

# Influence of Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction on Employees' Intention to Provide eWOM: The Moderating Role of Perceived Company Reputation\*

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## Abstract

Staff word-of-mouth is a largely overlooked way to increase organizational attractiveness and recruit valuable human resource through employee referrals. The purpose of this research is to assess the influence of job satisfaction and organizational commitment on the employees' willingness to convey positive information about their company on social networks. Our findings show that job satisfaction and affective commitment directly affect electronic word-of-mouth propensity, while the influence of continuance and normative commitment is strongly moderated by the perceived company reputation. These results indicate that companies can use satisfaction and affective commitment, as well as reputation, as leverages for driving employees to generate positive staff word-of-mouth in the online environment.

**Keywords:** eWOM, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, perceived company reputation

**JEL Codes:** M19, M54

## Introduction

The phenomena associated with globalization, such as workers' migration, workforce shortage, and heightened talent competition, to name just a few, have generated multiple concerns among theoreticians and practitioners alike to identify ways to attract and maintain human resources (Hanin/Stinglhamber/De-lombe 2013). One solution is for employees (even interns) to recommend the organization as a good job-provider, in both offline and online environments (Sun/Ayoun/Calhoun 2013; Hanin et al. 2013; Van Hoyer 2012; Ahamad 2019; Breitsohl/Ruhle 2016). However, the research that aims to analyse the decisive factors behind word-of-mouth, electronic word-of-mouth and the organizational strategies that could help increase their positive role is quite limited (Van Hoyer 2012; Hanin et al. 2013; Keeling/McGoldrick/Sadhu 2013; Dechawatanapaisai 2019).

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Word-of-Mouth (WOM) and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) are both communication channels for sharing information and opinions. They differ in several aspects, as systematized in Table 1.

The effects of WOM need to be considered because organizations cannot control the employees’ communications outside their work (Cable/Turban 2001). The employees are organizational messengers through everything that they communicate. Quick and easy information delivery, especially online, can support (or not) organizational efforts. The employees’ recommendations (positive WOM and eWOM) are good tactics for companies to increase organizational attraction, especially in the first stages of recruitment (Keeling et al. 2013).

**Table 1 – Differences between WOM and eWOM**

	WOM	eWOM
Type of interaction, communication channels	Direct communication (oral - face-to-face or by phone)	Communication mediated technologically (written - on platforms and via other digital modes)
Range, accessibility	Limited, low accessibility (interpersonal communication)	Large, facile accessibility (information may be accessible to a global public)
Permanence, accuracy and digital fingerprint	Less persistent and can be easily forgotten or lost over time (is based on participants’ memory); without fingerprint	Permanence (the message remains stored online)/ with fingerprint
Influence, credibility / negativity bias	Increased (due to direct interaction, interpersonal relationships) / negativity bias - easier to counteract	Variable (depending on the credibility and number of people who expose the message)/ negativity bias - hard to counteract
Propagation speed and magnitude	Slow, limited (it assumes physical presence of individuals)	Extremely fast (posted messages can be accessed immediately), with potential for global spread
Need for new knowledge	No need for new knowledge	Depends on experience factor, knowledge sharing factors and technology acceptance factors

Systematization from: Husain/Varshney 2022, Yang 2017, Huete-Alcocer 2017, Tham/Croy/Mair 2013, Hoffmann/Novak 1996

Both WOM and eWOM can play significant roles in human resources management (in modeling the employer brand, influencing people in search of a job, obtaining feedback on the experience of employees in the organization). However, researches on eWOM developed in the field of human resources are quite few, unlike in marketing where we can see a high output (Evertz/Kollitz/Süß 2021). With the development of social networks and contents created by users, WOM metamorphoses in eWOM, the latter having a large development (Sarma/Choudhury 2015). The differences between WOM and eWOM can no longer

be neglected in the context of changes generated by technological progress. The effects that could be generated by the speed with which the messages reach individuals and by their global spreading capacity should make managers reflect. These reasons have also guided our research towards analysing the relationships between certain organizational variables and eWOM.

Employees can contribute to the consolidation of the company's good reputation, with long-term effects on its ability to attract and retain valuable people. Many times these extra roles of employees are not fully acknowledged by the organization's management, therefore there is no strategic support in this respect (Helm 2011). Taking on these roles can be determined by job satisfaction, organizational commitment and perceived corporate reputation (Helm 2011).

Consequently, our study aims to analyse the influence of organizational commitment and job satisfaction on the employees' intention to recommend the organization as a good employer in the online environment, and to assess the moderation effect of perceived company reputation on the relationships between job satisfaction, respectively organizational commitment, and employees' positive eWOM.

The choice for organizational commitment and job satisfaction as antecedents for employees' intention to provide eWOM is motivated by the fact that both are human attitudes that reflect a positive evaluation of the job, being an affective response to the organization as a whole (commitment), and to specific characteristics of the job (job satisfaction) (Lum/Kervin/Clark/Reid/Sirola 1998). A considerable amount of research also shows that organizational commitment and job satisfaction are the primary factors for the occurrence of desirable organizational behaviours (Schappe 1998), or have positive influence on such behaviours (Podsakoff/MacKenzie/Paine/Bachrach 2000; Organ/Ryan 1995).

