

CHAPTER THREE

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. PREAMBLE

Organizational commitment has progressively become a substantial focal theme within the scopes of distinguishing a business in its environment; specifically in a highly competitive environment, organizational commitment encompasses the capability to establish a uniquely strong competitive advantage. The commitment to an organization, exuded by the employee, adds powerful value to the organization and thus, it is crucial to identify efficient incentives and stimuli.

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of the non-monetary motivational factor pride within an organization's environment. Specifically, the study was designed to determine the relation between the employees' perceived sentiment of pride for their organization and their output commitment to their organization on each of organizational commitment's three levels: affective, continuance and normative level.

Consequently, in order to appraise the relation between pride and organizational commitment as well as its potential impact, the hereby-leading research question, 'Does the perception of pride working for an organization lead to a higher commitment to the organization?', results in the proposed hypotheses:

- H₁: Organizational commitment is a dependent variable from the independent variable pride.
- H₂: The level of perceived pride working for an organization or the organization itself represents a stimulus for each dimension of organizational commitment.
- H₃: A strong intensity in the employee's perception of pride for her/his organization leads to a positive relation to affective organizational commitment.
- H₄: A strong intensity in the employee's perception of pride for her/his organization leads to a negative relation to continuance organizational commitment.
- H₅: A strong intensity in the employee's perception of pride for her/his organization leads to a positive relation of normative organizational commitment.
- H₆: A strong intensity in the employee's perception of pride of her/his work for the organization leads to a positive relation of affective organizational commitment.
- H₇: A strong intensity in the employee's perception of pride of her/his work for the organization leads to a negative relation of continuance organizational commitment.
- H₈: A strong intensity in the employee's perception of pride of her/his work for the organization leads to a positive relation of normative organizational commitment.

3.2. INTRODUCTION TO METHODOLOGY

The following chapter's purpose is constituted by the exploration and clarification of how the information and data, which substantiate the foundation of this study's research as well as its subsequent conclusions, were found, developed, and synthesized. For this thesis, and commonly for each academic research, the respective researcher must determine and define which modus of methodology depicts an optimum practical approach and eventually yields the highest quality of

appropriately compatible results. The designated function underlying the study's methodology chapter is to establish comprehension, predominantly of the research's conduct process and which theoretical assumptions undergird the purported hypotheses. The crucial factor of the specifically chosen research methodology is its capability of underpinning and validating the study's stated hypotheses as well as facilitating and enabling the completion of the respective research (Quinlan, 2011).

Research commonly is illustrated as a successive process, constituted of single steps, forming an eventually unfolding entity of knowledge and finding (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2010). Originally, the term *research* is derived from Latin language; to the term, there are specific characteristics attached. There must be a clearly defined purpose of what is eventually supposed to be found, driving the entire research. In order to accomplish the finding of what the purpose defines, a systematic accumulation of data must be implemented, followed by an interpretation of the data (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The primary underlying aim, leading a research, is to concentrate data, which is reliably proving a hypothesis stated in a purpose. Research reliability is then attained, when standard principles of scientific methodology are considerably followed, comprising clear policies and techniques that generate interrelated information. The aggregate of efficient research incorporates the (i) clear definition of the research's purpose, (ii) the detailed definition of the research's methodology that capacitates other researchers to reprise the research, (iii) a thorough research's plan in order to generate an optimum of objectiveness, (iv) a utilization of ethically high criterions, (v) the transparent illustration of the research's limitations, (vi) the comprehensive conveyance of the research's data significance, (vii) the unequivocal delineation of the findings, (viii) the adequately limited preparation of the data's ratiocination to those who may use it, (ix) and lastly the appropriate reflection of the researcher's integrity and experience (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

