

Original Article

The Mediating Role of Affective Commitment: Reinforcing Meaning of Work and Reducing Turnover Intention

El Papel Mediador del Compromiso Afectivo: El Refuerzo del Sentido del Trabajo y la Reducción de la Intención de Cambiar de Empleo

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ABSTRACT

The meaning of work has been a topic of interest that in demands further research and development to enrich its understanding. This paper aims to analyze the mediating role of affective commitment within the relationship between the meaning of work and turnover intention. As well as to add to the scarce research in Puerto Rico on the meaning of work and affective commitment with turnover intention. This study is a secondary data analysis using data from Rodríguez Montalbán's (2019) study. Furthermore, this study proposes a non-experimental approach while following a cross-sectional correlational model in a sample of 612 working people in Puerto Rico and was studied using descriptive, correlations and mediation analyses. The results supported our hypothesis, presenting a partial mediation between the meaning of work and turnover intention. These findings suggest that organizations can foster affective commitment and decrease turnover intention by promoting the meaning of work within the workplace.

Keywords: affective commitment, meaning of work, turnover intention

RESUMEN

El significado del trabajo es un tema de interés que requiere investigación y desarrollo para enriquecer el conocimiento y proveer más información sobre las diversas formas de estudiarlo. El objetivo de este artículo es analizar el rol mediador del compromiso afectivo dentro de la relación entre el significado del trabajo y la intención de abandono. Así como, añadir a la escasa investigación que existe en Puerto Rico sobre el significado del trabajo y compromiso afectivo con intención de abandono. Este estudio es un análisis de datos secundarios, utilizando datos del estudio de Rodríguez Montalbán (2019). Además, este estudio propone un enfoque no experimental siguiendo un modelo correlacional de corte transversal en una muestra de 612 de personas trabajadoras en Puerto Rico y fueron estudiados mediante análisis descriptivos, correlaciones y de mediación. Los resultados obtenidos apoyan nuestra hipótesis presentando una mediación parcial entre el significado del trabajo y la intención de abandono.

Estos hallazgos sugieren que las organizaciones pueden fomentar el compromiso afectivo y disminuir la intención del abandono promoviendo el significado del trabajo dentro del lugar de trabajo.

Palabras Claves: compromiso afectivo, intención de abandono, significado del trabajo

INTRODUCTION

We dedicate most of our lives to work for sustenance and family support. Our goals and values shape our actions and thoughts about the meaning of our work, influencing our behavior and perspectives. This continuous quest for meaning molds us personally and professionally, prompting us to evaluate how external factors affect our lives. Considering this reflection, we act on these influences. So, it begs the question, how does the meaning of work fit within Puerto Rico's organizational culture?

The limited literature on the meaning of work in Puerto Rico hinders the application of recent findings within its working culture (Burgos Del Toro et al., 2009; Cotto, 2020; Guzmán López, 2015; Martínez Lugo et al., 1999; Sánchez Cardona et al., 2019; Serrano Pabón, 2019; Sotomayor Añeses, 2011). This gap hinders research in this construct. Previous studies indicate a positive correlation between the meaning of work and affective commitment (Allan et al., 2019; Cotto, 2020; Scroggins, 2008; Steger et al., 2012). Additionally, the meaning of work predicts turnover intention (Heleno et al., 2018; Serrano Pabón, 2019), as well as affective commitment with turnover intention (Meyer et al., 2002; Mowday et al., 1979; Scroggins, 2008). Considering these lines of research, our study raises the question: Can affective commitment mediate the relationship between the meaning of work and turnover intention?

This study explores the mediating role of affective commitment between the meaning of work and turnover intention, using mediation analysis to understand how affective commitment influences this relationship. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing strategies to enhance the meaning of work within the workplace. Such enhancement could lead to increased employee commitment and a greater intention to remain with the company (Allan et al., 2019; Bailey et al., 2019).

Meaning of Work

The meaning of work has sparked a never-ending intrigue within the realm of Industrial Organizational

Psychology due to its perspective (Allan et al., 2019; Bailey et al., 2019; Rosso et al., 2010). Initially described as self-expression, having a purpose, and gaining a sense of accomplishment while working (Morse & Weise, 1955), ongoing research has expanded its understanding (Allan et al., 2019; Bailey et al., 2019; MOW, 1987; Rosso et al., 2010). The meaning of work is seen as a personal and individualistic concept, emerging when one's beliefs, values, and goals align with one's work (Bailey et al., 2019; Scroggins, 2008).