The moderating role of perceived corporate reputation needs to be assessed since a positive internal perception influences both employees' reactions and how the company is viewed from outside (Davies/Chun/da Silva/Roper 2004).

Our research has been organized as follows: we first present the theoretical framework of the study focusing on the definition of our working concepts (organizational commitment, job satisfaction, corporate reputation, and staff eWOM); we further discuss the influence of the three dimensions of organizational commitment, as well as the influence of job satisfaction on the employees' intention to spread positive eWOM, along with the moderating role of perceived corporate reputation, in order to formulate the hypotheses of our research; the next two sections describe the research methodology (sample and data collection, questionnaire, indicators, methods) and the results; subsequently, we discuss the theoretical and managerial implications of the main results, and end with concluding remarks.

## 1. Theoretical framework and the development of hypotheses

This section gives an overview of the literature on the working concepts considered in our research: organizational commitment, job satisfaction, corporate reputation and staff eWOM, as well as on the nature of the relationships between them, to substantiate the research hypotheses.

### 1.1 Working concepts

#### *Organizational commitment*

Authors of studies conducted on the topic of organizational commitment argue that there is no agreement as to the definition of this concept (Meyer/Allen 1991; Alniacik/Cigerim/Akcin/Bayram 2011). Several definitions have been developed in an attempt to capture its essence, initially seen as a one-sided concept rather than as a multi-dimensional one (Juaneda-Ayensa/Clavel San Emeterio/González-Menorca 2017; Uraon 2018).

Although the idea of organizational commitment was used in various studies, the concept as such was first explained in Becker's work (1960), who argued that commitment is present when "*people engage in consistent lines of activity*", which means that "*it outlines the mechanisms by which past actions link extraneous interests to a line of activity*". Porter et al. (1973) define organizational commitment "in terms of the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization." According to other authors, it represents the degree to which employees adopt the organization's values and objectives and identify with them in carrying out their professional duties (Tanriverdi 2008). Meyer and Allen (1991) show that commitment, as a psychological state, reflects the desire, need and/or obligation to remain the organization's employee. The authors highlight the relation between attitudinal and behavioral components of commitment and delineate three dimensions of organizational commitment:

- *Affective commitment* refers to emotional attachment, involvement and identification with the organization. The employees are a part of the organization because they *want* it. In this case we can speak of mutual *willingness* to contribute to organizational wellbeing, associated with positive feelings.
- *Continuance commitment* means awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization. Employees remain in the organization because they think they *must* do so. They perceive the costs associated with job quitting as being too high. *Cost-based reciprocity* (fear of losing what has been gained from involvement, personal effort etc.) is what governs the employee-employer relationship, therefore the employee will be as involved as necessary to remain in the organization.

- *Normative commitment* is associated with the obligation to remain in the organization. Employees feel they *should* stay out of a sense of moral duty, loyalty. Thus, this is a reciprocity *via obligation*.

There is also an important amount of research carried out to validate Meyer and Allen model (Allen/Meyer 1990; Medeiros/Enders 1998; Mohammed/Eleswed 2013). This construct is widely used in the fields of human resource management and organizational behavior (Lizote/Verdinelli/Nascimento 2017), which is why it is selected for this study as well. Some of the limitations and directions for further research, suggested by those who have created or used it, are: the three dimensions, though interlinked, are distinct (Allen/Meyer 1990; Meyer/Stanley/Herscovitch/Topolnytsky 2002); the instrument has been created for a part of the North-American cultural space, and the results must be interpreted in relationship to the cultural context and the characteristics of the sample group etc. (Meyer et al. 2002); a better clarification of the construct regarding normative commitment is required (Meyer et al. 2002; Juaneda-Ayensa et al. 2017).

There are numerous studies that highlight the positive role of organizational commitment on certain variables, such as good job performance, organizational citizenship behavior or the intention to remain in the organization, but very little research investigates the relationship between organizational commitment and traditional or online word-of-mouth (Sun et al. 2013). Our research focuses on the relationship between organizational commitment and eWOM, by tracing the influence on each dimension in the model (affective, continuance and normative).

### *Job satisfaction*

The concept of job satisfaction is approached differently in various works, depending on the specificity of each research. However, most definitions are concentrated on the idea of attitude to the job and various aspects related to it, such as: a positive emotional state resulting from job assessment or feelings and thoughts associated to the job (Locke 1976), a cluster of evaluative feelings about the job (Spector 1985), specific cognitive, affective and evaluative reactions, of a person towards their job (Greenberg/Baron 2000), or “a feeling that appears as a result of the perception that the job enables the material and psychological needs” (Aziri 2011:78).

