The role of trust and team commitment in strengthening organizational commitment through mentorship

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Abstract

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The retention of employees and the workforce's commitment are significant challenges facing family-owned craft firms in Germany, particularly in the context of an increasing shortage of skilled labor. This thesis examines the relationship between mentorship, trust, team commitment, and organizational commitment within these firms to provide insights that can be used to enhance workforce stability.

The study employs a quantitative research design and Hayes' PROCESS Macro Model 8 to demonstrate that mentorship exerts a significant influence on organizational commitment, both directly and indirectly, with team commitment serving as a mediating factor. However, the indirect effects of mentorship on organizational commitment through team commitment were only significant when trust levels were high, underscoring the pivotal role of trust in moderating these relationships.

The findings contribute to the theoretical discourse on mentorship, trust, team, and organizational commitment by situating these dynamics within the context of German family-owned craft firms. The practical implications of this study underscore the necessity for the implementation of structured mentorship initiatives, trust-building strategies, and team-oriented interventions to enhance employee retention and commitment. While the findings offer valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of the study, including its cross-sectional design and industry-specific scope. It is recommended that future research adopt a longitudinal and cross-industry perspective in order to validate further and extend the findings.

Keywords: Mentorship, Trust, Team Commitment, Organizational Commitment, Family-Owned Craft Firms, German Mittelstand

Resumo

Título: O papel da confiança e do compromisso de equipa no reforço do compromisso organizacional através da mentoria

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A retenção de funcionários e o compromisso da força de trabalho são desafios cruciais para empresas familiares artesanais na Alemanha, especialmente diante da escassez de mão de obra qualificada. Esta tese explora como a mentoria, a confiança e o compromisso de equipa influenciam o compromisso organizacional nessas empresas, visando promover estabilidade e coesão no trabalho.

Através de um modelo de investigação quantitativa e do Macro-Modelo 8 do processo de Hayes, a pesquisa demonstra que a mentoria impacta significativamente o compromisso organizacional, tanto direta quanto indiretamente. O compromisso de equipa atua como mediador, mas os efeitos indiretos só são significativos com níveis elevados de confiança, destacando seu papel essencial como moderador.

Os resultados ampliam o discurso teórico sobre mentoria, confiança e compromisso organizacional, contextualizando essas dinâmicas no setor artesanal familiar alemão. As implicações práticas apontam para a importância de programas estruturados de mentoria, estratégias para fortalecer a confiança e intervenções voltadas à equipe, visando retenção e engajamento. Apesar das contribuições, o estudo reconhece limitações como o caráter transversal e o foco setorial. Pesquisas futuras devem adotar abordagens longitudinais e interindustriais para validar e ampliar os achados.

Palavras-chave: Mentoria, Confiança, Compromisso com a Equipa, Compromisso Organizacional, Empresas Familiares de Artesanato, Mittelstand Alemão

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III List of Abbreviations

CEO	Chief executive officer
CI	Confidence interval
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
F-PEC	Family influence on power, experience, and culture
H1	Hypothesis 1 (2-6 respectively)
M	Sample mean
MFQ-9	Mentoring functions questionnaire
OCQ	Organizational commitment questionnaire
p	p-value
RQ	Research question
R^2	Multiple correlation squared
SD	Standard deviation
SE	Standard error
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
t	t-statistic
TCS	Team commitment scale
β	Regression coefficient

M	Mediator
MW	Interaction term between mediator and moderator
W	Moderator
X	Independent variable
Y	Dependent variable

1. Introduction

Attracting and retaining a skilled workforce is widely recognized as a crucial factor in business competitiveness and a major contributor to economic success on a global scale (Lanvin & Monteiro, 2023). As countries worldwide face challenges in maintaining a skilled employee base, talent retention has become critical to economic stability and growth (Bilan, Mishchuk, Roshchyk, & Joshi, 2020). In Germany, the growing shortage of skilled workers, particularly in professions requiring manual labor, has received increasing political and economic attention over the past decade (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2023).

> While 15 years ago we faced the problem of having five million unemployed workers, the issue today is: Where will we get skilled workers? [...] We know many craftsmen and companies that are desperately looking for skilled workers (Merkel, 2019).

In this statement, Angela Merkel acknowledges the increasing problem of finding skilled crafts workers in Germany, especially for family-owned craft businesses of the German Mittelstand. These small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) tend to have difficulty dynamically adapting their strategy and culture to changing labor market conditions, as their more traditional values and processes have always led to less emphasis on strategic orientation (Thomä, et al., 2013).

1.1 Relevance of the Topic, Problem Statement, and Research Question

The ability to attract and retain skilled employees is particularly critical for craft firms, where recruitment and retention are among the most challenging aspects of human resource management (Bilan, Mishchuk, Roshchyk, & Joshi, 2020; Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2023). These firms are more likely to encounter difficulties in the recruitment process, including financial challenges, than other business types (Carroll, Marchington, Earnshaw, & Taylor, 1999). The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has intensified these challenges, leading to labor shortages as employers and organizations struggle with shifts in labor availability and changing job preferences in the post-pandemic world (Ng & Stanton, 2023). As a result, employee retention has become increasingly important, as hiring new staff is not only more costly but also significantly more difficult (Das & Baruah, 2013). One factor in employee retention is organizational attachment and organizational commitment, which are closely related to an individual's motivation to stay with a company (Hytter, 2007). A strong sense of team commitment can enhance this organizational commitment, as employees who feel connected to their teams often develop a more profound sense of loyalty to the organization (Becker & Billings, 1993; Bishop & Scott, 2000). In family firms, where social interactions are more effective than in non-family firms, commitment plays a key role in resolving goal divergence among organizational members and aligning them toward common goals, thereby increasing team performance (Kotlar & De Massis, 2013; Neininger, Lehmann-Willenbrock, Kauffeld, & Henschel, 2010). Furthermore, when employees perceive support through mentoring relationships, they are more likely to demonstrate commitment (Payne & Huffman, 2005). Such mentorship serves to build a foundation of trust, which is beneficial to the organization as a whole since it helps to retain employees. (Koberg, Boss, & Goodman, 1998).

Despite substantial research on mentorship and commitment, the specific impact of mentorship on organizational commitment and its subsequent influence on employee retention remains underexplored (Payne & Huffman, 2005). This impact is particularly true in the context of family firms, such as those in the German Mittelstand, where unique governance structures and family influence may further shape these dynamics (Agle & Caldwell, 1999; Eddleston & Kellermanns, 2007). The extant literature primarily examines commitment in large corporations, often neglecting the unique challenges faced by family-owned SMEs, which are characterized by different values and interpersonal dynamics (Beehr, Drexler, & Faulkner, 1997). Even though mentorship and trust have been shown to enhance commitment, the implementation of these strategies in German family firms can be challenging due to the influence of the firm's unique mentality and family relationships on professional interactions. (Agle & Caldwell, 1999; Eddleston & Kellermanns, 2007). Additionally, extant studies frequently focus on general theories of commitment without examining the impact of team commitment on organizational commitment and how these might be adapted or modified for family firms, where personal relationships and legacy concerns are often of paramount importance (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005). This underscores the importance of research that addresses these gaps and examines the circumstances under which mentorship affects organizational commitment, with a particular focus on the distinct contextual factors present in family firms in the craft sector, to address the skills shortage effectively.

> *RQ: Does the relationship between mentorship and organizational commitment operate through team commitment, and do levels of trust moderate this relationship?*

Further sub-questions are:

> *Does mentorship negatively or positively affect team commitment? Does team commitment negatively or positively influence organizational commitment?*

Is the indirect effect of mentorship on organizational commitment through team commitment stronger or weaker depending on the level of trust?

1.2 Overview of the Dissertation's Structure

The thesis follows a typical dissertation structure and consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the topic, its relevance, the problem statement, and the research question. This is followed by an overview of existing literature, highlighting key findings and examining the link between critical variables such as organizational commitment, team commitment, mentorship, and trust. Despite substantial research in these areas, the relationships between these factors and the differences in these relationships in family-owned craft firms remain underexplored. Accordingly, the following chapter will present hypotheses to investigate these variables further. The design and implementation of the study conducted to answer the research question are described in detail in the methodology review. The analysis section presents the survey results, and the discussion section compares them to the existing literature to identify similarities and novel contributions. Finally, the concluding section will draw recommendations for action based on the findings, address the limitations of the study, and offer suggestions for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Family Firms

The majority of international business landscapes are characterized by a predominance of family firms (Astrachan & Shanker, 2003), as they represent a significant proportion of all companies globally (La Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes, & Shleifer, 1999) and contribute substantially to the global economy through their unique business models and long-term focus (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005; Gagné, Sharma, & De Massis, 2014). These firms often develop from entrepreneurial enterprises, a common phenomenon typically initiated when founders appoint their children as employees (Poza & Daugherty, 2010). Family firms, which family members shape, differ from non-family businesses in terms of their organizational form (Gagné, Sharma, & De Massis, 2014), their nonfinancial goals (Gómez-Mejía, Haynes, Núñez-Nickel, Jacobson, & Moyano-Fuentes, 2007), their outcomes (Anderson & Reeb, 2004), and their generally higher performance (Anderson & Reeb, 2003).