3.3. METHOD OF LITERATURE RESEARCH

PRISMA guidelines and statement were followed in order to ensure a literature research of high quality. Initially, a comprehensive search of academic journals was completed, basing on the key terms pride and organizational (i.e., organisational) commitment. The primary online database has been searched in the first step – EBSCOhost (Siam University Central Library), with a limitation to academic journals. In a second step, the section of references of each found academic journal article was reviewed so as to identify and find further articles. Additional searches in two primary databases – Google Scholar and JSTOR – were conducted and sources beyond academic journals, such as books and theses were reviewed. In the third step, specific inclusion criteria were applied to identify redundant articles and material. Primary criterion was the relevancy of the topic. Topics, including personality and character traits, goal setting, burnout and emotional exhaustion, bullying, employability and meaning of work were not integrated in the study, as these materials were not immediately linked to the two primary topics, resp. two primary variables. Other fields, including employee and work engagement, self-esteem, leadership, stress, motivation, turnover intention, well-being and job security are partially to be found in the study, as the found material on these topics displays high correlation with the primary topics. Second criterion applied was the age of the material, which was not to be over 20 years, with exceptions for fundamental literature, theses, and theories.

Finally included were 102 sources that have been identified as valid through the exclusion criteria. Other sources were dismissed (see: PRISMA model).

