Educational Commitment Foci: Psychological Bond Generation, Plateau and Quondam

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EDUCATIONAL COMMITMENT FOCI: PSYCHOLOGICAL BOND GENERATION, PLATEAU AND QUONDAM

[*TEACHING AND RESEARCH*]

COMMITMENT IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

Despite the existence of different contexts (market, corporation, civil, etc.), the same bonds can be experienced in each of one them. Klein, Molloy and Brinsfield (2012) brought a new paradigm for the research of psychological bonds in the workplace. The authors questioned assumptions implicit in the predominant model (Meyer & Allen, 1991), suggesting that commitment is one of several bonds and can be generalized to all targets. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) complement my point of view by mentioning that commitment has a "core structure", capable of being studied in different contexts. My proposal is to follow the trend suggested by Klein et al. (2012), but going beyond the organizational environment. This proposal paper discusses the generalization of the concept of commitment to the educational environment through the contrast with workplace between three contexts: corporations, market and civil. This contrast allows to observe that the commitment has (1) the same theoretical origins regardless of the context, (2) is defined in a similar way, (3) has a nomological network with the same antecedents and consequences e (4) empirical/theoretical development patterns. However, the researchers in each area were isolated in their contexts and generated the same conceptual and empirical problems.

Like Quondam Commitments (Klein, Brinsfield, Cooper, & Molloy, 2017), Residual Commitments (Breitsohl & Ruhle, 2013), Commitments Systems (Klein, Solinger, & Duflot, 2020), the study of commitment in the educational environment allows the expansion of research boundaries in several theoretical and practical intercontextual issues. As a theoretical contribution, I present the possibility of the first intercontextual bond, giving space for the discussion of other psychological bonds (identification, instrumental, entrenchment, acquiescence). Another theoretical advance that may arise from the present paper is a general theory of the continuum of bonds with any target. As a contribution to practice, I suggest the possibilities to test the relationship between civil and market focuses, identify conflicts between different contexts, observe the influence of residuals and quondam commitments in other contexts. Among other different and almost infinite possibilities of relationships. So, my approach is the same adopted by Klein et al. (2012), because I present characteristics in the definitions that are common to all targets, contrast the definitions of commitment to other bonds and point out conceptual confusions.

Corporate Context

The HRM/OB literature has discussed the nature of the commitment phenomena. One of the first proposes to operationalize the concept of workplace commitment (Becker, 1960) was Ritzer and Trice (1969), in the following years researchers exposed several other definitions (Reichers, 1985; Rusbult, 1980; Salancik, 1977; Wiener, 1982; Wiener & Gechman, 1977). O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) and Meyer and Allen (1991) synthesized the literature and observed that the commitment can be observed through three components. Otherwise, Klein, Molloy and Brinsfield (2012) - KUT - clarified and stretched the concept of commitment as a unidimensional construct in continuum of psychological bonds. Beyond this aspect, when compared to the O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) and Meyer and Allen (1991), KUT major

advantage is to emphasize the measure of different targets. Characteristic predicted since Reichers (1985), that proposed the commitment approach based on multiple targets, because he recognized that workers can commit to leaders, teams, projects and other organizational constituents. Klein et al. (2012) follow the premise that despite being generalized for all the targets, it is limited to the workplace. My proposal is to expand the contextual continuum of bonds that were previously limited only to the workplace, specifically commitment.

In the literature review by Reichers (1985), 6 of the 21 studies mentioned are from the educational environment (students or teachers). Klein et al. (2014) also applied his instrument within the educational environment (student and alumni). This mention of both authors demonstrates an implicit consent that the instruments used within the workplace are also amenable to application in the educational environment. Despite being a conceptual basis for entrenchment (Rodrigues & Bastos, 2012; Rodrigues, Bastos, & Moscon, 2019), not commitment (Klein et al., 2012), Becker (1960) mention that commitment is used to analyze phenomena in different contexts (organizational, religious, political).

Breitsohl and Ruhle (2013) deepened the concept of residual commitment. This definition is responsible for relating the targets of students' commitments to the targets of commitment in the workplace. The current commitment is positively affected by positive experiences in previous work (Cohen, 2007). Breitsohl and Ruhle (2013) detail that residual impairment is one of those factors that make up the experiences. My proposal is to bring this phenomenon closer to the educational environment, since the first professional experiences occur when individuals are still inserted in the educational environment. In the transition phases, affection tends to remain, to the detriment of cognitive and behavioral aspects (Solinger, Hofmans, & van Olffen, 2015). Consequently, part of the affection that the student has in the educational environment is transported to the workplace at different levels.