The Meaning of Work International Research Team (MOW, 1987) describes it as an individual's interpretation of work's meaning in the broader context of life. Salanova et al. (1996) define it as a set of beliefs and values toward work developed before and during socialization at work. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) characterize it as one's understanding of the purpose and achievements in their work. García et al. (2001) view it as a set of beliefs, values, and attitudes toward work. Allan et al. (2019) define it as a "global judgment of one's work accomplishing significant goals congruent with existential values" (pp. 502).

Ultimately, the meaning of work hinges on individual values, beliefs, and attitudes, which gains significance in workplaces when fostering a culture that values individual contributions and enables self-expression (Bailey et al., 2019; Rosso et al., 2010). External factors can also impact one's meaning of work (e.g., health issues, economic changes, family upbringing). In essence, the meaning of work is a positive psychological state resulting from perceiving work as fulfilling, worthwhile, and impactful on the world.

MOW Heuristic Research Model (1987)

The Meaning of Work International Research Team (1987) developed a heuristic research model postulating that one's perception of work is influenced by personal choices, experiences, organizational and environmental (i.e., sociocultural) factors. The model comprises three sets: a) Conditional Variables, encompassing antecedents like personal characteristics (i.e., generational cohort, gender, educa-

tion), family situation, present job (i.e., job characteristics, work schedule), and career history; b) Central Variables, defining the meaning of work through factors such as work centrality, societal norms, valued work outcomes, and work goals; c) Consequences, representing outcomes of working (i.e., work attachment and job autonomy), intricately linked to the individual's meaning of work (MOW, 1987).

Antecedents and Outcomes of Meaning of Work

The meaning of work is shaped by individual values, beliefs, and attitudes, influenced by workplace factors. Bailey et al. (2019) categorized its antecedents into: a) job design; b) leadership and management; c) organizational-level factors; d) workplace relationships; and e) individual characteristics. Job Design focuses on how one's work is designed and can affect the meaning of work. For example, job autonomy has positively and significantly associated with the meaning of work (Anthun & Innstrand, 2016). Leadership and Management, how various leadership styles could foster the meaning of work, such as transformational leadership (Arnold et al., 2007; Pradhan & Kumar Pradhan, 2016). Organizational-Level Factors are the elements and their effect on the meaning of work, such as person-organizational fit (Serrano Pabón, 2019) and organizational climate (Schnell et al., 2013). Workplace Relationships, how bonds at work can affect the meaning of work, such as perceived organizational support (Akgunduz et al., 2018). Individual Characteristics view how individualistic factors affect the meaning of work, such as a proactive personality (Akgunduz et al., 2018).

The outcomes can fall into a) work-related attitudinal and behavioral, b) performance-related, and c) individualistic. Work-related attitudinal and behavioral outcomes are one's response toward experiencing the meaning of work, such as organizational commitment (Geldenhuis et al., 2014), affective commitment (Cotto, 2020; Puchalska-Kamińska et al., 2019; Pradhan & Kumar Pradhan, 2016), in-role and extra-role behaviors (Puchalska-Kamińska et al., 2019), and organizational socialization (Comin & Pauli, 2018). The meaning of work is associated with performance-related outcomes like contextual performance (Pradhan & Kumar Pradhan, 2016). Individualistic outcomes focus on what one gains from the meaning of work, such as meaning in life, eudemonic well-being,

and calling orientation (Puchalska-Kamińska et al., 2019). This aligns with MOW's (1987) model, emphasizing the impact of one's work environment on the meaning of work and the individual's responses to these factors, such as values, beliefs, and attitudes.

Organizational Commitment

The evolution of the commitment traces back to Becker (1960), who defined it as a *side bet* resulting from an individual's involvement in social organizations. Grusky (1966) linked commitment to the employee's desire to sustain with an organization, while Kanter (1968) introduced cohesion commitment as an attachment to social relationships and cognitive-continuance commitment as the balance between the benefits of staying and the costs of leaving. Mowday et al. (1979) viewed commitment as a global construct reflecting a general affective response to the entire organization.