A high level of satisfaction can indicate the employees’ good mental and emotional state. An analysis of job satisfaction can point to the quality of organizational management (Aziri 2011). Job satisfaction leads to positive behavior, whereas dissatisfaction leads to negative behaviors. There are few studies that highlight the direct relation between job satisfaction and WOM (Haghighikhah/Khadang/Arabi 2016; Gross/Ingerfurth/Willems 2021), but nu-

merous reports present the positive relation between job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviors (Organ/Ryan 1995; Najafi/Noruzi/Azar/Nazari-Shirkouhi/Dalv 2011). WOM and eWOM are forms of manifestation of organizational citizenship behavior, the latter concept being defined as a discretionary individual behavior, non-rewarded formally, which leads to the overall efficient functioning of the organization. Taking all these aspects into account, we aim to analyze the importance of job satisfaction in generating eWOM.

### *Corporate reputation*

There are several views on the meaning of corporate reputation. Studies indicate a focus on different facets of the construct, from a theoretical as well as practical perspective (Fombrun/Van Riel 1997). An integrative definition could be the one offered by Fombrun and Rindova (1996, in Fombrun/Van Riel 1997:10): *“A corporate reputation is a collective representation of a firm’s past actions and results that describes the firm’s ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders. It gauges a firm’s relative standing both internally with employees and externally with its stakeholders, in both its competitive and institutional environments”*.

Reputation generates certain perceptions among employees, clients, investors, competitors and the public at large about what the organization does and represents (Fombrun/Van Riel 1997). Good reputation favors increased trust in the organization, increasing its attractiveness. Moreover, it constitutes a resource that is difficult to imitate, creating a competitive advantage. It is connected to corporate identity and culture (Fombrun/Van Riel 1997). Reputation has been evaluated based on certain attributes grouped around certain key-features (emotional appeal, products & services, vision & leadership, workplace environment, financial performance, social responsibility) as we find in Fombrun and Gardberg (2000).

### *Staff eWOM*

According to Keeling et al. (2013), staff word-of-mouth is “the process of staff and former employees communicating information and opinions about the organization, both within and beyond their social networks”. There are multiple characteristics that define word-of-mouth and its consequences (Sun et al. 2013), the distinction between traditional word-of-mouth and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) being of interest to us. The experience of the past years has shown that technological progress, the need for top international work/ collaboration, as well as crisis situations, lead to a more intense use of social networks; hence, our research has focused on eWOM. Obviously, employees can convey either positive or negative information, but in our case we particularly focused on

positive eWOM. We are interested in the factors that support it, with effects that can be capitalized on in human resource management.

With regards to WOM, studies have shown that employees with a positive attitude at work are likely to deliver it based on intrinsic motivation (Sun et al. 2013). Also, it is believed that eWOM has more credibility than messages sent by the company (Melián-González/Bulchand-Gidumal 2016). Moreover, eWOM is not temporary (unlike traditional WOM), because employees can communicate their opinions in writing, and they remain in the online environment (Litvin/Goldsmith/Pan 2008).

With positive eWOM, the employees can support organizational efforts related to attracting and retaining human resources. The importance of positive eWOM is clear for recruitment processes, but also in the creation of the employer's brand. The few studies focused on this topic stress the need for managers' and researchers' increased attention to this phenomenon (Van Hove 2012; Hanin et al. 2013; Keeling et al. 2013; Dechawatanapaisal 2019).

## 1.2 Views on the relationships between variables. Grounding research hypotheses

### Job satisfaction and eWOM

Specialized literature presents the positive effects of job satisfaction, among which we can list: increased loyalty and commitment (Martensen/Gronholdt 2006), stated intention to remain in the organization (Mosadeghrad/Ferlie/Rosenberg 2008), and organizational citizenship behavior (Najafi et al. 2011; Wahjusaputri 2018).

With regards to the relationship between job satisfaction and WOM or eWOM, studies show the significant direct influence of satisfaction on WOM (Haghighikhah et al. 2016), partial mediation of the relationship between the supervisor's perceived respect and WOM (Behrens/Parmelee 2018), a positive relation with the intention of recommending the organization, traditionally or online (with no distinction between the two forms) (Gross et al. 2021).

In agreement with the theoretical grounds, we have formulated the following research hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 1: Job satisfaction positively influences eWOM*

### Affective commitment and eWOM

Numerous studies demonstrate that affective commitment influences the manifestation of desirable organizational behaviors. It is stated that the estimation of the probability for employees to act in favor of the organization's interest can be facilitated by measuring affective commitment (Meyer/Allen 1991). Basically,

studies have demonstrated the following: a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction (Alniacik et al. 2011), a significant negative relationship with the intention of leaving the organization (Alniacik et al. 2011), increased interest in online activity (Wasko/Faraj 2005), a positive relationship with organizational citizenship behavior and increased diligence (Battistelli/Galletta/Portoghese/Pohl/Odoardi 2013), increased interest in using social networks and creating content for work-related purposes (Chen/Lu/Wang/Zhao/Li 2013), increased satisfaction and significant contributions in the workplace (Camilleri 2002), a sense of organizational support (Meyer et al. 2002), a negative connection with the intention of leaving the organization, fluctuation and absenteeism (Somers 1995). Identification with the organization supports employees taking on extra roles and is one of the positive determinants of WOM (Ruge/Lc/Supphellen 2021). Consequently, we have formulated the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 2: Affective commitment positively influences eWOM*

