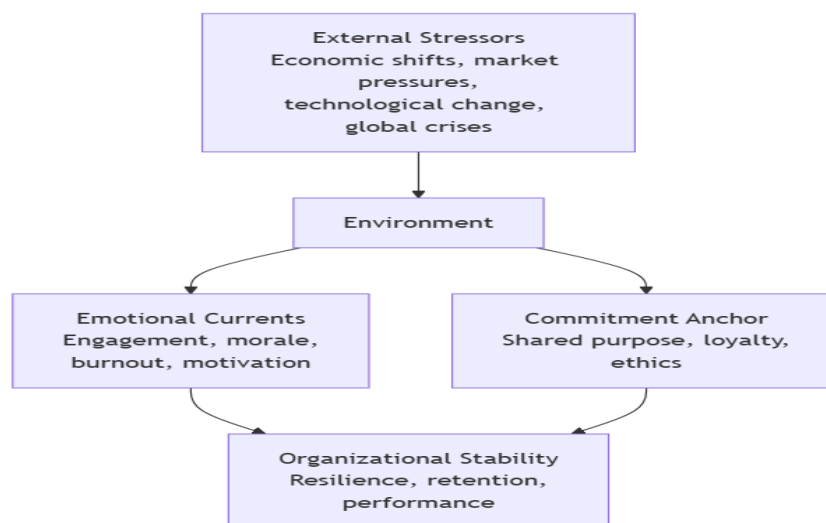
Conceptual Diagram

Figure 1: CAM within an organizational context

The diagram (Figure 1) depicts commitment as a central anchor at the bottom, holding steady against swirling currents representing emotions, while external stressors are shown as waves or winds impacting the system from above. Arrows indicate how commitment buffers the effects of emotions and stressors to maintain organizational stability and performance.

Figure 1 illustrates CAM's central proposition: emotions and external stressors are inherently fluid, yet commitment functions as the anchor that stabilizes the system and sustains organizational performance.

Testable Propositions

The Commitment Anchoring Model (CAM) proposes that commitment functions as the central stabilizing mechanism across organizational systems, shaping how individuals, teams, and organizations absorb emotional and environmental pressures. To support future empirical validation, the following propositions translate the model's conceptual elements into testable statements. They are organized across three levels of analysis and linked explicitly to the model's components the anchor (commitment), the currents (emotions), and the environment (external stressors).

Individual Level Propositions

At the individual level, CAM argues that commitment provides employees with psychological steadiness that buffers emotional volatility. When emotions fluctuate in response to workload, leadership behavior, or external stress, commitment allows employees to maintain alignment with organizational goals (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Jia et al., 2022). This buffering role serves as a key mechanism through which stability is achieved.

P1: Higher levels of individual commitment predict greater stability in employee behavior and performance, independent of fluctuations in emotional engagement

This proposition recognizes that emotional states positive or negative naturally change over time, yet employees with strong commitment sustain their involvement despite these shifts. Potential indicators could include behavioral consistency, reduced absenteeism, and adherence to organizational norms.

P2: In high-volatility environments, individual commitment mediates the relationship between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention

Prior research has shown that emotional exhaustion can lead to withdrawal behaviours (Zhu et al., 2023). CAM suggests that commitment acts as an intermediary mechanism that reduces the likelihood that emotional strain will translate into turnover intention.

Potential moderators for P1-P2 include perceived organizational support, leadership integrity, and ethical climate, which have been shown to strengthen employees' willingness to remain aligned with their organizations (Al Halbusi et al., 2021).

Team Level Propositions

Teams frequently experience emotional currents shaped by interpersonal dynamics, workload interdependence, and collective stressors. CAM suggests that shared commitment not shared emotion is what holds teams together during difficult periods. Trust, collective purpose, and ethical accountability strengthen this anchoring function (Blaique et al., 2023; Elms et al., 2023).

The relationship between team emotional climate and team performance is moderated by the level of collective commitment within the team.