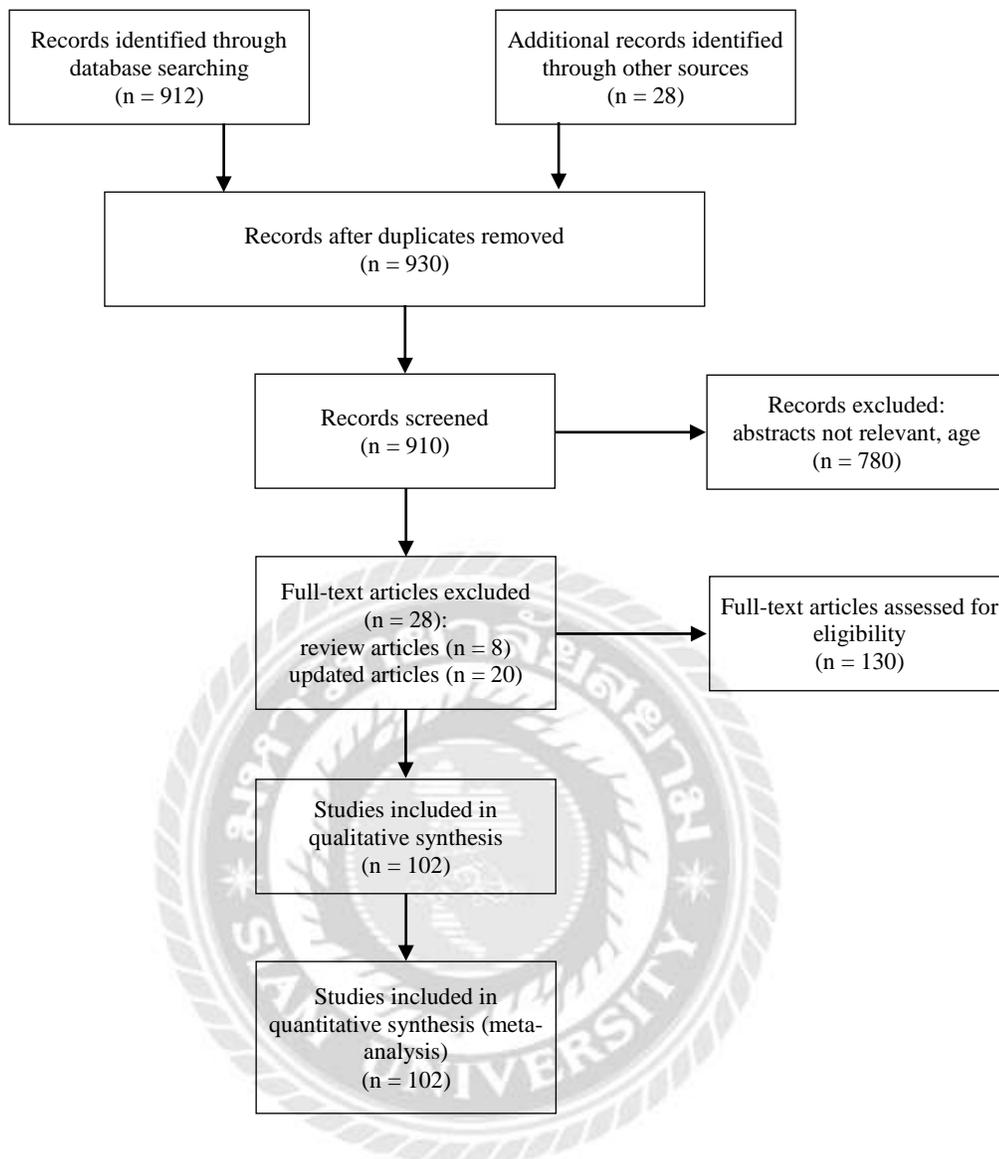


FIGURE 1: PRISMA FLOW DIAGRAM FOR UNDERLYING LITERATURE RESEARCH

(Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009)

3.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

The chosen methodology underlying the research for the hereby-specified study's purpose is a quantitative technique, particularized by the method of a questionnaire survey. The survey questionnaire methodology is a sub-category of quantitative research; the latter depicts the equivalent to qualitative research methodologies, which generate information that is articulated through words rather than numeric information, articulated through figures. Three centre aspects form the basis of quantitative research: (i) data collection, (ii) interpretative analysis and (iii) scientific reporting (Becker, 1970). Although the hereby-conducted study is of quantitative nature, qualitative aspects are as well incorporated, specifically in the conclusive interpretation segment. The implementation of qualitative research techniques and procedures is found in each research's processes of collecting and analyzing data as those individual notions, concepts, sentiments and thought approaches must not be excluded from the interpretation of non-numeric information (Quinlan, 2011). The qualitative research elements emphasize the interpretive methodology to ultimately generate gapless comprehension of a social phenomenon's significance, implication and consequence – rather than its pure frequency and regularity – through description, decryption, and translation (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The observational interpretation of environmental phenomena as well as measurement of natural occurrences within the environment conducted by the researcher and interpreted through the researcher's perspective of thought with an outcome of full understanding forms the priority of qualitative research (Ghuri & Gronhaug, 2010). Thus, these aspects of observation and interpretation must not be omitted, despite the study's quantitative scope.

The data accumulation derived from quantitative research is of various and multiple natures; hence, the groupings of same information with particular information natures must be identified

and these various information category classifications need respective concepts for analysis. Subsequent to the analysis, the information of figures provided by the quantitative research, then enables the researcher to understand why and how an action, a process, or the like takes place (Saunders, 2009).

Quantitative data accumulation and research for quantitative data findings is historically deeply established in research projects. Numerous reasons recommend the usage of quantitative research as it yields holistic information; holistic as the quantitative information analysed through quantitative methods and partly interpreted through a qualitative approach (i.e., the researcher's interpretation) perpetuates a chronology within the research phenomenon without disregarding and omitting foregoing and succeeding phenomena. That is due to the varying nature of its multi-layered data origins (individuals or organizations) and its alignment with environmental occurrences. Hence, research propositions that scheme social phenomena in specific environments, e.g., business organizations, draw on quantitative research findings as they rationalize and explain the specific social proceeding in numerical and empirical ways (Miles, 1979).