Mowday et al. (1982) categorized commitment into attitudinal and behavioral perspectives, addressing the alignment of values and goals and the employee's role in the organization. Meyer and Allen (1991) defined organizational commitment as a psychological state influencing the decision to continue or discontinue organizational membership, comprising affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Klein et al. (2012) characterized it as a volitional bond involving dedication and responsibility to the company. Meyer and Allen (1991) highlight the psychological process of affective commitment, emphasizing the employee's desire to stay based on positive work experiences, leading to increased effort and contributions. The value of organizational commitment lies in its representation of a broad psychological orientation with implications for various organizational behaviors (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Meyer and Allen's Three-Component Model of Organizational Commitment (1991)

Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model of organizational commitment examines turnover intention, with each commitment contributing to the framework. Affective commitment is influenced by personal characteristics (i.e., age, tenure, and education), workplace structure (i.e., role clarity, workplace relationships, and climate), and the employee's work experience (i.e., organizational support, conflict,

autonomy, and job challenges). Continuance commitment involves "side bets" and alternative employment opportunities, drawing parallels to Becker's (1960) side bet theory. Normative commitment is rooted in socialization (i.e., cultural, familial, or organizational) and organizational investments (i.e., training or tuition), creating a sense of obligation. Due to this, these factors can affect one's decision to continue with their current workplace or leave.

Antecedents and Outcomes of Organizational Commitment

Affective commitment represents an employee's genuine desire to stay (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Akin to the meaning of work, it is influenced by personal characteristics, organizational structure, and work experiences (Cotto, 2020; Scroggins, 2008; Steger et al., 2012). Personal characteristics focus on one's values, beliefs, and personality; such associations include life satisfaction (Dávila de León & Jiménez García, 2014), self-efficacy, and hope (Cernas-Ortiz et al., 2018). Organizational structure refers to the workplace's structural characteristics; such associations are ethical leadership (Benevene et al., 2018), leader's support (Samsudin et al., 2018), organizational virtues (Lupano-Perugini & Castro Solano, 2018) and organizational climate (Woznyj et al., 2019). Work experiences examine the factors influencing one's decision to join the organization, such as job satisfaction (Benevene et al., 2018; Lupano Perugini & Castro Solano, 2018; Romeo et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, the outcomes consist of work-based and individual-based behaviors. Work-based behavior is the associations related to one's state of affective commitment, such as turnover intention (Güllü et al., 2020; Romeo et al., 2020), intention to stay (Benevene et al., 2018; Falcão & Bittencourt, 2018), and organizational performance (Woznyj et al., 2019). Individual outcomes focus on the present behavioral factors, such as positive attitudes (Dávila de León & Jiménez García, 2014). Ultimately, when an organization provides experiences that align with one's expectations, it fosters affective commitment (Meyer et al., 2002; Mercurio, 2015).

Turnover Intention

One's intention to quit is influenced by external factors (i.e., organizational climate) and has

significant consequences for organizations (Kaur et al., 2013; Mobley, 1982). March and Simon (1958) define turnover intention as the desire for employee mobility based on the quality and quantity of alternatives and job satisfaction. Mobley (1977) characterizes turnover intention as withdrawal behavior and the subjective evaluation of the probability of leaving the organization (Mobley, 1982). Other definitions emphasize termination intentions arising from external reasons (i.e., employment opportunity), organizational background (i.e., organizational climate), or personal background (i.e., work dissatisfaction) (Vandenberg & Nelson, 1999).

Mobley's Turnover Intention Model (1977)

Mobley (1977) proposed a heuristic model outlining the intermediate steps in the satisfaction-turnover relationship and the decision-making process regarding one's intention to stay or leave. The model depicts one's sequential evaluation process in assessing their job satisfaction, leading to thoughts of quitting and potential behaviors like absenteeism. Subsequently, the individual weighs the expected utility of searching for new opportunities and the costs associated with leaving (i.e., loss of benefits). This leads to the intention to explore alternatives, initiating a search. Upon finding alternatives, the individual evaluates and compares them to their current job, influencing the decision to stay or quit.