2.1.1 Definition

The definition of family businesses has been a topic of significant debate in academic research, resulting in the development of multiple perspectives over time (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005). A frequently cited definition is proposed by Chua, Chrisman, and Sharma (1999). The authors define family firms as businesses that are <governed and/or managed with the intention to shape and pursue the vision of the business held by a dominant coalition controlled by members of the same family or a small number of families in a manner that is potentially sustainable across generations of the family or families= (Chua, Chrisman, & Sharma, 1999). This definition emphasizes the long-term perspective of transferring ownership to future generations and the unique governance structures that are characteristic of family firms. Astrachan, Klein, and Smyrnios (2002) further developed this concept by introducing the family influence on power, experience, and culture (F-PEC) scale. This approach underscores that family influence is not limited to ownership but rather extends to leadership and cultural involvement. Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma (2005) further elaborated on this concept, proposing that family firms should also consider the influence of family involvement on decision-making processes and strategic objectives. They argue that family firms often have specific resources and behaviors driven by a long-term vision and commitment to legacy (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005). The COVID-19 pandemic has further demonstrated family firms' resilience (Deloitte, 2021). As reported by Deloitte (2021), numerous family businesses demonstrated remarkable adaptability, prioritizing transformation, strengthening internal trust, and reassessing their long-term outlook to ensure continuity in the face of adversity. In general, family firms differ significantly in terms of their size, encompassing a wide range of entities, from small entrepreneurial businesses to medium-sized companies and even large global enterprises, which makes it challenging to define them in a manner that is universally and globally applicable (Moreno-Menéndez & Casillas, 2021).

2.1.2 German Medium-Sized Family Firms

The impact of family firms can vary depending on the geographic region (Amit & Belén, 2014). For example, in Germany, these firms represent approximately 80% of all businesses and employ 80% of the workforce (Poza & Daugherty, 2010). The terms family firm, owner-managed business, and family-run business are to be regarded as synonyms (Institut für Mittelstandsforschung, 2024). These firms form the Mittelstand as a special feature in the German-speaking area (Institut für Mittelstandsforschung, 2024). The word Mittelstand is often used in German-speaking countries as a synonym for SMEs, which are defined by statistical figures (Günterberg & Kayser, 2004). According to the quantitative criteria, the threshold value for SMEs is a maximum of 499 employees and an annual turnover of up to 50 million (Institut für Mittelstandsforschung, 2024). An important criterion is owner management, whether by a sole proprietor or a family (Berghoff, 2006). The straightforward and streamlined organizational structure, which is characterized by a flat hierarchy (Hoch, 1989), is associated with a particular <entrepreneurial spirit= due to the fact that the characteristics and objectives of the managing directors are reflected in a specific way of thinking (Franch Parella & Hernández, 2018). According to Berghoff (2006), most German companies identify with the Mittelstand and want to be part of it, which indicates that organizational commitment plays a vital role in understanding the Mittelstand. This <Mittelstand mentality= includes values that generally shape the behavior of an organization, its management, and employees, as well as their interaction with the environment (Agle & Caldwell, 1999).

2.2 Context Craftmanship

According to the Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks (2024), the skilled crafts sector is an essential part of the German Mittelstand. In Germany, there are currently more than one million craft enterprises, mainly small businesses, with an average of 5.6 employees (Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks e.V., 2023). With a turnover of around 766 billion euros and a 28 percent share of all apprenticeship places in Germany, the industry plays an important economic and social role (Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks e.V., 2023). In a large proportion of craft companies, the owner also acts as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (Kuiper, 2012). Thus, he or she is actively involved in the core processes, with operational activities accounting for a large share of crafts enterprises' day-to-day work (Kuiper, 2012). This labor-intensive work structure leads to strong regional roots of most of these companies (Kuiper, 2012). Most craft enterprises are active in the construction and processing industries (Baum et al., 2016; Thomä et al., 2013). Apart from that, the craft sector is very diverse and heterogeneous (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2023). Since it is not a uniform economic sector with a single structure, it comprises numerous orientations (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2023). However, one major challenge almost all craft businesses face is the recruitment and retention of rare skilled workers (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2023).

2.2.1 Shortage of Skilled Workers

The German economy is challenged by a widespread shortage of skilled workers (Tiedemann & Orange, 2024). The crafts sector is particularly affected by this shortage, demonstrated by a fourteen percent share of unfilled training places (Oeynhausen, Christ, Schuß, Milde, & Granath, 2023). There are various reasons for this. Firstly, the demographic change is leading to a general aging of the workforce and a decline in the available labor supply (Thomä, et al., 2013). In addition, the increasing complexity and service content of work is leading to rising demands on employees (Thomä, et al., 2013). Still, most employment contracts in the crafts sector are signed by lower secondary school leavers (Baum, et al., 2016). Comparably few high school graduates complete their apprenticeships in the crafts sector, even though more and more young people in Germany are gaining higher educational qualifications (Baum, et al., 2016). The comparatively high proportion of apprenticeship opportunities in the crafts sector highlights the central importance of securing the skilled labor demand in the crafts sector (Baum, et al., 2016). In addition, the loss of skilled workers to other companies and segments, a figure which is very high compared to other segments, plays an important role in the crafts sector (Haverkamp, 2009). Approximately half of the craftsmen trained in crafts enterprises leave the sector in their later working life (Haverkamp, 2009). Craft enterprises are mostly small businesses with regional roots, which makes job advertising and hiring new workers a challenging task (Baum, et al., 2016). Craft businesses tend to focus on local candidates, as employees who relocate to the area often leave, which limits the overall talent pool. (Baum, et al., 2016). Furthermore, the number of professional bottlenecks in terms of skilled labor is expected to even increase significantly in the next five years, driven by structural shifts in demographics, digitalization, decarbonization, and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2022).

2.2.2 Importance of Employees in Craftsmanship

In light of these conditions, the supply of motivated and qualified employees is of great importance, and evidence can be found in the literature showing that employees have a strong influence on the long-term competitive advantage of a company (Wright & McMahan, 1992; Harris & De Chernatony, 2001; Viswanathan & Pansari, 2016). Wright and McMahan (1992) name four basic requirements that must be met for employees to become a competitive advantage for an organization: (i) high influence of employee performance on the company’s added value, (ii) rarity of demanded skills, (iii) low replicability of the combined investment in human capital and (iv) low degree of automation of work. To conform (i) for the crafts sector, as already noted, the performance of individual employees plays a significant role in the value provided by the company through the operational day-to-day business (Kuiper, 2012). The shortage of skilled workers in the crafts sector confirms that (ii) is true for the sector (Tiedemann & Orange, 2024). The small share of unskilled workers in the sector is around 15 percent, which would be even smaller without the cleaners' branch with a 78 percent unskilled rate, demonstrating the low replicability of human capital applies to craftsmanship (Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks e.V., 2023). Lastly, a low degree of automation is generally assumed in the crafts sector since almost all daily work is carried out manually. Since all four points apply to human resources in the crafts sector, it is evident craftsmen have a strong influence on the competitive advantage of their respective companies.

2.3 Organizational Commitment

The increasing shortage of skilled workers poses various challenges to crafts businesses, especially in terms of employee retention, satisfaction, and motivation (Hytter, 2007). Many employee retention measures are often implemented without a clear understanding of motivation theories (Ramlall, 2004). In fact, personal factors play a crucial intermediary role between employee retention measures and outcomes (Ramlall, 2004). These personal factors in employee retention mainly involve loyalty, trust, identification, attachment to the organization, and organizational commitment, all of which are closely tied to the individual's motivation to stay with a firm (Hytter, 2007). In particular, organizational commitment is one of the primary reasons these individuals remain with the company (Hausknecht, Rodda, & Howard, 2009). Organizational commitment combines such challenges of employee retention, satisfaction, and motivation since it influences the decision to continue or terminate employment and defines the employee's relationship with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Since the 1960s, organizational commitment has been widely studied, with Meyer and Allen's three-component model remaining the most widely accepted framework (Loan, 2020). This model provides a comprehensive understanding of organizational commitment by breaking it down into three components: (i) affective commitment, (ii) continuance commitment, and (iii) normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991), all of which are influenced by the positive cultural conditions and unique socialization processes found in family firms that result in higher levels of loyalty, identification, and attachment among employees (Vallejo & Langa, 2010).