One technique to aggregate holistic data in the scope of quantitative research is the conducting of surveys. This kind of mutual data communication between respondent and researcher enables the latter to extract valuably rich information through directly as well as indirectly articulated declarations (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). The questionnaire and its observations and interpretations commence the procedure of the three quantitative research aspects, accumulating relevant data for the subsequent interpretation. The interpretation in turn depicts the conceptualization of attaining the research finding from a data aggregate, which eventually is committed to paper in written form through reports or theses (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The researcher essentially ought to thoroughly plan and as well thoroughly conduct and document a survey questionnaire so as to accumulate optimum data. The aggregate of data concentrated by a questionnaire survey must provide a consistent and valid reliability. A multitude of academic discourses depicts the advantages and benefits of quantitative surveying, such as, traceability, empirical evidence, the possibility to acquire a variety of data types and as well the comparability of various data sets, the outcomes' potentially high generalizability and validity (Almeida, Faria, & Queirós, 2017).

This cross-sectional study was conducted on sales employees working in a hierarchal environment of at least one superior in selected multinational automotive organizations with industrial, manufacturing and engineering backgrounds in Germany. The present study is categorized as a descriptive research as it includes different variables to be analysed and underlies the purpose to assess the correlations between these multiple variables. The framework is adopted from Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component organizational commitment scale with an extension that assesses the employees' pride manifestation for their work and for their organization, resp. for their company.

Following the three-component organizational commitment Scale by Meyer and Allen (1991), a specifically adapted scale of that type was applied to measure the employees' three directions of commitment to the organization (affective, continuance, normative commitment). Within the scope of this research, a seven-point scale according to Likert's framework was applied in order to specify the responses' degree of agreement to the various sampled items, with 1 equalling 'strongly disagree' to 7 equalling 'strongly agree'.

Meyer & Allen's (1991) three-dimension commitment scale is widely adopted as the predominating conceptualization of a measurement instrument for organizational commitment

(Bergman, 2006), comprising three sections, each with eight subitems. The affective commitment section consists of eight items.

Survey design is hereby the preferred technique; experiment design was not applied due to the study's nature. The survey technique gathers information, provided by responses of a selected population, concerning a variable that is to be studied. An experiment on the other hand, isolates the variable that is to be studied in the scope of a scientific procedure, in order to test a hypothesis. As the underlying research in this study is of descriptive nature, with a sample that may as well be of large scale, the experiment's research would have to be of experimental nature, with commonly small samples. Finally, the suitability for an experimental research design is given under the circumstances of physical and/or natural sciences, conducted primarily through a laboratory research, isolated from the outside; the present study is located in the environment of social and behavioural sciences, and conducted as a field research outside a laboratory or other scientific location, which makes a survey design applicable. Thus, the research design chosen for this study is the survey design, specifically the utilization of a questionnaire, as the survey study explores the potential relationship between variables, while the experiment would determine the relationship.

3.5. SAMPLE SELECTION

Inclusion criteria for the selected employees were underlying a non-probability convenience and quota sampling method and were justified as follows. A convenience and quota sampling method needed to be adopted as the confidentiality policies within the chosen organizations are to

be adhered to. These policies prohibited the researcher from obtaining information about the employees' personal data, such as, names, addresses and contact details.

The survey questionnaires were personally directed and gathered from 325 sales employees in the automotive sector of multinational groups, which will be further presented in the subsequent subchapter. The sample size's determination underlies the postulated theory that if the study's current population lies above 2,000 individuals, the sample size's ratio will have to be at 320 respondents (Sekaran, 2003) as well as the assumption that for a common study, a sample size of 30 to 500 participants is adequate (Roscoe, 1975). Hence, the sample size for the present study was constituted of 325 participating employees.

Two justifications substantiate the targeting of sales employees in this study. Firstly, in the automotive manufacturing industry, the product's production and its sale are effected at different times. The sales employees are committed to sell a product, of which they have no direct influence on quality and characteristics. Hence, they assume the crucial role of representing the interface between manufacturer and customer and eventually aim to improve the customers' loyalty and profitability. Secondly, sales employees are subject to greater degrees of emotional exhaustion than employees of other departments (Boles, Johnston, & Hair, 1997).