#### *Continuance commitment and eWOM*

Continuance commitment is related to the costs of leaving the organization (the perceived sacrifice), or the lack of alternatives. These costs can generate resentment and frustration (Camilleri 2002). There are studies that show that continuance commitment has negative effects on the employees' desirable behaviors. Other research results state that it has no influence, as Meyer et al. (2002) observed in a meta-analysis. Subsequent studies draw similar conclusions: continuance commitment has no impact on job satisfaction (Lizote et al. 2017), and the relationship between continuance commitment and employees' intention to remain in the organization is negative (Uraon 2018). Some authors even eliminate the continuance commitment component so as not to alter the analysis model of organizational commitment (Xiong/Jianmu/Pengju 2017). As eWOM can be assimilated to an extra role which requires extra effort, and continuance commitment does not seem to support this, the third research hypothesis is:

*Hypothesis 3: Continuance commitment does not influence eWOM*

#### *Normative commitment and eWOM*

Normative commitment is seen in terms of moral obligation, duty and gratitude (Juaneda-Ayensa et al. 2017). Empirical research on normative commitment as a determinant of certain organizational effects presents various results: normative commitment influences satisfaction negatively (Lizote et al. 2017), has a significant negative relationship with the intention to leave the organization (Somers 1995), does not support the use of social networks (Chen et al. 2013), has a significant impact on organizational citizenship behavior (Bakhshi/Sharma/Kumar 2011), and is correlated with affective commitment (Meyer et al. 2002). Feelings

generated by normative commitment can be positive, generating behaviors such as job performance, lack of absenteeism, organizational citizenship behavior, as well as negative ones when they stress the idea of obligation (Camilleri 2002).

Normative commitment is presented as an important predictor of WOM in a study carried out in the Chinese culture. This is explained by the fact that, in this culture, obedience and obligation are strong standards; consequently, the influence of normative commitment on employees is stronger (Sun et al. 2013). It seems that there is a positive correlation between certain cultural features (power distance and collectivism, which are also characteristic of the Romanian culture) (Clugston/Howell/Dorfman 2000). It is, nonetheless, believed that there are few empirical studies that would clearly support the results related to this dimension and future research is recommended (Juaneda-Ayensa et al. 2017).

Based on the theoretical findings presented, we formulate the following research hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 4: Normative commitment positively influences eWOM*

*Perceived company reputation as a moderator in the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment, on the one hand, and eWOM on the other hand*

Reputation, as an intangible asset, depends on real life experience, being related to attitudes. It is affective and attitudinal in nature (Fombrun/Van Riel 1997; Davies et al. 2004; Veh/Göbel/Vogel 2019). Employees' perception on corporate reputation can affect their loyalty and behavior (Davies et al. 2004; Primadini/Syaebani 2017), thus contributing to the formation of outsiders' perception (Helm 2011). A company with good reputation is expected to be able to retain talents, generate positive WOM, have market advantages, and create growth (Fombrun/Gardberg 2000). Research indicates a positive relationship between corporate reputation as perceived by the employees and positive eWOM (Es-enyel/Emeagwali 2019). A surprising positive effect of reputation on desirable behaviors was noticed when it was analyzed together with other variables (affective commitment and job satisfaction) (Alniacik et al. 2011). Also, the perceived external prestige mediates the relation between identification with the organization and WOM (Dechawatanapaisal 2019). This is why we aim to analyse its role as a moderator in the relationship of our variables with eWOM. Thus, we have elaborated the following research hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1': Perceived company reputation moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and eWOM intention*

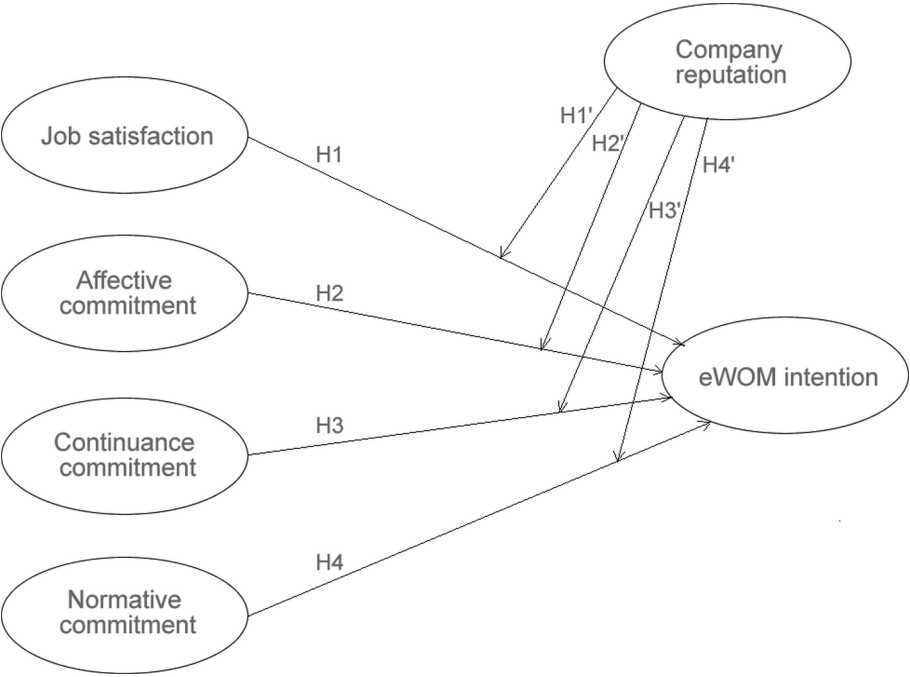
*Hypothesis 2': Perceived company reputation moderates the relationship between affective commitment and eWOM intention*

*Hypothesis 3': Perceived company reputation moderates the relationship between normative commitment and eWOM intention*

*Hypothesis 4': Perceived company reputation moderates the relationship between continuance commitment and eWOM intention*

Our final model can be examined in Figure 1.