(i) Affective commitment can be defined as <the employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization= (Meyer & Allen, 1991). In other words, employees express high levels of affective commitment as a result of their own choices rather than as a consequence of external influences (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Three main categories of antecedents contribute to the development of affective commitment in employees (Meyer & Allen, 1991). These can be classified as personal characteristics, organizational characteristics, and work experiences (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Individual characteristics are influenced by several demographic factors, including age, tenure, sex, and education, (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). In addition, personal dispositions, such as the need for achievement, autonomy, personal work ethic, locus of control, central life interest in work, perceived personal competence, ability, salary, and job level, also play a significant role in shaping an employee’s emotional connection to the organization. (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Organizational characteristics include the organization’s size, the decentralization of decision-making, the formalization of policies and procedures, and the degree of organizational centralization (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). In terms of these work experiences, affective commitment is significantly influenced by an employee’s level of comfort within the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). These factors include the confirmation of expectations prior to entry, the principle of fairness in the distribution of rewards, the reliability of the organization, the provision of organizational support, the clarity of roles, the absence of conflict, and the consideration of the supervisor. (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). In family firms, affective commitment is particularly critical because the relational culture of these firms supports strong emotional connections that enhance contextual performance and contribute to organizational success (Franco & Franco, 2017). Recent research indicates that workplace loneliness, which has emerged as a significant concern as a result of the transition to remote work due to the global pandemic, is significantly associated with reduced affective commitment, underscoring the importance of promoting a supportive and connected work environment to enhance employee retention (Kniffin, et al., 2021).

(ii) Continuance commitment can be defined as the perceived cost of leaving the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). This means that employees have a strong continuance commitment to the organization because <they think they need to<(Meyer & Allen, 1991). There are two main categories of antecedents, which are side bets or investments and the availability of alternatives (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Side bets or investments include the potential loss of non-transferable skills, attractive benefits, seniority-based privileges, and the disruption of personal relationships or uprooting of family (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). In addition, the availability of alternative job opportunities affects the perceived cost of leaving, which in turn strengthens continuance commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). In contrast to affective commitment, continuance commitment has increased among employees, who perceive a heightened cost of leaving their roles during the uncertain conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic (Chanana, 2021).

(iii) Normative commitment can be defined as a sense of obligation to stay with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). This implies that employees have a strong normative commitment to the organization because <they believe they ought to do so= (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). This can be influenced by advanced rewards offered by the organization, such as paying for college tuition or offering significant upfront rewards, which create a sense of loyalty and obligation in the employee to continue their employment with the organization (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Normative commitment, like affective commitment, has generally declined during the pandemic, as employees report a reduced sense of obligation to remain with their organizations in the context of ongoing challenges (Chanana, 2021).

2.4 Team Commitment

Despite the extensive research conducted on organizational commitment, team commitment has rarely been investigated (Riketta & Van Dick, 2005), even though most modern organizations emphasize that employees are expected to work together in teams (Ellemers, de Gilder, & van den Heuvel, 1998). Nonetheless, team commitment, which is often associated with organizational commitment (Neininger, Lehmann-Willenbrock, Kauffeld, & Henschel, 2010), has been identified as a key factor in retention management (Hausknecht, Rodda, & Howard, 2009). In contrast to organizational commitment, team commitment focuses on the team itself rather than the larger organization (Singh & Gupta, 2015). To be more precise, organizational commitment refers to an employee’s level of involvement and identification with the organization as a whole (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 2013). Team commitment is defined as the extent to which team members are engaged and identify with their respective teams (Bishop & Scott, 2000), a definition that remains a cornerstone of the literature and is widely cited as foundational in contemporary research (Lee, Kwon, Shin, Kim, & Park, 2018; Buvik & Tvedt, 2017). Furthermore, team commitment is associated with desired outcomes related to both the team and the organization (Becker & Billings, 1993), improved team performance (Bishop &

Scott, 1997), high levels of task interdependence (Bishop & Scott, 1997), and the employees' willingness to support one another (Bishop & Scott, 1997). The literature suggests that team members who have had positive experiences with the team are more likely to identify with the team's goals and values and want to remain committed to contributing to these goals (Neininger, Lehmann-Willenbrock, Kauffeld, & Henschel, 2010). These benefits associated with being part of a team significantly influence an individual's level of commitment to both the organization and the team (Becker, 1992), particularly in family-owned SMEs, where unique values and close interpersonal relationships play a central role (Beehr, Drexler, & Faulkner, 1997). Identification with the team and the organization often goes along with each other and leads to the best possible results when team members identify with both (Van Dick, Van Knippenberg, Kerschreiter, Hertel, & Wieseke, 2008). The ongoing shift to remote work due to COVID-19 has disrupted this identification, reducing team cohesion and social connections as employees report a diminished sense of belonging (Babapour Chafi, Hultberg, & Bozic Yams, 2021). The face-to-face interactions that once helped strengthen team bonds were often replaced by scheduled online meetings that lacked the spontaneity and natural flow of communication that fostered a sense of togetherness and group cohesiveness (Babapour Chafi, Hultberg, & Bozic Yams, 2021). This structured nature of virtual meetings made it harder to maintain interpersonal connections, leaving employees feeling disconnected and struggling to find a sense of purpose and connection within their teams (Babapour Chafi, Hultberg, & Bozic Yams, 2021). This weakening of social bonds has made it difficult to maintain trust and effective collaboration, both of which are essential for strong team commitment (Babapour Chafi, Hultberg, & Bozic Yams, 2021).

2.5 Mentorship

Given the evidence presented in numerous studies indicating that employees who receive mentorship often exhibit increased levels of trust and commitment, mentorship emerges as an essential approach to strengthening team bonds and fostering organizational loyalty (Koberg, Boss, & Goodman, 1998; Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Payne & Huffman, 2005). The term <mentorship= is typically used to describe a relationship between an experienced individual (mentor) and a less experienced colleague (mentee/protégé), with the objective of facilitating the development of professional skills and emotional connections within organizations (Kram, 1988; Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004). This definition continues to be widely accepted as researchers continue to validate its relevance and demonstrate an

interest in expanding the scope of mentoring research to include relationships involving multiple mentors or protégés (Ivey & Dupré, 2022). It has been shown that effective mentorship not only enhances job satisfaction, motivation, and loyalty but also reduces stress and turnover among mentees by providing them with the necessary tools to navigate challenges and achieve professional growth effectively (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Ragins, 2007). In the context of family firms, mentorship plays a dual role by building the engagement of non-family employees and supporting succession planning, both of which are critical to the organization's long-term success (Dhaenens, Marler, Vardaman, & Chrisman, 2018).

In his study, Kram (1983) outlined the various types of support mentors provide, collectively called <mentoring functions=. These functions are divided into three categories: (i) vocational support, (ii) psychosocial support, with an additional component of (iii) role modeling that emphasizes the mentor's influence on the protégé's professional identity (Burke, 1984; Kram, 1983; Scandura, 1992). (i) Vocational support includes activities such as career coaching and visibility, whereby mentors introduce protégés to important individuals, provide guidance, and promote their advancement opportunities and chances of receiving promotions (Kram, 1988). In contrast, the (ii) psychosocial dimension of mentorship addresses the personal development of the protégé, providing friendship and emotional support (Kram, 1988). These interactions foster a sense of competence and help reduce work-related stress, thereby positively affecting the protégé's well-being beyond the workplace (Baugh, Lankau, & Scandura, 1996). Furthermore, the (iii) role modeling function of mentorship enables the protégé to observe and imitate the mentor's behaviors, values, and work ethic, thereby establishing a framework for professional identity and behavior (Kram, 1988). As a result of this process, the mentor becomes a source of admiration and inspiration, establishing a standard that the protégé strives to emulate (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2005). During the post-pandemic era, the value of mentorship as a source of both professional guidance and emotional support has become increasingly evident. By implementing comprehensive mentoring programs that address the personal and professional challenges employees face, organizations can develop resilience and enhance job satisfaction, which in turn contributes to the stability of organizational loyalty (Agarwal, 2021).

2.6 Trust

Trust plays a central role in organizational dynamics, profoundly affecting employee retention (Chitsaz-Isfahani & Boustani, 2014), employee relations, and sustaining both individual and organizational effectiveness (McAllister, 1995). In addition to strengthening overall commitment (Coote, Forrest, & Tam, 2003), trust shapes how employees interpret the actions of others in the workplace, influencing perceptions and fostering a collaborative environment (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). Studies show that under conditions of high trust, individuals are more likely to interpret a colleague's actions positively, strengthening cooperation and mutual respect (Robinson, 1996; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999). In contrast, low trust often leads to negative perceptions and disengagement, undermining team cohesion and morale (Robinson, 1996; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999). In family firms, trust operates as a multilevel phenomenon, extending through various layers of the organization, shaping interpersonal relationships, decision-making, and governance, and distinguishing these firms from their non-family counterparts (Eddleston, Chrisman, Steier, & Chua, 2010).