Researching focuses of educational/student commitment allows us to understand conflicts of commitment that occur at different stages of the career, as already done in the workplace research (Jans, 1989). The conflict is due to a scarcity of resources available (e.g. time, attention, physical conditions) to distribute between workplace and educational environments. Breitsohl and Ruhle (2013) mention that antagonistic demands existing within the same sphere are responsible for aggravating conflicts. Finally, Cohen (2003) states that one of the reasons for commitment in the workplace (specifically the organizational) is more researched than other contexts is the fact that individuals spend more time in organizations. However, the following discusses other similarities between the characteristics of psychological bonds developed in other contexts and how they converge to a common point.

Market Context

The most cited authors in the area (Hunt, Chonko, & Wood, 1985) mention two characteristics as primary in commitment: responsibility and dedication.. Other communality with Klein et al. (2012) and authors in workplace is the definition of commitment as mediator. As mentioned by Cohen (2003), the definition of commitment by Hunt et al. (1985) is derived from Becker (1960) and the definition of Morgan and Hunt (1994) is based on Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian (1974). Although the first authors (Hunt et al., 1985) mention the affective basis in the conceptualization explanation, they use the operationalization of Ritzer and Trice (1969). The second authors (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), despite assuming authorship of the definition by Porter et al. (1974) they operationalize the research with CCS-TCM (Meyer & Allen, 1984). So, it is possible to conclude that the main marketing authors present a certain level of inconsistency when defining commitment based on affection, but operationalize based on continuation.

Within the educational environment, students can be committed to educational brands and products, the same can happen to teachers. Some research in the area has tested the influence of different civilian targets of commitment [Community (Zhang, Zhou, Su, & Zhou, 2013)] with brand and brand commitment to school/university commitment (Chen, 2017).

Civil Context

Davidson (1975) summarizes previous models of commitment to religion. The author mentions two main orientations/strands of commitment: religious conservatism, more related to involvement with the church, and religious liberalism, more related to involvement with the community. This theoretical construction synthesized by Davidson (1975) has some characteristics in common with the proposal by Klein et al. (2012). The first of these is the commitment as part of a continuum of bonds, to which psychological involvement with religion occurs in different ways according to how the bond is experienced. The second of them consists of the influence of normative aspects, closer to "want to" than "have to" be involved for a certain orientation (religious liberalism) to the detriment of another (religious conservatism). A common point from Reichers (1985) to Klein et al. (2012), the third is related to the use of different targets - "target-free approach", which can be used in order to compare them. The fourth consists of the type of emotion that is associated with the generation of the bond. Glock (1962) mentions that they can be experienced in a continuum similar to those mentioned by Klein et al. (2012).

As with other contexts, the workplace is related to the educational environment through the existence of specific knowledge that is acquired for the individual to be inserted in the context. However, as observed in the workplace, the religious also has "training teams" and values the spread of religious knowledge. Rothbard (1999) attributes the origin of public and free schools to the religious separatism of the Protestant strands in relation to the Catholic. This movement that mainly influenced the school systems of the European and American continents. Applied to the educational environment, Hackman and Dysinger (1970) and Tinto (1975) researches are initial proposition to test commitment empirically. Both articles have some commonalities, like to predict college dropout, intention to leave and student attrition. Nevertheless, the authors do not present a clear definition, like Glock (1962) and Davidson (1975). The following researches (Bean, 1980; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Terenzini, Lorang, & Pascarella, 1981) uses the mentioned papers as seminal. Notwithstanding, Tinto (1975) proposed a procedural model of how student dropout operates, this model is structurally similar to that proposed by Klein et al. (2012).

Commitment Targets Developed In Multiple Contexts

There are other targets of commitment that can be developed in multiple contexts simultaneously. This classification does not imply that the other targets have contributions from other contexts. Those mentioned below are natural from multiple contexts, while those mentioned in Table 1 are predominantly context-related. Among them, pro-social commitment, commitment to change, career, volunteer work, organizational learning can be mentioned.