**Figure 1 – Research Model**



**2. Instrument and methodology**

To collect our data, we have used a questionnaire applied to a convenience sample of 250 Romanian subjects. At the time of the study all of the respondents were employed in Romanian companies. They were either students of our faculty or members in different social network groups.

The survey was conducted online, using the Google Forms platform. The subjects were contacted through email or through direct group messaging, and asked whether they would be available to respond to our survey. Those who agreed received another email with the questionnaire link. The demographic characteristics of our sample are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 – Sample Demographics

<b>Respondents' gender</b>	
Male	29%
Female	71%
<b>Respondents' age</b>	
Mean	26.2
Standard deviation	6.7
Minimum	18
Maximum	49
<b>Respondent's seniority on the job</b>	
Mean	3.3
Standard deviation	4.7
Minimum	1
Maximum	28
<b>Company legal status</b>	
Limited liability	58%
Incorporated	9%
Other	33%
<b>Company capital type</b>	
Romanian	62%
Foreign	38%
<b>Number of employees</b>	
Mean	125.4
Standard deviation	159.1
Minimum	1
Maximum	760

The questionnaire was divided into several groups of questions, corresponding to the constructs to be measured: organizational commitment, job satisfaction, perceived company reputation, and willingness to provide eWOM. Organizational commitment was evaluated using the inventory created by Meyer and Allen (1991). In order to measure perceived reputation, we have used an inventory called *Index of perceived organizational reputation*, created by *Fortune Magazine* (Reese 1993). This inventory contains the following items: management quality, products and/or service quality, long term investments, financial solidity, the capacity to attract, develop, and keep talented people, responsibility towards the community, and the use of corporate assets (Carmeli/Tishler 2005). Job satisfaction was gauged using the *Generic Job Satisfaction* scale (Macdonald/MacIntyre 1997). As the authors of the scale state, general or common aspects of job satisfaction have been considered, so it can be used for employees

in all fields of activity. Finally, the intention to generate eWOM was measured using a scale adapted from (Alexandrov/Lily/Babakus 2013). All inventories are presented in the Appendix.

3. Data Analysis

A hierarchical multiple regression was run to determine (1) whether job satisfaction and commitment influence employee eWOM intention, and (2) whether the addition of the interaction terms of satisfaction and commitment, on the one hand, and perceived reputation, on the other hand, improve the prediction of eWOM intention.

The first regression model only includes the direct effects on eWOM intent (job satisfaction and the three commitment types – affective, continuity and normative), excluding the interaction effects. The second model comprises both

Table 3 – Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting eWOM intention

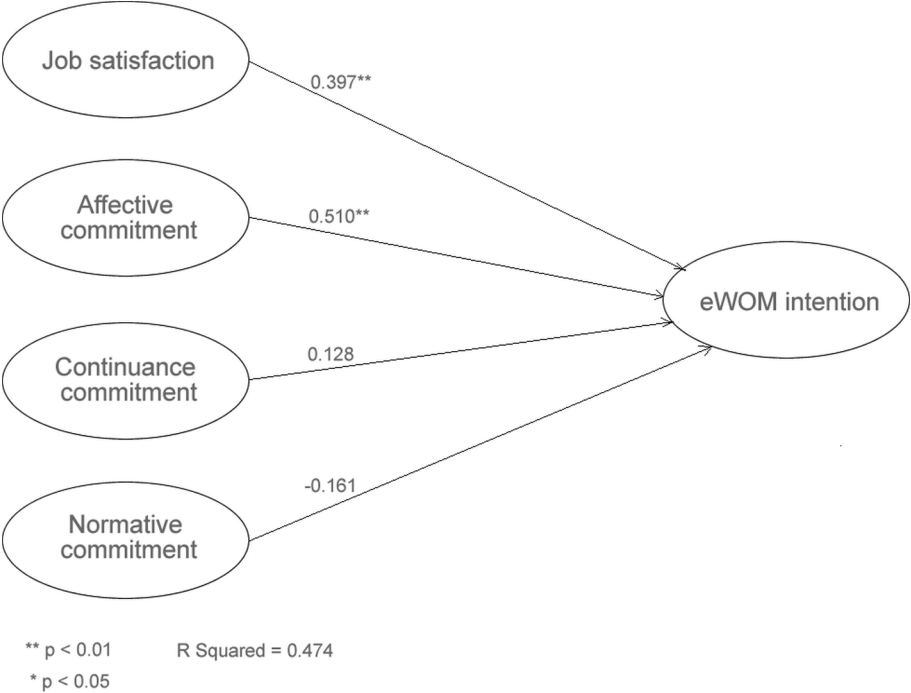
	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	t	Sig.	B	t	Sig.
Constant	5.032	58.040	<0.001	5.217	49.565	<0.001
Job satisfaction	0.397	2.758	0.006	0.372	2.582	0.010
Affective commitment	0.510	3.934	<0.001	0.503	3.857	<0.001
Continuity commitment	0.128	1.211	0.227	0.169	1.610	0.109
Normative Commitment	-0.161	-1.478	0.141	-0.189	-1.676	0.095
Perceived reputation	0.592	4.753	<0.001	0.575	4.714	<0.001
Job satisfaction * Perceived reputation	-	-	-	-0.080	-0.678	0.498
Affective commitment * Perceived reputation	-	-	-	-0.141	-0.210	0.227
Continuity commitment * Perceived reputation	-	-	-	0.220	1.984	0.048
Normative commitment * Perceived reputation	-	-	-	-0.273	-2.618	0.009
R <sup>2</sup>	0.474			0.507		
ΔR <sup>2</sup>	0.474			0.033		
F	43.981			27.437		
ΔF (Sig.)	43.981 (<0.001)			4.027 (0.004)		