Variables associated with Turnover Intention

Like previous constructs, turnover intention considers the individual and the impact of elements in the workplace on their behavior and decision-making. Factors such as being overburdened with work (Heleno et al., 2018), workplace mobbing (Güllü et al., 2020), and organizational change (Lundmark et al., 2020) could lead to turnover intention. Turnover intention can appear by other behavioral means like exhaustion, cynicism, and interpersonal strain (Shaukat et al., 2017). Meanwhile, conflicts with relationships (Shaukat et al., 2017), role conflict, and work-life conflict (Peng Lok et al., 2019) are predictors of turnover intention. The absence of organizational factors promoting stability and satisfaction contributes to turnover intention (Romeo et al., 2020). Additional predictors include job burnout (Gabel Shemuely et al., 2015; Garrido et al., 2017). Such factors significantly impact

one's daily life and prompt reconsideration of one's options (Mobley, 1982; Steers & Mowday, 1981).

Theoretical Framework

The meaning of work, affective commitment, and turnover intention are significantly influenced by individual perceptions and how external factors shape their decisions. Our study explores the mediating role of affective commitment in the relationship between the meaning of work and turnover intention. Meaningful work is metaphorically likened to caring for a delicate flower, requiring attention and nurturing (Bailey & Madden, 2016). This fragility is characterized as being self-transcendence, poignancy, episodic, reflectiveness, and personal (Bailey & Madden, 2016). In some cases, work is meaningful when it impacts others or the world at large. While others will find that challenging or uncomfortable conditions give them a sense of meaningfulness rather than the regular everyday scenario. Meanwhile, people experience meaningful work at sporadic moments, profoundly affecting them. On the other hand, experiencing meaningful work is done by being consciously aware of the significance of their experiences in the workplace. Lastly, people often understand meaningful work as something that their personal experiences can influence. The complexity of meaningful work is reflected in its fragility, encompassing a disconnect from values, lack of recognition, a sense of pointlessness, unfairness, disempowerment, lack of supportive relationships, and risks of harm (Bailey & Madden, 2016). The question arises: How does this process begin and conclude?

Meaning of Work and Turnover Intention

When individuals perceive their tasks as meaningful, valuable, and worthwhile, it initiates a "positive feedback loop" of increased positive organizational behavior and reduced turnover intention (Allan et al., 2019). Various studies have shown positive associations between the meaning of work and commitment (Allan et al., 2019; Cotto, 2020; Jiang & Johnson, 2018; Scroggins, 2008). This means that this "positive feedback loop" could work within the relationship between the meaning of work and affective commitment. Experiencing work as meaningful reinforces emotional attachments to the organization (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Meyer et al., 2002). Conversely, those lacking a sense of meaning in work feel they

have little to expect or contribute within their roles (Kahn, 1990). Finding meaningful work encourages individuals to identify with the organization, embracing its mission, vision, values, and goals (Steger & Dik, 2010; Jiang & Johnson, 2018).

Meaning of Work and Affective Commitment

Affective commitment has been presented as an outcome of the meaning of work (Allan et al., 2019; Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The psychological state described by affective commitment aligns with the meaning of work, where one's attitudes, beliefs, and values play a crucial role in coping with factors within and outside the workplace. Affective commitment and the meaning of work work in tandem, as finding more meaning in one's work leads to increased investment and emotional attachment to the organization (Cotto, 2020; Puchalska-Kamińska et al., 2019; Scroggins, 2008; Steger et al., 2012).

Affective Commitment and Turnover Intention

Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model of organizational commitment sheds light on the psychological process underlying the relationship between affective commitment and turnover intention. The model posits that structural characteristics and work experiences within one's workplace significantly influence one's turnover intention. When these elements are lacking or perceived negatively, it increases the likelihood of turnover intention. Genuine identification and involvement with the company lead to lower intentions to leave (Mowday et al., 1982). This aligns with prior studies on the relationship between affective commitment and turnover intention (Dias Ramalho Luz et al., 2018; Mañas-Rodríguez et al., 2019; Meyer et al., 2002; Mowday et al., 1979; Polizzi Filho & Claro, 2019; Scroggins, 2008).