This proposition highlights that even when a team experiences emotional highs or lows, strong shared commitment helps maintain performance consistency. Collective commitment could be reflected in shared goals, interdependence, and mutual accountability practices.

P4: Teams with higher levels of collective commitment experience less performance disruption in response to external stressors than teams that rely primarily on emotional cohesion.

This aligns with findings that emotionally driven team environments are more susceptible to instability, whereas commitment creates a more durable form of cohesion (Elcheroth & Drury, 2020).

Moderators at this level may include leadership style, psychological safety, and role clarity, all of which contribute to how teams experience commitment and manage emotional currents.

Organizational Level Propositions

At the organizational level, CAM proposes that cultures anchored in commitment, especially those grounded in fairness, shared values, and ethical leadership are more resilient when confronted with environmental pressures such as market shifts, crises, or large-scale change (Wut et al., 2022; Colquitt et al., 2014). Commitment provides the structural ballast that keeps systems stable even when emotional climates become turbulent.

P5: Organizational commitment strengthens the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational resilience.

Research indicates that ethical leadership enhances trust and psychological safety, which in turn reinforce collective commitment (Breevaart & Zacher, 2019). CAM extends this by proposing that commitment amplifies resilience outcomes, such as continuity of purpose, adaptability, and strategic stability.

P6: Organizations with strong commitment-based cultures experience lower levels of emotional contagion during periods of crisis compared to organizations that rely heavily on emotion-driven engagement strategies.

Because emotional contagion tends to intensify under stress, CAM argues that commitment-based cultures are better equipped to prevent emotional spirals that can disrupt performance or collaboration.

Potential moderators for P5-P6 include organizational justice practices, transparent communication systems, and workplace inclusion, which help sustain commitment even during instability.

Linking Propositions to the CAM Diagram

Across all levels, these propositions map directly onto CAM's visual structure:
    a. Commitment (Anchor) → links to P1, P3, P5
    b. Emotional Currents → link to P1, P3, P6
    c. External Stressors (Environment) → link to P2, P4, P6

Together, the propositions provide a structured foundation for empirical research designed to evaluate CAM's explanatory value and predictive strength across different workplace contexts.

Applications of the Commitment Anchoring Model (CAM) in 21st-Century Organizations

The Commitment Anchoring Model (CAM) offers organizations a way to strengthen stability in environments marked by uncertainty, emotional fluctuation, and rapid change. By positioning commitment not emotion as the mechanism that grounds individual and collective behaviour, CAM provides a practical lens for improving leadership practices, team functioning, employee engagement, and overall organizational resilience. Its applications unfold across three interconnected levels: individual (micro), team or departmental (meso), and organizational (macro).

Micro-Level Applications: Individual Employees

At the individual level, CAM reframes employee engagement by shifting attention away from short-lived emotional enthusiasm and toward intentional, value-driven commitment. Traditional engagement strategies often rely on boosting morale or generating positive emotional climates, yet research shows these affective states fluctuate with workload, leadership changes, or personal stress (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017; Jia et al., 2022). CAM suggests that employees grounded in commitment maintain alignment with organizational goals even when their emotional landscape shifts.

Commitment-Based Engagement

Employees who identify with organizational values and feel part of a meaningful mission are more likely to remain steady during emotionally demanding periods. This form of engagement supports consistent performance, reduces stress reactivity, and strengthens intrinsic motivation (Blaique et al., 2023).

Micro-Level Example

A social worker experiencing emotional fatigue may still sustain high-quality service delivery because their commitment to community welfare anchors their professional behaviour. Their emotions fluctuate, yet their dedication remains intact.

Implications for HR

HR systems can reinforce commitment by offering clear career pathways, meaningful recognition of long-term contributions, mentorship programs, and purpose-oriented onboarding practices that strengthen identification with organizational values.