R<sup>2</sup> – coefficient of determination  
ΔR<sup>2</sup> – variation in the coefficient of determination  
F – F test value  
ΔF – variation in the F test value

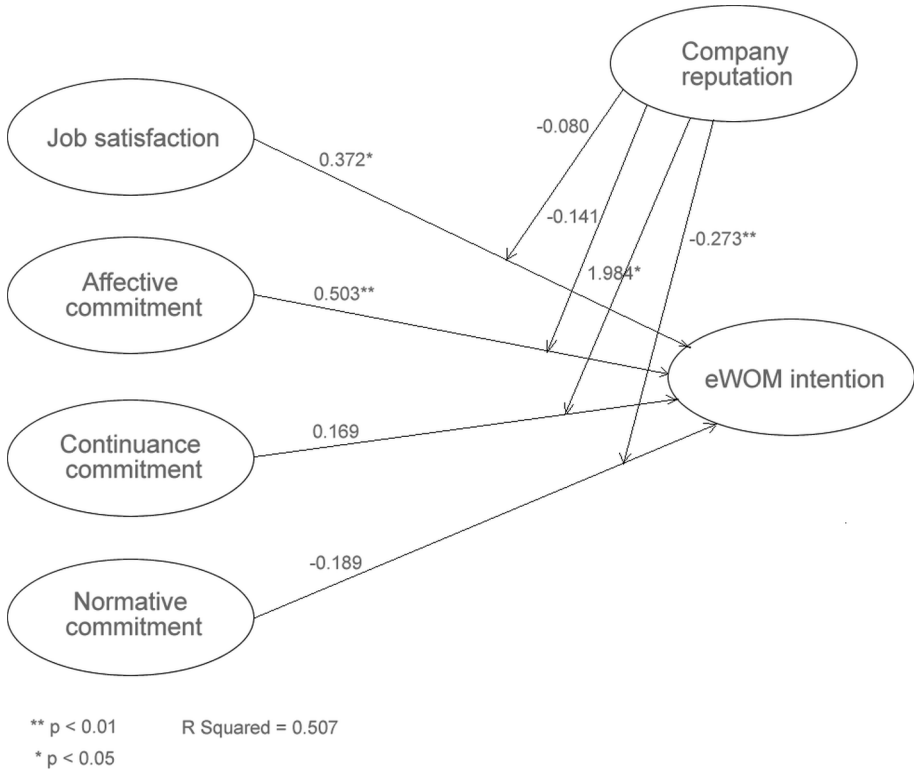
the direct effects and the interaction effects (eight predictor variables in total). The moderating variable, i.e. company perceived reputation, was also included in the model, though its direct effect on eWOM propensity is not of interest.

Before creating the interaction terms, the variables were standardized, in order to avoid the appearance of big correlations between predictors. The detailed results for each regression model can be found in Table 3. The regression coefficients can be found in Figure 2 (for the first model) and Figure 3 (for the second model).

**Figure 2 – Regression Coefficients for Model 1**



**Figure 3 – Regression Coefficients for Model 2**



There was independence of errors, as assessed by the Durbin-Watson test (2.153), and no evidence of multicollinearity was found, since all VIF values were smaller than 3. Model 1 was statistically significant:  $R^2 = 0.474$ ,  $F(5, 244) = 43.981$ ,  $\text{Sig.} < 0.001$ ; adjusted  $R^2 = 0.463$ .

Model 2 was statistically significant, as well:  $R^2 = 0.507$ ,  $F(9, 240) = 27.437$ ,  $\text{Sig.} < 0.001$ ; adjusted  $R^2 = 0.489$ . The addition of the interaction terms led to a statistically significant increase in  $R^2$  of 0.033,  $F(4, 240) = 4.027$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = 0.004$ .