3.6. DATA COLLECTION

The survey questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed based on the examination of scientific establishments, specific outcomes of which were assessed in the earlier subchapters of this thesis. Prior to the data collection, one meeting was conducted in the specific departments to inform the department's heads as well as the respective human resource managers in charge about the research's significance and content. These meetings as well clarified crucial points concerning the

using of the questionnaire, the confidentiality and the logistics of conduction the questionnaire process. The employees were provided with an acknowledgement about the questionnaire one week before the realization of the questionnaire procedure. To assure clarity and consistency within the questionnaire items, a pilot questionnaire study among sales employees of each company was undertaken. The questions were found clear, consistent and relevant.

The particular methodology of data collection in this study was of the previously mentioned field research method, specifically through the personal distribution of questionnaires among employees of the automotive sales sector background. The questionnaires were finalized in person and eventually collected by the researcher. Thereafter, the statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics processed the collected data. The applied questions for collecting data in the scopes of this study will be explained subsequently.

Each participant was asked to specify the degree to which she or he agrees with statements, such as *'To spend the rest of my career in this company, resp. organization would make me exceptionally happy and proud.'*, *'It would be very difficult for me to leave my company, resp. organization, even if I wanted to do so.'* or *'I think that an employee must always be loyal to his/her company, resp. organization and represent it with pride.'*

The respondents were only able to access the questionnaires in person. The questions predominantly comprised closed-ended questions, provided with a Likert scale of seven values, so as to enable the participants to weigh the importance of the measured elements from *'strongly disagree'* to *'strongly agree'*. Thus, all statements were measured as seven-point structured items; the indication of these items was coded following the principle that a high score signifies a particularly strong agreement, while low scores imply strong disagreement. The statements were formulated to define the general degree of a participant's sentiments. Specific events or occasions that may depict sources to these positions were not surveyed. A subsection to assess individual

data, such as, age, gender and education of the specific respondent, was incorporated as the results basing on these information were supposed to be group-oriented compared through the means of a correlation analysis.

The questionnaire was organized with the purpose to assess the three dimensions of organizational commitment with a strong focus on the motivational, non-monetary factor pride. Within this instrument, organizational commitment – with a concentration on the affective, continuance and normative dimensions – was studied within the scale of Likert's tool in the form of a seven-degree spectrum.

3.7. STATISTICAL METHOD

The data's analysis was conducted with the software SPSS Statistics, using T-Test and One-Way ANOVA. The dependent variables, affective, continuance and normative commitment towards the organization were measured with the adapted version of Meyer and Allen's (1991) organizational commitment scale. The adaptation was made in order to incorporate a conceptualized measurement of the independent variable represented by the non-monetary motivational factor *pride*. The justification of this specific combination of scale and questionnaire lies in Cronbach's alpha hypothesis. Based on this hypothesis, Meyer and Allen (1991) conducted the respective calculations and found the reliability coefficient of the entire questionnaire to range at 0.97, while the affective dimension's coefficient scopes at 0.86, the continuance dimension's one at 0.85 and the normative dimension's one at 0.92 (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The reliability analysis, basing on Cronbach's alpha, therefore shows that the values range between 0.85 and 0.97; these values sufficiently exceed the minimum value of 0.70. Hence, the conclusion can be made that these measures are provided with an adequate grade of reliability.

As mentioned, within the context of this study, Likert's seven-point scale was applied to specify the level of agreement to all items. An additional categorization of the mean values of all items into three degrees was conducted, so as to classify low levels, moderate and high levels of response. I.e., these mean values ranging in the scope of less than 2.00 were classified as 'low', whereas values of higher than 2.00, but less than 3.50 were 'moderate' and finally values ranging of 3.5 or higher were labelled 'high'. The standard deviation thereby channels the spreading of a data set from its mean. In the scope of the present data accumulation it became visible that the stronger the spread of the data was, the higher the deviation value was.