Trust in organizational settings is commonly divided into two primary forms: (i) cognition-based trust and (ii) affect-based trust, each shaped by different antecedents that influence its development within the organization. (McAllister, 1995). This distinction remains widely recognized and continues to serve as a foundational framework in contemporary trust research (Glikson & Woolley, 2020). (i) Cognition-based trust is based on an individual's beliefs about the competence, reliability, and integrity of a coworker or supervisor, which are formed through consistent and dependable performance on job tasks (Butler, 1991; Cook & Wall, 1980; Johnson-George & Swap, 1982). Antecedents of cognition-based trust include consistency and conformity to norms of reciprocity and fairness, which collectively strengthen an employee's confidence in the competence and reliability of others in the workplace (Lindskold, 1978).
(ii) On the other hand, affect-based trust is rooted in emotional bonds and mutual concern among colleagues, reflecting a deeper relational investment beyond just role performance (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). This type of trust emerges from relational antecedents such as regular, positive interactions, emotional support, and authentic communication, all of which foster personal connections and a sense of mutual respect among team members (Clark & Mills, 1979; Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 1985; Organ, 1988).

Together, cognition-based and affect-based trust establish a balanced foundation for organizational relationships, reinforcing both professional reliability and personal connections that contribute to a supportive and effective workplace environment (McAllister, 1995). Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of trust, with an increased emphasis on transparent communication and empathy proving essential for building trust, as employees increasingly prioritize organizations that foster well-being and flexibility (Kniffin, et al., 2021; Chen & Sriphon, 2021). Leaders who consistently communicate with transparency and understanding can strengthen both cognition-based and affect-based trust, supporting employee engagement and resilience in the evolving workplace landscape (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001).

2.7 Hypotheses

The primary operational day-to-day business of craft firms minimizes the impact of remote work disadvantages. However, the associated, mostly operational management with traditional solution strategies leads to a tendency to underestimate business management aspects like employee retention management, despite being one of the most critical factors in countering the shortage of skilled workers (Thomä, et al., 2013). The upside potential of human resources in these organizations is often not fully exploited, and thus, the performance of employees tends to be below the maximum possibility (Huselid, 1995). Based on a detailed literature review, the following hypotheses are formulated to examine the relationship between mentorship, trust, team commitment, and organizational commitment as they highly relate to employee retention (Hytter, 2007). This section outlines the theoretical foundations that guided the formulation of each hypothesis.

It is widely accepted that effective mentorship plays an essential role in professional development, role clarification, and providing emotional support to employees, all of which contribute to enhanced attachment to the organization (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz & Lima, 2004; Payne & Huffman, 2005). Findings from the study by Koberg, Boss, and Goodman (1998) suggest that mentorship relationships play a role in aligning the goals and values of employees with those of the organization, which in turn enhances their sense of loyalty and overall commitment. However, the direct effects of mentorship on organizational commitment, rather than on commitment in general, have not yet been the subject of sufficient research, especially in the context of family-owned craft businesses. In these organizations, where interpersonal dynamics and conventional management practices frequently influence employee relationships, mentorship may assume a particularly crucial role in fostering organizational commitment (Agle & Caldwell, 1999; Eddleston & Kellermanns, 2007). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> *H1: Mentorship is positively related to organizational commitment in family-owned craft businesses.*

Building on the positive relationship between mentorship and organizational commitment, research indicates that effective mentorship also fosters a strong sense of team unity and collaboration, which in turn reinforces organizational commitment (Becker & Billings, 1993; Bishop & Scott, 2000; Koberg, Boss, & Goodman, 1998; Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Payne & Huffman, 2005). This is based on the assumption that employees who are committed to their teams are more likely to develop a more profound commitment to the organization as a whole (Becker & Billings, 1993; Bishop & Scott, 2000). The premise is further supported by studies conducted by Riketta and Van Dick (2005) which suggest that team commitment may act as an antecedent to organizational commitment and that the two may be similar, particularly in settings where social interactions are central to organizational success (Neininger, Lehmann-Willenbrock, Kauffeld, & Henschel, 2010). When employees develop a strong sense of identification with their teams, they are more likely to feel a parallel sense of attachment to the organization, thus enhancing both team and organizational commitment. Consequently, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: Mentorship is positively related to team commitment in family-owned craft businesses.

H3: Team commitment is positively related to organizational commitment in family-owned craft businesses.

H4: Team commitment mediates the relationship between mentorship and organizational commitment in family-owned craft businesses.

Trust is an essential component of mentor-mentee relationships, as it fosters a safe environment for honest communication and feedback (McAllister, 1995). High levels of trust enable mentees to fully engage with mentorship, which in turn promotes team cohesion and a sense of collective commitment (Robinson, 1996; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). When trust is present, the positive effects of mentorship on team commitment are amplified, as employees feel more connected and cooperative within the team setting and to the organization as a whole (Koberg, Boss, & Goodman, 1998; Costa, Roe, & Taillieu, 2001; Coote, Forrest, & Tam, 2003). Consequently, the last hypotheses are structured as follows:

H5: Trust moderates the relationship between mentorship and team commitment in family-owned craft businesses.

H6: Trust moderates the relationship between mentorship and organizational commitment in family-owned craft businesses.

Based on the hypotheses formulated, the following model (Figure 1) can be mapped, which is used as the basis for the subsequent data analysis.

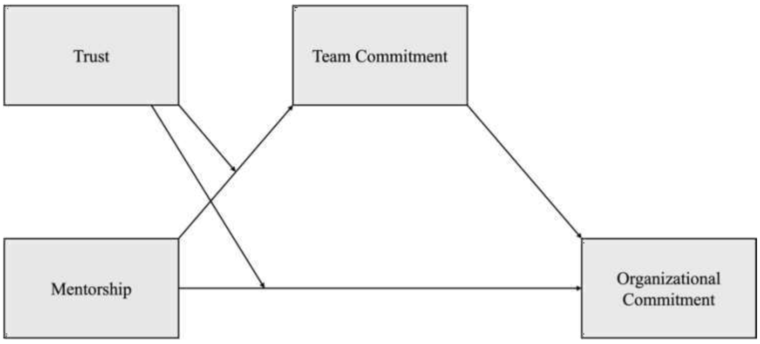

Figure 1: Conceptual Model (Hayes, 2012)

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between mentorship and organizational commitment in family-owned craft businesses, where the dynamics of interpersonal relationships are of particular significance (Beehr, Drexler, & Faulkner, 1997). The conceptual framework for this research was constructed around a moderated mediation model, with team commitment serving as a mediator between mentorship and organizational commitment and trust serving as a moderator in the relationship between mentorship and team commitment and mentorship and organizational commitment. This approach is consistent with the methodologies employed in studies of complex organizational dynamics (Hayes, 2012).

The survey was conducted online using the Qualtrics platform. The participants were randomly selected from a diverse pool of employees at five German family businesses in the craft sector, which ranged in size from 15 to 120 employees. The inclusion of companies of varying sizes enhanced the depth of the study, as it enabled access to the perspectives of employees from firms of different operational scales and with various hierarchical structures, thereby facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of the research constructs. The use of random sampling ensured that the respondents within each organization were representative of the organization as a whole. The survey links were distributed via company contacts, with particular emphasis placed on maintaining the participants' confidentiality and encouraging honest and unbiased responses. Furthermore, the structured format of the survey guaranteed consistency in responses, thus enabling the drawing of meaningful inferences. The research design enabled the study to offer significant insights into the dynamics of organizational commitment within the context of family-owned craft firms, particularly in terms of mentorship, trust, and team commitment. Further details regarding the survey, which was conducted in German, can be found in Appendix 1.

3.2 Participants

A total of 195 surveys were received and processed between October 30 and November 20. Of these, 126 responses were found to be suitable for analysis, resulting in an effective response rate of approximately 65%. Sixty-nine responses were excluded due to incomplete data or failure to meet attention control criteria. All participants provided informed consent before completing the survey, which was designed to ensure anonymity and voluntary participation. No personally identifiable information was collected, and data security was a priority throughout the study. Ethical considerations followed the principles of confidentiality and transparency in accordance with established norms for research involving human participants.

The final sample consisted of 126 participants ranging in age from 17 to 68 years (M = 28.58, SD = 12.78), with most participants being male (93.7%). Participants reported a wide range of educational backgrounds. The largest group had a secondary school diploma (44.4%) as their highest academic qualification, followed by participants with an apprenticeship (14.3%) and participants with a lower secondary school diploma (13.5%). Other educational qualifications included master craftsman's diploma (7.9%), general university entrance qualification (7.9%), technician's diploma (4.8%), diploma (4.0%), and university of applied sciences entrance qualification (3.2%). Organizational tenure also exhibited considerable variation, with 7.1% of participants having been employed by their current employer for less than one year and 27% having been in their position for between one and two years. Furthermore, 36.5% of participants reported a tenure of 3-5 years with their current employer, while 18.3% indicated a tenure of 5-15 years, and 11.1% reported a tenure exceeding 15 years. The demographic statistics are presented in Table 1, while all descriptive statistics can be found in Appendix 2.