Job satisfaction has a significant positive influence on eWOM intention ( $B=0.372$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = 0.010$ ), as well as affective commitment ( $B=0.503$ ,  $\text{Sig.} < 0.001$ ). Furthermore, the interaction terms between reputation and these two variables is not statistically significant. Continuity commitment and normative commitment have no significant effect on eWOM intention, but the coefficients of the interaction terms between these variables and perceived reputation are statistically significant.

In conclusion, perceived reputation moderates the influences of continuity commitment and negative commitment on eWOM intention. To investigate these

moderating effects we have used simple regression analysis, as recommended by Aiken and West (1991). Specifically, we have considered the following relationships: (1) the relationship between continuity commitment and eWOM intention for low and high levels of reputation, and (2) the relationship between normative commitment and eWOM intention for low and high levels of reputation. These levels were set as being equal to one standard deviation below and above the mean, respectively.

The results of the simple regression analyses are summarized in Table 4.

**Table 4 – Simple regression analyses predicting eWOM intention**

Independent variable: continuity commitment			
	B (slope)	T	Sig.
Low perceived reputation	-0.139	-1.806	0.278
High perceived reputation	0.478	3.705	<0.001
Independent variable: normative commitment			
	B (slope)	T	Sig.
Low perceived reputation	0.194	1.590	0.113
High perceived reputation	-0.572	-3.839	<0.001

For the employees with low levels of perceived reputation, the eWOM intention is not influenced by continuity commitment. For the employees with high perceived reputation, there is a significant positive relationship between continuity commitment and eWOM intention ( $B=0.478$ ,  $Sig.<0.05$ ).

Furthermore, for the subjects with low perceived reputation, normative commitment has no effect on eWOM intention. However, for the subjects with high perceived reputation, there is a significant negative relationship between normative commitment and intention to provide eWOM online ( $B=-0.572$ ,  $Sig.<0.05$ ).

These results will be thoroughly discussed in the next section.

## 4. Discussions

### *Theoretical implications*

Our analysis shows that the intention to offer eWOM on social networks is positively influenced by job satisfaction as well as affective commitment, so the first two research hypotheses are validated. This influence is not changed by perceived reputation, so hypotheses H1' and H2' are not validated. In other words, employees who are happy with their job and truly devoted to the company will probably support it online, regardless of its reputation in the outer world. Job satisfaction and affective commitment reflect one's attitude towards the job (Meijerink/Beijer/Bos-Nehles 2020). Job satisfaction represents

the employees' feelings towards their job and the different aspects of their work (Spector 1985). Employees' behavior is closely linked to job satisfaction (Davis/Newstrom 1989). Affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment to the organization, associated with the feeling of identification with the organization, involvement, and the joy of belonging (Meyer/Allen 1991). The generated behaviors are in agreement with these attitudes, with a desire for involvement. Thus, satisfied employees that present strong affective commitment will show their intention to recommend the organization as a job provider.

Our results match those of the few studies that present the significant direct influence of job satisfaction on WOM (Haghighikhah et al. 2016; Gross et al. 2021) or of affective commitment on WOM (Ruge et al. 2021). But most studies that analyse the two variables highlight the different positive consequences at organizational level, which shows the importance of taking them into account in the strategic management of human resources. As for the role of perceived reputation, our results coincide with those of Yahya et al. (2017), reporting that there is no significant association, from a statistic point of view, between external perceived prestige and professional satisfaction.

The analysis proves that continuance commitment does not influence eWOM, so our third research hypothesis is validated. Continuance commitment is rather linked to the reward system (Juaneda-Ayensa et al. 2017), and eWOM refers rather to a voluntary, unrewarded behavior. The result matches findings in specialized literature, namely that continuance commitment does not lead to positive organizational results and can even have negative effects (Meyer et al. 2002), possibly also because the perceived sacrifice or the lack of alternatives can generate resentments (Camilleri 2002).

The hypothesis referring to the positive influence of normative commitment on eWOM is not validated. Studies have shown that normative commitment is associated with desirable consequences, but not as strongly as in the case of affective commitment (Meyer et al. 2002). On the other hand, there are studies indicating that the normative commitment does not support the use of social networks (Chen et al. 2013), which could be an explanation for our result. The relationship between this dimension of continuity and eWOM behavior needs further investigation.

The effects of continuance and normative commitment on eWOM intentions depend a lot on perceived reputation (hypotheses H3' and H4'). For employees with low levels of perceived reputation, these variables do not affect the intention to talk about their company online. These people do not have special reasons to be proud of their employers, so they will not support them out of obligation alone. They will probably spread the word about their company only if they are attached to it affectively (in other words, if they have high levels of satisfaction and affective commitment).

This is not the case for employees with high levels of perceived reputation. Our findings clearly show that their tendency to offer eWOM goes up when the level of continuance commitment increases. Basically, continuance commitment quantifies the employee's fear of loss – the fear of losing the benefits they could obtain by working for the company. This fear is certainly greater if the employer is seen as a renowned company, with a solid standing and good financial status. In this situation, many employees will probably feel the need to put in a good word for their company on social media. These results are in accordance with the studies arguing that continuance commitment supports the use of networks and content creation (Chen et al. 2013) and the studies that show that perceived organizational reputation influences eWOM positively (Esenyel/Emeagwali 2019).