Perceiving work as necessary, worthwhile, or valuable creates a sense of meaning, leading to greater identification with the organization and increased involvement and commitment to contributing to it. (Arnoux-Nicolas et al., 2016; Bailey et al., 2019; Scroggins, 2008). However, if one fails to find meaning in their work or cannot perceive it as meaningful, they may become avoidant at work and less involved in organizational activities and duties (Heleno et al., 2018; Serrano Pabón, 2019). This, in turn, may make them seek new job opportunities or even leave the organization.

Research Question

Does affective commitment mediate the relationship between the meaning of work and the employee's turnover intention?

Hypothesis

H1: Affective commitment will partially mediate the relationship between the meaning of work and turnover intention.

Hypothesized Model

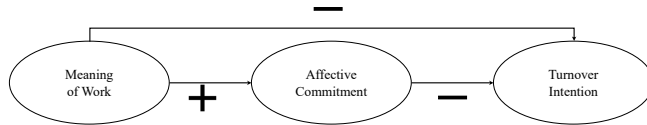


Figure 1. Hypothesized Model

Justification

The meaning of work has been an “elusive” topic of interest and has demanded a continuation of research and development to enrich its understanding and provide more insight into various ways to study it (Allan et al., 2019; Bailey et al., 2019; Rosso et al., 2010). The meaning of work has been studied in various locations worldwide, but the studies done in Puerto Rico have been far apart. Thus, it has caused an interest in the continued study of the meaning of work within the working context of Puerto Rico and provide an additional stance on how the construct takes shape in the island (Cotto, 2020; Guzmán López, 2015; Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2019; Serrano Pabón, 2019; Sotomayor Añeses, 2011).

For this reason, this study aims to understand the mediating role of affective commitment in the relationship between the meaning of work and turnover intention. This study aims to enhance our understanding of the relationship between the meaning of work, turnover intention, and affective commitment in Puerto Rico. Similarly, with the relationship between affective commitment and turnover intention. While this relationship has been observed in other areas of the world but not in Puerto Rico (Stinglhamber et al., 2015; Yousaf et al., 2015).

By understanding these factors, we can create ways to allow us to foster the meaning of work within the workplace. By doing so, employees could experience an increase in their commitment and develop an intention to stay within the company (Allan et al.,

2019; Bailey et al., 2019). Especially when the workplace is ever-changing and work plays a massive role in the individual's life (Allen & Meyer, 1991; Bailey et al., 2019; Mercurio, 2015; MOW, 1987; Rosso et al., 2010).

METHOD

This study is a secondary data analysis, using data initially collected by Rodríguez Montalbán (2019) study of psychosocial factors in the workplace in a sample of workers in Puerto Rico. For this investigation, Dr. Ramón Rodríguez Montalbán was contacted to request his informed consent to use the data collected from his study; upon receiving his approval, we conducted our statistical analyses. Our study was approved by the Scientific Research Committee (IRB) of the Albizu University (IRB Protocol Fall18-22).

Research Design

The study uses a non-experimental approach, analyzing secondary data from Rodríguez Montalbán's (2019) study on Puerto Rican workers. It explores statistically significant relationships between research variables using a cross-sectional correlational model. Only specific variables related to the meaning of work, affective commitment, and turnover intention will be considered. The advantage of secondary data analysis is that it's cost-effective, fast, and avoids new data collection issues while exploring novel conclusions. (Kerlinger & Lee, 2002; Brewerton & Millward, 2006).

Participants

A non-probabilistic sample of 612 workers in Puerto Rico participated in the study. The participants were 59% female, 40.5% male, and .2% transgender, and were between the ages of 21- to 78-year-old ($M = 35.44$, $SD = 11.83$). Furthermore, 71.4% of the sample worked in the private sector, mainly in the service sector (37.1%). Many of the participants held a full-time position (75%). Regarding tenure, the data fluctuated between 0 - 62 years ($M = 13.42$, $SD = 10.67$). Lastly, 74.9% of the sample did not perform supervisory tasks.

Measures

Sociodemographic. This form asked the participant for information on gender, age, academic background, tenure, the type of organization that they

work in, the sector from which they work, if they are a full time or a part time employee, and if they supervise or supervised other employees.