Demographic Statistics

		SEX	AGE	NATIONALITY	EDUCATION	TENURE
N	Valid	126	126	126	126	126
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.06	28.579		4.31	2.99
Std. Deviation		.245	12.775		2.065	1.092

Table 1: Demographic Statistics

3.3 Measures

Previous studies have shown that demographic factors such as age, gender, tenure, and education significantly influence commitment (Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002), a relationship that is further supported by table 2, which highlights significant correlations between these demographic variables and the key constructs examined in this study. Therefore, this analysis included these demographic variables as controls.

Correlations

		SEX	AGE	EDUCATION	TENURE	MENTORSHIP	TRUST	TEAM COMMITMENT	ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT
SEX	Pearson Correlation	1	.142	.151	.181*	.084	.101	.183*	.057
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.114	.092	.042	.349	.261	.041	.526
	N	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126
AGE	Pearson Correlation	.142	1	.629**	.733**	.207*	.336**	.226*	.359**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.114		<.001	<.001	.020	<.001	.011	<.001
	N	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126
EDUCATION	Pearson Correlation	.151	.629**	1	.431**	.260**	.330**	.243**	.338**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.092	<.001		<.001	.003	<.001	.006	<.001
	N	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126
TENURE	Pearson Correlation	.181*	.733**	.431**	1	.119	.188*	.119	.217*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	<.001	<.001		.186	.035	.186	.015
	N	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126
MENTORSHIP	Pearson Correlation	.084	.207*	.260**	.119	1	.838**	.617**	.747**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.349	.020	.003	.186		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126
TRUST	Pearson Correlation	.101	.336**	.330**	.188*	.838**	1	.642**	.762**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.261	<.001	<.001	.035	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126
TEAM COMMITMENT	Pearson Correlation	.183*	.226*	.243**	.119	.617**	.642**	1	.734**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.041	.011	.006	.186	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126
ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT	Pearson Correlation	.057	.359**	.338**	.217*	.747**	.762**	.734**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.526	<.001	<.001	.015	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

The survey used standardized scales to measure key variables of interest, namely mentorship, trust, team commitment, and organizational commitment. All items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (<Strongly Disagree=) to 5 (<Strongly Agree=), which allowed participants to indicate the degree to which they agreed with each statement. In order to ensure the validity of the analysis, a reliability analysis was conducted to test Cronbach's alpha. The details can be found in the attached Appendix 3.

Mentorship was measured using the Mentoring Functions Questionnaire (MFQ-9) developed by Pellegrini and Scandura (2005), derived initially from Scandura (1992) as a 20-item scale. The nine items included statements such as <My supervisor takes a personal interest in my career= and <My supervisor helps me coordinate professional goals=. These items captured vocational support, psychosocial support, and role modeling in the mentor-mentee relationship.

It is noteworthy that the original source used the term <my mentor= rather than <my supervisor=. This adjustment was made to reflect the work context of family craft businesses in this study. Cronbach's alpha of mentorship was 0.90.

Trust was assessed using the scale developed by McAllister (1995), which includes both affect-based trust and cognition-based trust. Items included <We have a sharing relationship. We can both freely share our ideas, feelings, and hopes= and <Given my supervisor's track record, I see no reason to doubt his/her competence and preparation for the job=. A reverse-coded item was included to ensure thoughtful responses. The original source used the term <this person= rather than <my supervisor=. The Cronbach's alpha of trust was 0.90.

Team commitment was measured using Foote and Tang's (2008) Team Commitment Scale (TCS). This scale included ten items such as <I am proud to tell others that my company uses the team concept= and <The team concept really inspires the best in me in the way of job performance=. Several items were reverse-coded to check for response bias. The Cronbach's alpha of team commitment was 0.85.

Organizational commitment was measured using Mowday, Steers, and Porter's (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). This scale consisted of 15 items divided into three components: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Items such as <I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful= reflected affective commitment, while reverse-coded items targeted continuance and normative dimensions. The Cronbach's alpha of organizational commitment was 0.92.

By using these established scales, the study ensured the reliability and validity of its measures, allowing for a robust examination of the relationships among mentorship, trust, team commitment, and organizational commitment in the context of family-owned craft firms in Germany.

4. Analysis

This study examines the complex relationships among mentorship, trust, team commitment, and organizational commitment through a moderated mediation model. Each hypothesis was tested using Hayes' PROCESS Macro in SPSS. This analysis tool allowed for a detailed examination of processes and revealed moderation and mediation effects using a bootstrapping approach (Hayes, 2012). Five thousand bootstrap replications were used to generate robust confidence intervals for both direct and indirect effects, ensuring reliable statistical inference. All analyses were performed at a 5% significance level.

Since the hypotheses in this study were formulated to explore a moderated mediation effect, where moderation is present on path a and path c', the analytical approach employed was PROCESS Model 8 (Figure 2). This particular model is specifically designed to evaluate the indirect effect of X on Y via the proposed mediator M and the direct effect of X on Y. Essentially, this model captures both first-stage moderation, impacting the relationship between X and M and moderation of the direct relationship between X and Y. The structure of Model 8 involves two distinct regression sub-models. The first sub-model focuses on analyzing the regression of the mediator M on the independent variable X, the moderator W, and the interaction term XW. This interaction term allows for the evaluation of the moderating role of W in the relationship between X and M. The second sub-model includes the regression of Y on X, M, W, and the interaction terms XW and MW. This setup captures the moderating effect of W not only on the direct relationship between X and Y but also on the path from M to Y, providing a comprehensive understanding of the complex moderated mediation relationships.

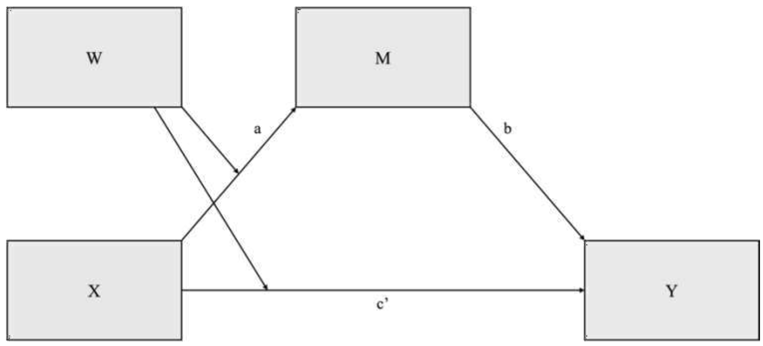

Figure 2: Conceptual Model 8 of Hayes PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2012)

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of the hypothesis testing results, emphasizing statistical results and their implications. The hypotheses are evaluated using regression coefficients (*β*), standard errors (*SE*), standard deviation (*SD*), t-statistics (*t*), p-values (*p*), confidence intervals (*CI*), and coefficients of determination (R^2) to provide a sophisticated understanding of the findings and their significance in the context of German family craft businesses.

The first step was to evaluate H1, depicting a direct positive relationship between mentorship and organizational commitment. The regression analysis confirmed this hypothesis, providing a standardized coefficient of $\beta = 0.747$, indicating a strong and significant relationship. Controlling for other variables, the unstandardized coefficient of $\beta = 0.602$ indicated that a oneunit increase in mentorship resulted in a 0.602-unit increase in organizational commitment. The exceptionally low p-value ($p < 0.0001$) provides robust statistical support, indicating a very low probability that this relationship occurred by chance. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.558$) suggests that 55.8% of the variability in organizational commitment can be attributed to mentorship alone, underscoring its critical role. These results strongly support H1 and highlight mentorship as a key driver of organizational commitment. Detailed statistical results are presented in Appendix 4 further to illustrate the strength and precision of this relationship.

H2, which examined the relationship between mentorship and team commitment, was analyzed as a subsequent step. The results indicated a significant positive effect, with a regression coefficient of $\beta = 0.2473$. The standard error ($SE = 0.1024$) confirmed the precision of this estimate, while the t-value of $t = 2.4150$ and the p-value of $p = 0.0173$ confirmed its statistical significance. The confidence interval ($CI = [0.0445; 0.4501]$) further supported these findings as it remained entirely positive, excluding zero. These findings confirm that mentorship plays a central role in fostering team commitment, particularly in the collaborative environment of family craft businesses.

Next, H3 examined the influence of team commitment on organizational commitment. The analysis revealed a strong and significant relationship, with a regression coefficient of $\beta = 0.3721$. The standard error ($SE = 0.0653$) ensured the reliability of this estimate, while the t-value of $t = 5.6969$ and the p-value ($p < 0.0001$) demonstrated the robustness of the results. The confidence interval ($CI = [0.2427; 0.5014]$) confirmed that the effect size was consistently positive. These results validate H3 and underscore the critical role of team commitment in driving organizational commitment.