There are different targets of pro-social commitment, they can be developed in the context of the market, corporation or civil. Involving several family aspects [parents (Montada & Schneider, 1991), spouse/marital (Adams & Jones, 1997), friend (Rusbult, 1980) commitments] and social/community (Montada, 1992; Montada & Schneider, 1991). As defined by Klein et al. (2012), Montada (1992) was emphatic when mentioning that pro-social commitment is

observed through responsibility towards the target, while Adams and Jones (1997) emphatically discuss the role of dedication in commitment. In addition, their empirical results (Montada, 1992; Montada & Schneider, 1991) point out that positive emotions are positively associated with pro-social commitment, while negative emotions are negatively associated.

Despite the career commitment has a greater relationship with the corporate context, it is also strongly dependent on market relations and the civil context, as discussed by Wiener (1982) or (Jans, 1989). Another multicontextual target is the commitment to change, a scale partially validated with students (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002), also researched with teachers in a civil context – prosocial with youth care professionals (van der Voet, Steijn, & Kuipers, 2017) and with public managers (Van der Voet, Kuipers, & Groeneveld, 2016).

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJETIVES

There is a pattern of characteristics observed and some points overlap between the study of the commitment phenomena in multiple contexts: theories antecedents and seminal (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1970; Becker, 1960; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Kanter, 1968; Rusbult, 1980; Wiener & Gechman, 1977); responsibility and dedication to targets are characteristics used to observe commitment; conceptualized and empirically developed based on the TCM (Meyer & Allen, 1991) or Porter et al. (1974); measure of different targets – "target-free approach" (Hackman & Dysinger, 1970; Klein et al., 2012), some indicator in measurement model (Klein et al., 2014, 2012; Tinto, 1975) and some antecedents/consequents (Klein et al., 2012; Tinto, 1975).

Solinger, Hofmans and van Olffen (2015) present empirical results that support part of the comparisons of this work. Most articles in multiple contexts mention the positive relationship between commitment and long-term duration with a target. Solinger et al. (2015) point out that long-term relationships are based on affective attachment and the majority of commitment literature in multiple contexts aims at long-term relationships.

The first researches of educational commitment aimed at predicting voluntary dropout (Tinto, 1975) and persistence (Terenzini et al., 1981) of students, as well as market models (Hunt et al., 1985). The motivation of the researchers is the same for both environments: to understand what factors that precede the withdraw or permanence in a certain target (school, work, organization). For this reason, part of the contextual definitions of commitment mentioned Porter et al. (1974). The authors definition have some level of endogeneity with the desire (intention) to stay/leave in working with marketing (Hunt et al., 1985) or study in school (Hackman & Dysinger, 1970; Tinto, 1975), for example.

This work can be justified by two means: (1) the residual commitment of the commitment targets when the student is still in school influence when he/she is in the workplace. This relationship between the targets of educational commitment and those of the workplace is stronger when the student is moving from one phase of transition to the other, when entering the workplace. When understanding the relationships of the first topic, it is possible to highlight a second one, related to (2) studying commitment targets of when the person is still a student, we can see as a source of forecasting some level of variability of the commitment workplace of future generations[1].

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[1] E.g.: when measuring the level of student commitment in the 2000s is possible to predict the level of commitment of a given target when he is already working in 2003. Therefore, when measuring the commitment with a given target at the present moment t in time, it's possible to predict the target of commitment in the workplace at a given t + 1 in the future.