Meaning of Work. The study measured the meaning of work by using Arnold et al. (2007) Meaningful Work Scale. This scale has 4 items (e.g., The work I do makes me feel accomplished), and participants respond to the items by rating it on a Likert scale ranging from 0 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree). The original English version of the instrument presented a good internal consistency ($\alpha = .84$). The study used a Spanish translation of the scale (Rodríguez Montalbán, 2019).

Affective Commitment. The study measured affective commitment with an Affective Commitment Scale (Rodríguez Montalbán, 2019). This scale consists of 4 items (e.g., I am proud to work in this company), and respondents rated each item by using a Likert scale that ranged from 0 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree). The scale in this study had good internal consistency ($\alpha = .87$).

Turnover Intention. The study measured turnover intention with Rodríguez Montalbán et al. (2014) Turnover Intention Scale. This scale is comprised of 4 items (e.g., I am currently looking for another place of employment), and a Likert scale is used to rate each item, ranging from 0 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree). During the study, the scale had a good internal consistency ($\alpha = .92$).

General Procedures

Some adjustments were made to facilitate the study's analyses, including reverse scoring certain items in the Meaningful Work Scale (Arnold et al., 2007) for consistency. The original sample size remained unchanged. The hypothesis will be assessed

through correlation and mediation analyses using SPSS, involving 612 participants aged 21 to 78 working in diverse organizations in Puerto Rico. The correlational analysis will examine relationships between variables, while the mediation analysis will explore the role of a mediating variable in explaining the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Data Analysis

The study employed correlational analysis and utilized the PROCESS module by Hayes (2018) to test the hypothesis regarding the mediation effect in the proposed model. Mediation analysis was conducted to understand how a mediating variable explains the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This analysis aimed to ascertain if one or more mediating variables influence the association between the independent and dependent variables (Field, 2017). The analysis computed the mediation effect (indirect effect of the independent variable through the mediating variable) and the direct effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The significance of the mediation effect was determined by calculating the 95% confidence interval (CI).

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the descriptives, correlations, mediation analysis, Cronbach's Alpha, and McDonald's Omega between the variables. As expected, all relationships in the study are significant and in the expected direction. Meaning of work is positively related to affective commitment ($r = .63, p < .01$) and negatively related to turnover intention ($r = -.47, p < .01$). Similarly, affective commitment is negatively related to turnover intention ($r = -.51, p < .01$).

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, Cronbach's Alpha, McDonald's Omega (N = 612)

Variable	M	SD	α	Ω^2	1	2	3
1. Meaning of Work	4.42	1.25	.85	0.82		.63	-.47
2. Affective Commitment	4.03	1.37	.87	0.88	.63		-.51
3. Turnover Intention	2.54	1.80	.91	0.92	-.47	-.51	

*Note: M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; α = Cronbach's Alpha; Ω^2 = McDonald's Omega; all correlations are significant to $*p < .001$*

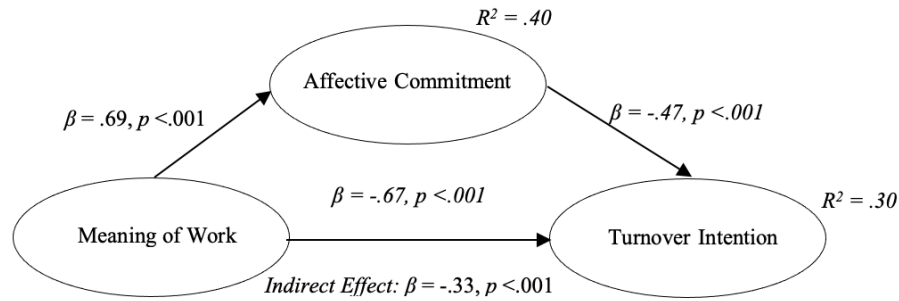


Figure 2. Partial Mediation Model

To test the hypothesis that affective commitment mediates the relationship between the meaning of work and turnover intention, the PROCESS 3.0 module for SPSS by Hayes (2018) was used for this analysis. A positive relationship was found between the meaning of work and affective commitment ($\beta = .69, p < .001$). A negative relationship was found between affective commitment and turnover intention ($\beta = -.47, p < .001$). Meanwhile, a negative relationship was found between the meaning of work and turnover intention when the affective commitment was absent ($\beta = -.67, p < .001$). Finally, when affective commitment is presented, a significant relationship was found between the meaning of work and turnover intention ($\beta = -.35, p < .001$). Consequently, this shows that affective commitment partially mediates the relationship between the meaning of work and turnover intention. The indirect effect of affective commitment on the relationship between the meaning of work and turnover intention is ($\beta = -.33, 95\% [-.41, -.24]$). Lastly, the mediation model explains 40% of the variance of affective commitment and 30% of the variance of turnover intention.