The analysis also tested the moderated mediation model to assess the role of trust in amplifying the indirect effects of mentorship on organizational commitment through team commitment. The moderated mediation index, calculated as the product of the regression weights for paths a and b, was found to be statistically significant. The confidence interval ($CI = [0.0301; 0.1537]$) excluded zero, providing compelling evidence of moderated mediation. These results suggest that trust acts as a contextual factor that reinforces the pathway through which mentorship influences organizational commitment, highlighting its dynamic role in the model.

H4 specifically examined the mediating effect of team commitment on the relationship between mentorship and organizational commitment. The analysis, which considered three levels of trust

(-1SD, M, +1SD), revealed that the indirect effect was statistically significant only at high levels of trust. The confidence interval (CI = [0.0418; 0.337]) was entirely positive, excluding zero for high trust, with an indirect effect size of 0.1685. This suggests that, within the context of high trust, there is a significant, positive, indirect effect of 0.1685 from mentorship on organizational commitment, which is mediated by team commitment.

The fifth hypothesis focused on the moderating role of trust in the relationship between mentorship and team commitment. The interaction term β = 0.2396 reflected a significant moderating effect, supported by a standard error (SE = 0.0686), a t-value of t = 3.4913, and a p-value of p = 0.0007. The confidence interval (CI = [0.1037; 0.3756]) further corroborated these results as it excluded zero. This result validates H5, suggesting that trust enhances the positive influence of mentorship on team commitment. However, the interaction plot revealed that this moderating effect is particularly pronounced at higher levels of trust, highlighting its contextual nature.

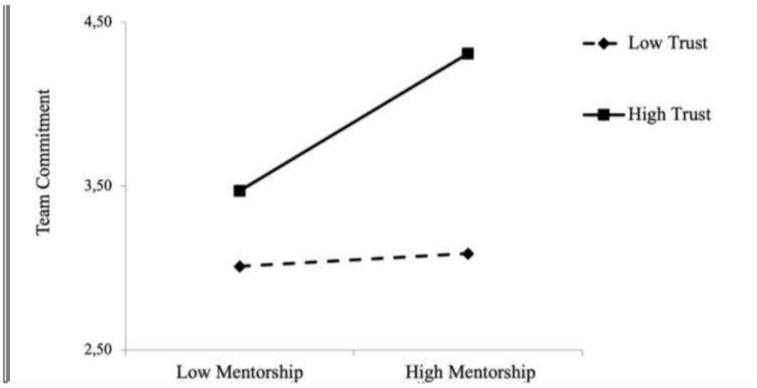

Figure 3: Plot of the interaction effect between mentorship and team commitment

Lastly, H6 examined whether trust moderates the direct relationship between mentorship and organizational commitment. The results indicated a negligible negative moderation effect, with an interaction term of β = -0.0026. The standard error (SE = 0.0512), the t-value of t = -0.0509, and the high p-value (p = 0.9595) all indicated a lack of statistical significance. The confidence interval (CI = [-0.1039; 0.0987]) included zero, further confirming the absence of a moderating effect. These results do not support H6, suggesting that trust does not directly influence the strength or direction of the relationship between mentorship and organizational commitment. However, its role in moderating the relationship between mentorship and organizational commitment remains critical, as indicated by the previous findings.

Taken together, the statistical analyses for H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, and H6 provide robust support for the hypothesized relationships, with trust and team commitment emerging as key contextual factors shaping the dynamics of mentorship and commitment. Additional details and statistical findings are provided in Appendix 5.

5. Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of the study and compares them to existing and above-lined research approaches. In addition, theoretical and managerial implications are defined.

The research addressed the question: Does the relationship between mentorship and organizational commitment operate through team commitment, and do levels of trust moderate this relationship? These circumstances under which mentorship affects organizational commitment, with a particular focus on the contextual factors present in family firms in the craft sector, were analyzed in order to address the shortage of skilled employees effectively. A quantitative study was conducted to examine six hypothesized relationships between mentorship, trust, team commitment, and organizational commitment, specifically in the German Mittelstand. Overall, the results supported most of the hypotheses, highlighting alignments with existing literature while uncovering novel contributions. In particular, findings shed light on the mediating role of team commitment and the moderating effects of trust, offering both theoretical advances and practical strategies for improving employee retention and engagement in this organizational context.

The first step in the analysis of the moderated mediation model was to test H1. The results of the regression analysis supported H1, confirming that mentorship has a direct and positive relationship with organizational commitment. This finding is consistent with previous research, such as Payne and Huffman (2005), highlighting the central role of mentorship in fostering affective and continuance commitment, which significantly reduces turnover intentions. By helping to connect employees' personal aspirations with organizational goals, mentors play an essential role in aligning individual goals with broader organizational priorities, providing both professional development and emotional support (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004). This dynamic is particularly pronounced in family-owned craft businesses, where active involvement in day-to-day operations fosters close interpersonal relationships and a deep sense of mutual understanding (Eddleston & Kellermanns, 2007). The mentorship process in these settings serves as a tool for transferring tacit knowledge and reinforcing organizational values, which are critical for maintaining organizational continuity across generations (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005). Moreover, mentorship has been shown to increase employees' emotional attachment to the organization, thereby reducing turnover intentions and increasing loyalty (Joiner, Bartram, & Garreffa, 2004). It fosters a sense of belonging by addressing both career development and psychosocial needs, which further strengthens employees' attachment to the organization (Ensher & Murphy, 2011). In summary, mentorship serves as a critical mechanism for increasing organizational commitment by aligning individual and organizational goals, reinforcing organizational culture, and fostering emotional ties. (Payne & Huffman, 2005; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Allen et al., 2004). Furthermore, it plays a critical role in retaining high-potential talent, ensuring a constant pipeline of skilled and motivated employees (Hegstad & Wentling, 2004).

The second hypothesis (H2) examined the relationship between mentorship and team commitment, hypothesizing that mentorship would positively influence team commitment. This question is also a central component of the research question addressed in this dissertation: Does mentorship negatively or positively affect team commitment? The results of the analysis provide robust support for this hypothesis, indicating a significant positive relationship between mentorship and team commitment. As Kram (1985) has observed, mentoring relationships are of critical importance in shaping interpersonal dynamics and fostering a supportive work environment, which are essential elements for effective team collaboration and commitment. Similarly, mentorship has been demonstrated to facilitate communication and coordination among team members, thereby promoting a cohesive and aligned team dynamic (Bishop & Scott, 2000; Koberg, Boss, & Goodman, 1998). Building on this foundation, Williams, Scandura, and Gavin (2009) provide further insights into how particular forms of mentorship enhance team commitment. The authors present the argument that mentorship cultivates a supportive environment, facilitates improved communication, and reinforces team cohesion, thereby further establishing mentorship as a vital component of successful team dynamics (Williams, Scandura, & Gavin, 2009). These effects are especially pronounced in family-owned businesses, where mentors frequently assume roles that encompass both leadership and collaboration (Eddleston & Kellermanns, 2007). In this manner, they cultivate a sense of unity and shared purpose within teams (Eddleston & Kellermanns, 2007).

The third hypothesis (H3) investigated the relationship between team commitment and organizational commitment. As part of this investigation, a sub-question was posed for further analysis: Does team commitment negatively or positively influence organizational commitment? The results of the analysis provided substantial evidence in support of H3, confirming a direct and positive relationship between team commitment and organizational commitment. This finding is consistent with the assumption that employees who are committed to their teams are more likely to develop a more profound commitment to the organization as a whole (Becker & Billings, 1993; Bishop & Scott, 2000). Riketta and Van Dick (2005) highlight the fact that team commitment can function as an antecedent to organizational commitment and that the two constructs are closely related, particularly in environments where interaction and collaboration is a central aspect of operations, such as in family-owned firm of the German Mittelstand (Neininger, Lehmann-Willenbrock, Kauffeld, & Henschel, 2010). In such organizational settings, a culture that is oriented toward the group fosters strong interpersonal relationships and a sense of unity among employees, which enhances organizational commitment (Stasa Ouzky & Machek, 2024).