Furthermore, a T-Test as well as an One-Way ANOVA were implemented to assess if there are substantial variances between the variables *organizational commitment* and *pride* and demographic, resp. personal variables, such as, the participants' age, their gender and marital status as well as their educational degree. The abstract variable *organizational commitment* was assessed with a total of 24 questions, resp. statements, divided into three groups, while the variable of *pride* was measured with a total of four statements. A further section comprising four independent demographic variables was added.

3.8. METHODOLOGY CONCLUSION

The following framework illustrates the applied research path within the present study (chosen elements are highlighted).

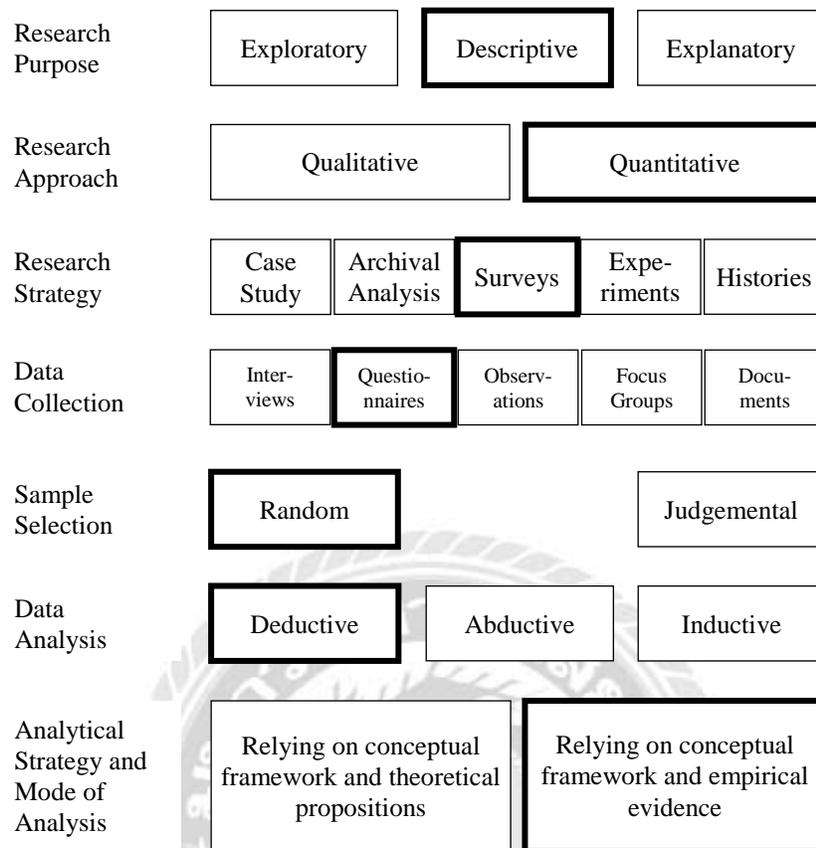


FIGURE 6: RESEARCH PATH OF PRESENT STUDY

(adaption based on Johansson & Ström, 2002)

The research purpose was of descriptive nature, situated in the scope of a quantitative approach. The underlying research strategy was the survey methodology, specified by the utilization of questionnaires. The analysis of the accumulated data, provided by a randomly selected sample, was implemented deductively. The eventual analytical strategy was guided by the reliance on the analyzed empirical evidence within the developed conceptual framework. The personally gathered data of sales employees' responses were accumulated through two instruments: a brief demographic characteristics questionnaire as well as an adapted model of

Meyer & Allen's (1991) Organizational Commitment model, comprising 24 statements to be measured. Within the Organizational Commitment scale, eight items were applied to assess each of the three dimensions of affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The respondents indicated their agreement using the Likert scale ranging from a level of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). In this study, the organizational committing behaviour of sales people with higher perceived pride was considerably stronger than others' commitment. Data analysis, outcomes and findings will subsequently be presented in Chapter four.