DISCUSSION

The study found that the meaning of work is positively correlated with affective commitment and negatively correlated with turnover intention. Affective commitment mediates the relationship between the meaning of work and turnover intention, with a partial mediation indicating that the meaning of work influences both directly and indirectly through affective commitment. The results suggest that experiencing meaning in work fosters affective commitment and reduces the intention to leave. These findings are consistent with previous research. (Allan et al., 2019; Cotto Delgado, 2020; Hackman & Oldham, 1976;

Scroggins, 2008; Steger et al., 2012; Serrano Pabón, 2019).

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The meaning of work can be fostered and can lower one's intentions to leave, as we can infer from our results in a sample of workers in Puerto Rico. Our findings are consistent with previous research in and outside Puerto Rico (Allan et al., 2019; Heleno et al., 2018; Serrano Pabón, 2019; Scroggins, 2008). The heuristic model proposed by MOW (1987) mentions that one's meaning of work is affected by one's work environment and coping mechanisms with the factors surrounding them (i.e., values, beliefs, and attitudes). This means that affective commitment serves as a "positive reinforcement" to the person experiencing their work as meaningful and will be more inclined to stay with their current employer. With this "reinforcement" provided by affective commitment, an employee experiencing the meaning of work can enter a "positive feedback loop" to enable other positive workplace behaviors; this benefits the employer and the employee. Our findings provide empirical support for these theoretical approaches.

Meanwhile, the practical implication of this study is that we should handle the meaning of work on the individual level, and it is vital to recognize the employee's differences to promote their self-identification with the organization. An introspective scale can be used to understand how employees perceive their job and whether it aligns with their personal meaning of work. Based on the results, the organization or consultant can determine how to assist employees in finding meaning, such as creating a supportive work environment that helps them discover intrinsic meaning and balance work and personal life. Additionally,

allow the use of cross-training, mentoring, or coaching to provide employees with opportunities for professional development, a flow of exchanging ideas, receiving recognition, and a space to express themselves fully in the workplace. Another way to continue to promote their meaning of work and, to an extent, affective commitment is the use of community-building activities to foster a sense of unity, a sense of belonging, a space to exchange ideas, and to express themselves (Allan et al., 2019; Mercurio, 2015). Understanding the individual is essential for organizations to retain their current and future personnel because a person's meaning of work can change because of the organizational and environmental factors surrounding them.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The study has limitations, including its cross-sectional design, which captures variables at a specific point in time. Availability sampling was used, but the large and diverse sample size was considered advantageous. Limited research on the meaning of work in Puerto Rico necessitated drawing insights from Latin America and the Caribbean due to cultural similarities. Despite these limitations, the study contributes to the literature on the meaning of work in Puerto Rico. The call for further research emphasizes exploring how the meaning of work influences other psychosocial factors in Puerto Rican workplaces and examining the consistency of affective commitment's mediating effect on the relationship between the meaning of work and turnover intention, especially in the context of post-pandemic developments.

CONCLUSION

As MOW (1987) states, the meaning of work is complex and highly differentiated at the individual level. The beauty of this complex construct is that it focuses on the individual's beliefs, values, and attitudes toward working while considering the factors in the individual's surroundings. Ultimately, this study demonstrated that when individuals experience their work as meaningful, it helps them to be emotionally committed to the organization, causing them to desire to stay in their current job. Nevertheless, the impact that the meaning of work presents to organizations is that we should recognize that everyone is different. It is vital to consider these differences

during their tenure. One's meaning of work can fluctuate depending on the factors around them, and because of it, one could view the meaning of work as forever changing.

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Review Process: This study has been reviewed by external peers in double-blind mode.

Statement of the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence: No generative artificial intelligence was used in the drafting, analysis, or preparation of the manuscript.

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