The fourth hypothesis (H4) proposed to investigate whether team commitment acts as a mediator in the relationship between mentorship and organizational commitment in family-owned craft businesses. This analysis also investigated whether the indirect effect of mentorship on organizational commitment through team commitment is stronger or weaker depending on the level of trust. The findings partially confirmed H4, indicating that when trust is elevated, team commitment can indeed act as a mediator in the relationship between mentorship and organizational commitment. Nevertheless, the strength of this mediation is dependent upon the level of trust within the organization. Specifically, higher levels of trust serve to amplify the indirect effect, whereas lower levels do not, thereby indicating that trust represents a critical factor in this dynamic. As discussed in the first step of the analysis, demonstrating the direct positive influence of mentorship on organizational commitment, the indirect influence presents a more complex challenge. In this moderated mediation model, team commitment acts as a mediator between mentorship and organizational commitment, while trust serves as a moderator in both the relationship between mentorship and team commitment and the relationship between mentorship and organizational commitment. Consequently, the analysis must account for the moderating role of trust to accurately assess the actual value of the indirect effect. The findings of this study provide evidence to reinforce the critical role of team commitment as a mediator between mentorship and organizational commitment. This is because mentorship offers a supportive environment where team members experience a sense of value and connection, which in turn enhances the level of trust and the strength of team bonds, enabling team members to align their individual goals and objectives with those of the larger organizational structure (Koberg, Boss, & Goodman, 1998; Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Payne & Huffman, 2005). Furthermore, the notion that elevated levels of trust enable the effective leveraging of team commitment as a mediator, thereby enhancing the alignment between mentorship practices and organizational outcomes, is consistent with the proposition put forth by Agle and Caldwell (1999).

This also aligns with the fifth hypothesis (H5), which examines the moderating effect of trust on the relationship between mentorship and team commitment in family-owned craft businesses. The findings confirm that there is a significantly positive influence. Nevertheless, as with H4, elevated levels of trust serve to amplify the positive impact of mentorship on team commitment. Conversely, for lower levels of trust, this relationship is not statistically significant. This also highlights the pivotal function of trust in optimizing the advantages of mentorship within teams. Trust is an essential component, as it fosters a secure environment in which honest communication and feedback can take place (McAllister, 1995). High levels of trust enable employees to engage fully with mentorship, which in turn promotes team cohesion (Robinson, 1996; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). The success of mentorship is contingent upon the presence of trust, as trust serves as the foundation for open communication and mutual respect, which are essential for effective relationships (Goodsett, 2021). Furthermore, the presence of trust amplifies the positive effects of mentorship on team commitment, as employees feel more connected and cooperative within the team setting (Koberg, Boss, & Goodman, 1998; Costa, Roe, & Taillieu, 2001; Coote, Forrest, & Tam, 2003). In contrast, when trust is lacking, the full potential of mentorship and team commitment may not be achieved. Although the moderating effect of trust on the relationship between mentorship and team commitment was found to be a significant factor in strengthening the relationship, its impact on organizational commitment revealed a different picture.

The sixth hypothesis (H6) proposed that the relationship between mentorship and organizational commitment in family-owned craft businesses is moderated by trust. The analysis demonstrated that this moderating effect is not statistically significant, indicating that varying levels of trust did not significantly influence the impact of mentorship on organizational commitment. This further reinforces the proposition put forth by Agle and Caldwell (1999) that there is a strong correlation between the level of trust and the implications of team commitment.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

The concepts of mentorship, trust, and organizational commitment have long been subjects of interest in the fields of organizational behavior. Each of these concepts offers distinct insights into employee engagement, retention, and performance. Nevertheless, the interrelationship between these variables and team commitment remains less well-explored, particularly in regard to their collective influence on workplace dynamics. This thesis builds on previous research to provide valuable insights into the interactions between mentorship, trust, team commitment, and organizational commitment, particularly in the context of family-owned craft businesses. Furthermore, it makes a contribution to the existing literature by investigating the mediating role of team commitment and the moderating effects of trust, extending existing theories in organizational commitment and mentorship dynamics. Although the general benefits of mentorship, such as enhanced job satisfaction and career development, have been extensively documented, the particular role of mentorship in fostering organizational commitment remains an under-researched area. This thesis makes a contribution to addressing this gap by demonstrating that mentorship not only has a direct influence on organizational commitment but also operates indirectly through team commitment. In doing so, it follows the approach proposed by Dhaenens, Marler, Vardaman, and Chrisman (2018), who called for research to explore the nuanced ways mentoring relationships promote various forms of commitment in family firms, thereby advancing our understanding of these dynamics. These findings also align with social exchange theory, highlighting how mentorship fosters positive exchanges of support and guidance, building mutual trust that strengthens team cohesion and enhances organizational outcomes (Blau, 1964). Moreover, the moderated mediation analysis provides detailed insights into the influence of trust and mentorship in this context. The moderating effect of trust on the relationship between mentorship and team commitment was found to be significant. However, its moderating effect on the direct relationship between mentorship and organizational commitment was found to be negligible. This finding challenges the assumption that trust has a universal impact in mentorship contexts, suggesting that its role may vary depending on the organizational or relational focus (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). Concurrently, team commitment is identified as a pivotal mechanism for cultivating enhanced organizational commitment, whereby it facilitates a collective perception of purpose and collaboration among employees. Such commitment to team goals can extend beyond the team level, thereby creating a broader connection to organizational objectives and reinforcing an employee’s sense of loyalty and engagement. These results contribute to theoretical discussions by emphasizing the context-dependent nature of trust’s moderating influence and team commitment’s mediating influence, particularly in family-owned businesses where informal interpersonal dynamics often play a substantial role.

Furthermore, the study contributes to the expanding body of literature examining the dynamics of family-owned businesses. By situating the research within the German Mittelstand craft sector, the findings underscore the pivotal role of cultural and contextual factors in influencing the efficacy of mentorship and trust. The findings indicate that family-owned businesses, which are typified by an emphasis on personal relationships and long-term sustainability, may serve to reinforce the significance of team commitment as a mediator. In light of these findings, this research contributes to the theoretical understanding of organizational commitment by integrating mentorship and team commitment as essential mechanisms within this construct. The findings indicate that while mentorship can directly foster a sense of organizational commitment, its indirect effects through team commitment are equally, if not more, significant in specific contexts. In conclusion, this study makes a substantial contribution to the theoretical literature by advancing understanding of the roles that mentorship, team commitment, and trust play in fostering organizational commitment. The findings not only support existing theories but also challenge and extend them, offering new insights into the complex interactions between these variables in family-owned business contexts.

5.2 Managerial Implications

In addition to its theoretical contributions, this study offers several managerial implications for family-owned businesses in the craft sector, particularly those in the German Mittelstand. These insights are particularly relevant for organizations that are seeking to enhance employee engagement, retention, and overall organizational performance through the implementation of mentorship programs, initiatives designed to enhance trust within the organization, and strengthening both team commitment and organizational commitment. The findings underscore the significance of mentorship as a strategic instrument for cultivating organizational commitment. It is recommended that managers prioritize the development of mentorship programs that provide both professional development and emotional support. Consequently, organizations can assist employees in aligning their individual objectives with those of the organization, thereby fostering a stronger sense of loyalty and reducing turnover intentions (Payne & Huffman, 2005). Mentorship programs tailored to the dynamics of family-owned businesses, where personal relationships and long-term sustainability are central, can be especially effective in reinforcing organizational values and creating a cohesive workforce (Eddleston & Kellermanns, 2007). The study also highlights the critical role of team commitment as a mediator between mentorship and organizational commitment. Managers should focus on strengthening team cohesion by creating opportunities for collaboration, open communication, and shared purpose within teams. Team-building initiatives and training that emphasize collective problem-solving and mutual trust can enhance team performance and amplify the benefits of mentorship programs (Shuffler, DiazGranados, & Salas, 2011). Additionally, fostering a team-oriented culture can help employees extend their commitment from the team level to the organizational level, thereby reinforcing a sense of collective responsibility and engagement (Neininger, Lehmann-Willenbrock, Kauffeld, & Henschel, 2010). Trust is identified as a key moderator in the mentorship-team commitment relationship, underscoring the need for managers to cultivate a high-trust environment. Managers should foster transparency, consistent communication, and mutual respect to build trust among employees. This can include regular feedback sessions, recognition of employee contributions, and leadership behavior that models integrity and fairness (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). In family-owned businesses, where informal interpersonal dynamics often influence trust levels, managers should be particularly mindful of maintaining open and inclusive communication channels to strengthen the bonds between mentors and mentees (Eddleston & Kellermanns, 2007). The findings also suggest that mentorship and trust-building efforts have the indirect potential to address broader challenges, such as employee retention and skill shortages, through organizational commitment. These challenges are particularly acute in the craft sector, where specialized skills are essential, and turnover can disrupt operations. Managers should view these initiatives not as standalone programs but as integral components of a broader strategy to develop and retain skilled talent. By leveraging mentorship and trust, organizations can create a supportive work environment that enhances employee satisfaction and long-term commitment (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004). In conclusion, this study provides actionable insights for managers seeking to enhance employee retention and engagement in family-owned craft businesses. By focusing on mentorship, trust, and team commitment as interconnected levers, managers can create a resilient and committed workforce that is well-positioned to navigate the challenges of today's competitive landscape.