Meso-Level Applications: Teams and Workgroups

Teams often operate as emotional ecosystems where enthusiasm, frustration, or conflict can move rapidly across members. These emotional currents influence performance but can also destabilize collaboration when not anchored effectively (Elms et al., 2023). CAM presents shared commitment not shared emotion as the element that grants teams resilience during volatility.

Collective Commitment as Team Stabilizer

Teams that articulate shared goals, emphasize interdependence, and cultivate mutual accountability are better equipped to weather emotionally intense periods. Collective commitment creates a baseline of trust that stabilizes teamwork even when morale dips.

Role of Leadership

Transformational and ethical leadership can strengthen this shared anchor by communicating purpose, modeling reliability, and ensuring fairness in team processes (Breevaart & Zacher, 2019; Al Halbusi et al., 2021).

Meso-Level Example

A project team facing sudden policy changes may experience anxiety or frustration. Yet if the team previously established shared commitment through role clarity and regular reflection sessions, they can maintain performance until emotional equilibrium returns.

Implications for Team HR/Management

Organizations can cultivate meso-level anchoring through:
   a. Structured team rituals (e.g., weekly recommitment check-ins),
   b. Peer recognition systems based on shared contributions,
   c. Transparent communication norms, and
   d. Ethics-based team charters that reinforce collective responsibility.

Macro-Level Applications: Organizational Culture and Leadership Systems

At the macro level, CAM argues that commitment forms the ethical and structural backbone of resilient organizational cultures. Organizations that rely heavily on emotional engagement campaigns or charisma-driven leadership often experience burnout cycles and instability when enthusiasm fades (Elcheroth & Drury, 2020). CAM counters this by promoting cultures grounded in fairness, justice, shared purpose, and long-term value alignment.

Commitment-Based Culture Building

When organizational values are consistently enacted not merely stated employees perceive procedural and relational justice, which strengthens loyalty and reduces turnover intention (Colquitt et al., 2014). This alignment between values and behaviour functions as a cultural anchor that sustains identity and cohesion.

Leadership Systems

Effective leaders reinforce this anchoring through transparency, ethical consistency, and decision-making that emphasizes shared responsibility. Such behaviour fosters trust, psychological safety, and stability during crises or transitions (Wut et al., 2022; Quadri et al., 2024).

Macro-Level Example

During an economic downturn, an organization that communicates openly, applies fair workload distribution, and affirms its long-term mission is more likely to maintain unity. Employees remain committed despite emotional strain because the culture sustains their confidence in the system.

Policy and HR Strategy Implications

CAM can guide the design of:
   a.   Ethics-focused performance metrics,
   b.   Leadership development programs emphasizing integrity and consistency,
   c.   Long-term employee value propositions (EVPs),
   d.   Crisis management frameworks grounded in shared purpose rather than morale-boosting tactics, and
   e.   Inclusion and justice policies that reinforce collective accountability.

Cross-Level Synergy

CAM also asserts that the anchor effect strengthens when micro-, meso-, and macro-level structures align. For example, when individual commitment is reinforced by team cohesion and an ethical organizational culture, resilience increases at all levels. Such alignment reduces the destabilizing influence of emotional contagion and fosters continuity of purpose across the system

Conclusion and Future Research Directions

The Commitment Anchoring Model (CAM) offers a timely rethinking of how organizations sustain stability in environments increasingly characterized by emotional turbulence, rapid change, and structural uncertainty. While emotions continue to influence how employees interpret and respond to daily work experiences, they remain inherently fluid and sensitive to contextual pressures (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017; Elfenbein, 2023). CAM responds to this challenge by reframing commitment as the central anchoring mechanism that maintains cohesion, performance, and relational continuity when emotional climates fluctuate. This shift places commitment not emotion at the core of organizational resilience.