These aspects present strong evidences that workplace and the educational environment may are treating the same phenomena, but with different of contexts, thereafter the concept (Klein et al., 2012) and measurement model (Klein et al., 2014) of the workplace may be adequate to evaluate students/educational commitment. This project of thesis aims to fill the gap of educational environment with workplace evidences. The first article aims to theoretically evaluate the similarities between the literatures. The second article aims to test empirically the relationships between commitment in his nomological network. The third article aims to analyze the variations of student's commitment in time. The present thesis pretends to focus on four student's commitment targets: goal, goal preparation, career and institutional. Table 1 presents the comparative synthesis between the contexts in the workplace and educational environment.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The first article proposed in this thesis project is strictly theoretical. So, it is based on argumentative techniques, such as analogy (Ketokivi, Manutençãoe, & Cornelissen, 2017), metaphors (Cornelissen, 2006) and explanation by contrast (Tsang & Ellsaesser, 2011). The second and third articles are empirical and aim to test the nomological network (Klein et al., 2012; Tinto, 1975) and the construction of commitment systems [CST, (Klein et al., 2020)] within the educational context, respectively. Data will be collected using a combination of different measurement instruments. The second article contains the validation of the KUT instrument proposed by (Klein et al., 2014), this instrument has three items with the essential characteristics that measure commitment as a reflective latent variable. Like KUT, the fourth item is a direct measurement adapted to the target-free approach of (Klein et al., 2012), which can also be found in the literature of the educational context (Grosset, 1991; Terenzini et al., 1981; Tinto, 1975). It is plausible to comment on the existing tautology in the KUT instrument by (Klein et al., 2014), because an item that measures commitment directly is also used as a reflexive way of observing it. To verify empirically this tautology, I propose to test the correlation between the item of direct measurement with the latent variable of commitment measured by the three items that represent its essential characteristics will be tested: volition, dedication and responsibility [both in different foci of commitment].
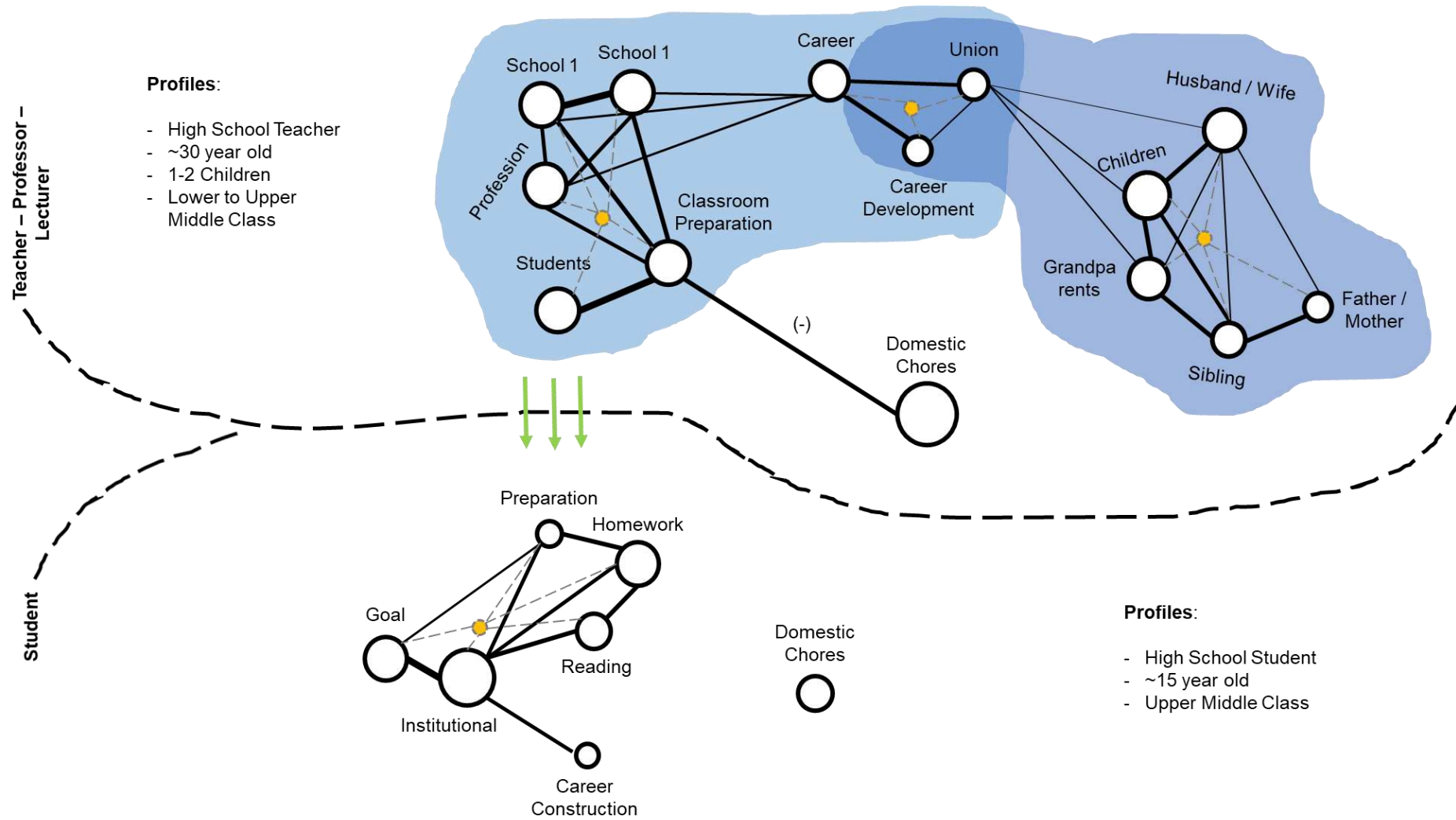
The second article is also responsible for nomological validation (Klein et al., 2012; Tinto, 1975). However, I intend to measure each of the constructs directly, but with multiple foci of different typification and systems. This trade-off is fundamental for the operationalization of the research, since a questionnaire containing all the items of each of the phenomena of the nomological network of commitment would make the instrument practically endless. The idea of measuring the nomological network between multiple foci is to test the breadth of the theoretical model.