For the same employees (with high levels of perceived reputation), normative commitment has a strong negative influence on eWOM intention: the higher the commitment, the lower the disposition to talk about the employer positively. This result is little surprising, because we could expect people with a high level of loyalty to be willing to help their employers by praising and recommending them. There is, however, a plausible explanation for this: employees with a high level of normative commitment believe they have done their duty to the company, contributing to a great extent to its current strength and reputation. Consequently, they feel less obliged to support it online. On the other hand, employees with low levels of normative commitment will probably generate positive eWOM due to their affective connection to the company. These results can be justified in light of the findings of Chen et al. (2013), who showed that normative commitment does not support the use of social media.

### *Managerial implications*

The findings of our empirical study provide support to researchers and practitioners in the human resource management field. More precisely, they can help the organizational efforts related to the recruitment process and employer branding, so companies can attract and maintain valuable human resource. In the first place, managers should aim to increase affective commitment and job satisfaction. They should pay primary attention to everything that generates positive feelings, emotional attachment and intrinsic motivation (such as values, organizational climate etc). Also, they should carefully consider the nature of rewards for employees. Continuance commitment, for instance, goes up with transactional rewards, and the effects of this commitment on employees' behavior is often not positive. However, even a great level of continuance commitment can have a positive impact on staff eWOM, in the case of a solid corporate reputation. Thus, feelings of belonging and pride are important, and they can be developed

by means of proper internal and external communication (Dechawatanapaisal 2019).

As for normative commitment, it does not sustain eWOM either, and the moderating effect of reputation is negative. Consequently, it seems that this type of commitment should not be encouraged. Future research, which may also include other variables, could shed more light on this problematical issue.

In using the results of our research, one must be aware of its several limitations. First of all, only Romanian citizens were selected as subjects. Most of them are students or young professionals, because these categories of people use social networks more frequently. The fact that we have used convenience sampling is another limitation that could affect, to some extent, the generalizability of our findings.

## 5. Conclusions

Our empirical research draws attention to the influence of job satisfaction and affective commitment on the intention to provide staff eWOM, as well as the moderating role of perceived corporate reputation in the relationship between normative and continuance commitment, on the one hand, and propensity to provide eWOM, on the other hand. This moderation explains under which circumstances normative and continuance commitment can increase the likelihood that employees talk positively about their company in the online environment.

The data analysis technique that we have chosen is linear regression with moderation. This is the most appropriate method taking into consideration our research context. The regression analysis reveals both the predictors with the highest impact on the response variable and the insignificant, irrelevant predictors. Moreover, the regression technique allows us to modify any predictor's effects by introducing moderator variables. This way we can assess whether the relationship between the predictor and the dependent variable depends on the level of other variables. By using the hierarchical regression we have separated the influences of the moderating variables and have detected the significant influences.

Our analysis concerning the relationships between organizational commitment and eWOM demonstrates, once more, that the three forms of commitment (affective, continuance and normative) are distinct, as noted by Meyer et al. (2002), with different effects on eWOM: affective commitment has a positive influence on eWOM without the moderating effect of perceived reputation, while the effect of continuance commitment and affective commitment depends heavily on reputation.

This study provides the basis for further research opportunities. This research could examine other variables that impact the willingness to provide staff

eWOM, like social media usage habits, personality traits, need for evaluation, self-enhancement, as well as the influence of other possible moderating variables like company size, staff remuneration level, perceived company performance, and so on.

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## Appendix

### *Affective commitment*

I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization

I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own

I do not feel like 'part of my family' at this organization\*

I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization\*

This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me

I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization\*

\* reversed-score items

### *Continuance commitment*

It would be very hard for me to leave my job at this organization right now even if I wanted to

Too much of my life would be disrupted if I leave my organization

Right now, staying with my job at this organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire

I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this organization

One of the few negative consequences of leaving my job at this organization would be the scarcity of available alternative elsewhere

One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice

*Normative commitment*

I do not feel any obligation to remain with my organization\*

Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave

I would feel guilty if I left this organization now

This organization deserves my loyalty

I would not leave my organization right now because of my sense of obligation to it

I owe a great deal to this organization

\* reverse-scored items

*Job satisfaction*

I get along with supervisors

All my talents and skills are used

I feel good about my job

I have recognition for a job well done

I feel good about working in this company

I feel close to the people at work

I feel secure about my job

I believe management is concerned about me

On the whole, I believe work is good for my physical health

My wages are good

*Perceived company reputation*

Our firm possesses a very favorable reputation for...

... its quality of management

... its quality of products/services

... its long-term investment value

... for its ability to attract, develop and keep talented people

... for its community and environmental responsibility

... for its optimal use of its assets

Our firm possesses a very poor for reputation for...

... not being innovative\*

... lacking financial soundness\*

\* reverse-scored items

*eWOM propensity*

How likely would you do any of the following?

Say positive things about your company

Recommend your company to people who search for a job

Recommend your company to someone who seeks advice about getting a job