Across its various dimensions, CAM highlights how intentional, value-based commitment enables individuals to stay grounded, helps teams maintain alignment through shared purpose, and supports organizations in sustaining identity and direction during periods of stress or transition. It integrates insights from organizational psychology, ethical leadership, and resilience research to provide a structural explanation of why some organizations withstand volatility more effectively than others (Wut et al., 2022; Colquitt et al., 2014). In doing so, CAM moves beyond traditional engagement models by proposing that durable stability arises not from how employees feel in a given moment but from the deeper commitments that shape how they respond to challenges over time.

Theoretical Significance and "So What?"

The theoretical contribution of CAM lies in three areas. First, it reframes the hierarchy between emotion and commitment by positioning commitment as the regulator that sustains engagement rather than an outcome that depends on it. Second, it brings resilience thinking into mainstream organizational behavior by explaining how commitment absorbs emotional and environmental shocks, thereby protecting organizational continuity. Third, it embeds ethical considerations fairness, integrity, reciprocity into commitment theory, emphasizing that commitment strengthens when employees experience justice and value alignment (Al Halbusi et al., 2021). Together, these contributions provide a richer conceptual vocabulary for understanding organizational life in volatile contexts.

In practical terms, CAM offers organizations a more reliable foundation for leadership development, HR strategy, culture building, and crisis management. It encourages a shift from short-term emotional morale boosters toward long-term strategies that nurture shared purpose, ethical consistency, and relational trust. This reorientation has critical implications for retention, performance stability, and institutional resilience.

Limitations

As a conceptually derived model, CAM carries several limitations. It synthesizes existing theory rather than empirical data, which means its propositions require rigorous testing before broader generalizations can be made. The model also assumes that commitment functions similarly across diverse cultural contexts, yet levels of collectivism, power distance, and social cohesion may shape how commitment is formed and expressed. Finally, the model emphasizes psychological and ethical processes but does not fully address structural factors such as resource constraints or policy environments that might weaken or reinforce commitment dynamics.

Directions for Future Research

Future studies should aim to empirically validate CAM across multiple levels of analysis. Longitudinal research could examine how commitment buffers emotional volatility during major organizational events such as restructuring, leadership transitions, or crisis conditions. Quantitative modeling may test CAM's propositions by assessing whether commitment moderates or mediates relationships among emotional engagement, performance, and turnover intention (Zhu et al., 2023). Cross-cultural investigations would also be valuable in evaluating whether commitment anchors operate similarly in collectivist, individualist, African, Asian, or Western organizational contexts.

Researchers may further explore the cognitive and affective mechanisms through which commitment stabilizes behavior, including emotional regulation, moral reasoning, and identity attachment. Finally, policy-oriented studies could examine how CAM informs retention strategies, psychological safety initiatives, leadership accountability systems, and organizational justice frameworks. Such work would deepen understanding of commitment as a systemic anchor and strengthen CAM's predictive and practical validity.

Closing Perspective

In an era where emotional volatility is amplified by digital communication, global uncertainty, and accelerated change, organizations require frameworks that steady the human elements of work. CAM offers such a foundation. By prioritizing commitment as the stabilizing force at the heart of organizational life, it provides scholars and practitioners with a model for building systems that are not only emotionally intelligent but also ethically grounded, resilient, and sustainable.

References

Al Halbusi, H., Williams, K. A., Ramayah, T., Aldieri, L., & Vinci, C. P. (2021). Linking ethical leadership and ethical climate to employees' ethical behavior: the moderating role of person–organization fit. *Personnel Review*, *50*(1), 159-185. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-09-2019-0522

Allen, N. J., & Meyer, J. P. (1990). The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, *63*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.1990.tb00506.x

Ashkanasy, N. M., & Dorris, A. D. (2017). Emotions in the workplace. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, *4*(1), 67–90. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032516-113231

Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Sanz-Vergel, A. I. (2014). Burnout and work engagement: The JD-R approach. *Annual review of organizational psychology and organizational behavior*, *1*(2014), 389-411. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091235

Blaique, L., Ismail, H. N., & Aldabbas, H. (2023). Organizational learning, resilience and psychological empowerment as antecedents of work engagement during COVID-19. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, *72*(6), 1584-1607.