The third article will be based in part on the data collected in the second, mainly regarding the identification of multiple foci. The first step will be the typification of each commitment foci systems and subsystems, followed by the data collection with items of direct measured over time. This data could also be carried out at multiple levels or even in networks, Like represented in Figure 1. The aim of this article is to describe the temporal variation of commitment systems within the educational context.

Table 1: General panorama of workplace and educational environment targets of commitment (*working table*)

Context	Workplace Targets	Unit of Analysis	e.g. Reference	Educational Targets	Unit of Analysis	e.g. Reference
Market	Product/Service	Customer/Client	(Sánchez-Pérez & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2004)	Education as a Service	Student as Customer/Client	
Market	Brand	Customer/Client	(Amine, 1998; Walsh, Page Winterich, & Mittal, 2010)	Brand	Student as Customer/Client	
Corporative	Organization	Worker	(Klein et al., 2012; Meyer & Allen, 1991; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986)	College, Institution of Education	Teachers, Professors, Managers, Educational Workers	(Jesus & Rowe, 2017; Rowe, Bastos, & Pinho, 2013; Traldi & Demo, 2012)
Corporative	Profession	Worker	(Swart, Kinnie, van Rossenberg, & Yalabik, 2014)	Teaching	Teachers, Professors, Student Teachers	(Carpenter & Byde, 1986; Elsworth & Coulter, 1978)
Corporative	Leader/Supervisor	Worker	(Wasti & Can, 2008)	Advisor/Mentor/Program	Students, Student Teachers, Beginners Teachers	(Green & Bauer, 1995)
Corporative	Team/Workgroup	Worker, Coworkers	(Swart et al., 2014)	Colleagues	Students, Teachers, Professors	
Corporative	Customer/Client	Worker, Salesman	(Swart et al., 2014)	Students	Teachers, Professors	(Xiao & Wilkins, 2015)
Corporative	Goal	Worker	(Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, & Alge, 1999; Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, Wright, & Deshon, 2001)	Academic Goal/Goal Preparation	Students, Teachers, Professors	(Grosset, 1991; Hackman & Dysinger, 1970; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Terenzini et al., 1981; Tinto, 1975)
Civil	Occupation	(Volunteer) Worker	(Ritzer & Trice, 1969)	College, School, Institutional	Students and Parents	(Hackman & Dysinger, 1970; Nguyen, Yu, Melewar, & Hemsley-Brown, 2016; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Tinto, 1975)
Civil	Community/Society	Citizen, (Volunteer) Worker	(Antonovsky & Antonovsky, 1974; van Rossenberg et al., 2018)	Charter – Communitarian – Non-Profit Schools	Students, Teachers, Professors	(Mintrop & Ordenes, 2017)
Civil	Religion	Believer, (Volunteer) Worker	(Davidson, 1975; Glock, 1962)	Religious Schools	Students, Teachers, Professors	
Civil	Sports/Physical Activities	Professional/Amateur Athlete	(Schmidt & Stein, 1991)	College Sports	Athletic Students, Sports Professor	

Figure 1: Interaction [in green] between two different levels of commitment systems and subsystems.

Teacher – Professor – Lecturer

Profiles:

- High School Teacher
- ~30 year old
- 1-2 Children
- Lower to Upper Middle Class

School 1   School 1   Career   Union   Husband / Wife

Profession   Classroom Preparation   Career Development   Children   Grandparents   Father / Mother   Sibling

Students   (-)   Domestic Chores

Student

Preparation   Homework

Goal   Reading

Institutional   Domestic Chores

Career Construction

Profiles:

- High School Student
- ~15 year old
- Upper Middle Class

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