Breevaart, K., & Zacher, H. (2019). Main and Interactive Effects of Weekly Transformational and Laissez-Faire Leadership on Followers' Trust in the Leader and Leader Effectiveness. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 92*, 384-409. https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12253

Colquitt, J. A., Baer, M. D., Long, D. M., & Halvorsen-Ganepola, M. D. K. (2014). Scale indicators of social exchange relationships: A comparison of relative content validity. *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 99, 599-618.

Cupać, J. (2020). The anxiety dilemma: Locating the Western Balkans in the age of anxiety. *Journal of Regional Security*, *15*(1), 7–38.

Elcheroth, G., & Drury, J. (2020). Collective resilience in times of crisis: Lessons from the literature for socially effective responses to the pandemic. *The British journal of social psychology*, *59*(3), 703–713. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12403

Elfenbein, H. A. (2023). Emotion in organizations: Theory and research. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *74*(1), 489-517. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-032720-035940

Elms, A. K., Gill, H., & Gonzalez-Morales, M. G. (2023). Confidence is key: Collective efficacy, team processes, and team effectiveness. *Small Group Research, 54*(1), 3–32. https://doi.org/10.1177/10464964221104218

Grandey, A. A., Diefendorff, J. M., & Rupp, D. E. (2019). *Emotional labor in the 21st century: Diverse perspectives on emotion regulation at work*. Routledge.

Jia, X., Liao, S., & Yin, W. (2022) Job insecurity, emotional exhaustion, and workplace deviance: The role of corporate social responsibility. *Front. Public Health 10:*1000628. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.1000628

Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1997). *Commitment in the workplace: Theory, research, and application.* Sage.

Meyer, J., Stanley, D., Jackson, T., McInnis, K., Maltin, E. & Sheppard, L. (2012). Affective, normative, and continuance commitment levels across cultures: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior. 80*(2), 225-245. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2011.09.005

Mohamed, S.M. A, Mosa, S.AY.E.M, Mahmoud, A.A. (2023). Job Stress and Emotion Regulation relation to Workplace Wellbeing among Psychiatric Nurses. *Egyptian Journal of Nursing & Health Sciences, 4*(2), 168-197.

Quadri, S. S. A., Afsar, J., & Bangash, S. A. (2024). Assessing the role of organizational commitment in leadership style-driven organizational development. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, *8*(4), 433–451. https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2024(8-IV)34

Tewfik, B. A., Kim, D., & Patil, S. V. (2024). The ebb and flow of job engagement: Engagement variability and emotional stability as interactive predictors of job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *109*(2), 257.

Weiss, H. M., & Cropanzano, R. (1996). Affective events theory: A theoretical discussion of the structure, causes and consequences of affective experiences at work. In B. M. Staw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior* (Vol. 18, pp. 1–74). Elsevier.

Wut, T. M., Lee, S. W., & Xu, J. B. (2022). Role of Organizational Resilience and Psychological Resilience in the Workplace-Internal Stakeholder Perspective. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, *19*(18), 11799. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191811799

Zahirah, N. G., & Satrya, A. (2024). The influence of career growth and perceived organizational support on turnover intention: The role of organizational commitment among Indonesian millennial employees. *EKOMBIS REVIEW: Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Dan Bisnis*, *12*(3), 3129-3146. https://doi.org/10.37676/ekombis.v12i3.6179

Zhang, Z., Shi, H., & Feng, T. (2022). Why Good Employees Do Bad Things: The Link between Pro-Environmental Behavior and Workplace Deviance. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, *19*(22), 15284. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192215284

Zhu, T., Park, S. K., Tu, R., & Ding, Y. (2023). Does Emotional Labor Trigger Turnover Intention? The Moderating Effect of Fear of COVID-19. *Sustainability*, *15*(21), 15336. https://doi.org/10.3390/su152115336