6. Conclusion, Limitations and Future Research

The issue of employee retention and commitment represents a significant challenge for numerous German family-owned craft firms, particularly in light of the growing shortage of skilled labor. This study aimed to gain insight into the dynamics of mentorship, trust, team, and organizational commitment within this context. The research demonstrated that mentorship serves as a critical driver of organizational commitment using a quantitative methodology and Hayes' PROCESS Macro Model 8. This relationship operates both directly and indirectly, with team commitment serving as a mediating factor of particular significance. It is of specific relevance to note that the moderating role of trust was found to amplify the impact of mentorship on team commitment significantly. This finding underscores the value of creating and maintaining a high-trust organizational culture in order to maximize the outcomes of mentorship. The study highlights the fact that mentorship serves not only to facilitate individual growth but also to reinforce team cohesion, which is a crucial element in cultivating a collaborative and dedicated workforce. Similarly, the emphasis on trust reflects its role as a fundamental element for effective mentorship and organizational alignment. By situating this research within the context of the German Mittelstand, the findings provide a deeper understanding of how family-owned craft businesses can utilize mentorship, trust, and team commitment to address contemporary organizational challenges. In addition to its theoretical contributions, this study provides practical strategies for the enhancement of organizational commitment and the promotion of employee retention. These findings illustrate the significance of prioritizing mentorship and the establishment of cohesive, trust-based team environments.

Although this study offers valuable insights into the dynamics of mentorship, trust, team commitment, and organizational commitment in family-owned craft firms, several limitations should be acknowledged. A principal limitation of the study is its cross-sectional design. As the data was collected at a single point in time, it is challenging to make causal inferences about the relationships between mentorship, trust, team commitment, and organizational commitment. Although the theoretical framework and prior empirical research supported the conceptual model, the findings must be interpreted with caution. Future research could address this limitation by employing longitudinal designs that capture changes over time, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of how mentorship initiatives develop and influence organizational outcomes. A further limitation is the potential for common method variance, given that all data was self-reported by the participants via surveys. This reliance on a single source gives rise to concerns about the potential for inflated correlations between variables. Although interaction effects, such as those investigated in the study's moderated mediation model, are less susceptible to common method variance, future research could incorporate multiple data sources, such as supervisor evaluations or objective performance metrics, to substantiate the findings and enhance their reliability. The generalizability of the study is also constrained by the specific context in which it was conducted. The study is centered on German family-owned craft firms. These businesses frequently display interpersonal dynamics and relatively modest team sizes. It is thus possible that these characteristics may not be universally applicable to larger or non-family-owned organizations. Moreover, as is typical of the Mittelstand, the demographic composition of the participants was predominantly male, which could influence the perspectives captured in the study, particularly with regard to mentorship and team dynamics. A more comprehensive understanding of how mentorship, trust, and team commitment manifest in diverse settings could be facilitated by extending the scope of the investigation to encompass other industries, organizational structures, or cultural contexts.

Further research could investigate a number of areas in order to build upon these findings. Longitudinal studies would be of particular value in understanding the evolving nature of mentorship, trust, and team commitment over time. Furthermore, research could examine alternative moderators and mediators, such as employee engagement, job satisfaction, or organizational culture, to uncover additional pathways linking mentorship and organizational outcomes. A further study could extend the investigation to encompass a comparison of different industries or cultural contexts. This would enable the identification of factors that are specific to family-owned craft businesses, as well as those that are more universal. Furthermore, the incorporation of behavioral metrics, such as employee retention rates, productivity, or customer satisfaction, could serve to validate the subjective findings further and provide actionable insights. By addressing these limitations and pursuing new research directions, future studies can enhance the comprehension of mentorship, trust, team commitment, and organizational commitment. This will not only advance theoretical perspectives but also provide family-owned businesses with the tools to create more resilient and committed workforces.

7. References

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8. Appendix

8.1 Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study
Católica-Lisbon
Mentorship, Trust & Commitment in Family Business
Description of the research and your participation
You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Alexander Pretz.
The purpose of this research is to learn about mentorship, trust, commitment and turnover intentions in family firms.
Your participation will involve the filling out of a brief survey.
Risk and discomforts
There are no known risks associated with this research. If for any reason you feel discomfort or uncomfortable you are free to stop at any time.
Protection of confidentiality
Your information will be kept confidenctial. Your identity will not be revealed in any publication resulting from this study.
Voluntary participation
Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.
Contact information
If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Alexander Pretz via alpretz@web.de
Consent
I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent to participate in this study.
Yes _______ No _______

What is your gender?	Male
	Female
	Diverse
	Not specified
What is your age?	
What is your nationality?	German
	Other
What is your education level?	No qualification
	Lower secondary school Ccertificate
	Secondary school diploma
	University of applied sciences entrance qualification
	General university entrance qualification
	Completed apprenticeship
	Technician
	Master craftsman
	Diploma
	Bachelor's degree
	Master's degree
	PhD or MBA
	Other
For how long have have you been working for this organization?	Less than 1 year (≤1 year)
	Between 1 year and 2 years (>1 and ≤2 years)
	Between 3 and 5 years (>3 and ≤5 year)
	Between 5 and 15 years (>5 and ≤15 year)
	More than 15 years (>15 years)

Measurements	Questions	Total
Mentoring	Introduction: Think about your relationship with your direct supervisor and select to which extent you agree with the following statements.	
Mentoring Measure (MFQ-9) Likert scale (1 to 5) 1 Strongly disagree; 2 Disagree; 3 Neither agree nor disagree; 4. Agree; 5 Strongly agree	My supervisor takes a personal interest in my career.	1
	My supervisor helps me coordinate professional goals.	2
	My supervisor has devoted special time and consideration to my career.	3
	I share personal problems with my supervisor.	4
	I exchange confidences with my supervisor.	5
	I consider my supervisor to be a friend.	6
	I try to model my behavior after my supervisor.	7
	I admire my supervisor's ability to motivate others.	8
	I respect my supervisor's ability to teach others.	9
Trust	Introduction: Think about your relationship with your direct supervisor and select to which extent you agree with the following statements.	
Trust Likert scale (1 to 5) 1 Strongly disagree; 2 Disagree; 3 Neither agree nor disagree; 4. Agree; 5 Strongly agree	We have a sharing relationship. We can both freely share our ideas, feelings, and hopes.	1
	I can talk freely to this individual about difficulties I am having at work and know that (s)he will want to listen.	2
	We would both feel a sense of loss if one of us was transferred, and we could no longer work together.	3
	If I shared my problems with this person, I know (s)he would respond constructively and caringly.	4
	I would have to say that we have both made considerable emotional investments in our working relationship.	5
	This person approaches his/her job with professionalism and dedication.	6
	Given this person's track record, I see no reason to doubt his/her competence and preparation for the job.	7
	I can rely on this person not to make my job more difficult by careless work.	8
	Most people, even those who aren't close friends of this individual, trust and respect him/her as a coworker.	9
	Other work associates of mine who must interact with this individual consider him/her to be trustworthy.	10
	If people knew more about this individual and his/her background, they would be more concerned and monitor his/her performance more closely. (R)	11
Team Commitment	Introduction: Consider your commitment to the team within your organization and select the extent to which you agree with the following statements.	
Team Commitment Scale (TCS) Likert scale (1 to 5) 1 Strongly disagree; 2 Disagree; 3 Neither agree nor disagree; 4. Agree; 5 Strongly agree	I am proud to tell others that my company uses the team concept.	1
	I am extremely glad our company chose the team concept over other ideas.	2
	This company's decision to implement the team concept was a definite mistake. (R)	3
	In the long run, there is not much to be gained by using the team concept. (R)	4
	I talk up the team concept to may peers as a positive change for our company.	5
	The team concept rally inspires the best in me in the way of job performance.	6
	I really care about the success of the team concept.	7
	I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help the team concept be successful.	8
	It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to give up on the team concept. (R)	9
	I feel very little loyalty to the team concept. (R)	10
Organizational Commitment	Introduction: Consider your overall commitment to your organization and indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.	
Organizational Commitment Questionaire Likert scale (1 to 5) 1 Strongly disagree; 2 Disagree; 3 Neither agree nor disagree; 4. Agree; 5 Strongly agree	I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.	1
	I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.	2
	I feel very little loyalty to this organization. (R)	3
	I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	4
	I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.	5
	I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	6
	I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar. (R)	7
	This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way ofjob performance.	8
	It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization. (R)	9
	I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.	10
	There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely. (R)	11
	Often. I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees. (R)	12
	I really care about the fate of this organization.	13
	For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.	14
	Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part. (R)	15

8.2 Appendix 2: Descriptive Statistics

SEX

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	118	93.7	93.7	93.7
	Female	8	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

NATIONALITY

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	German	122	96.8	96.8	96.8
	Other	4	3.2	3.2	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

AGE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	17.00	7	5.6	5.6	5.6
	18.00	19	15.1	15.1	20.6
	19.00	17	13.5	13.5	34.1
	20.00	15	11.9	11.9	46.0
	21.00	2	1.6	1.6	47.6
	22.00	2	1.6	1.6	49.2
	23.00	3	2.4	2.4	51.6
	24.00	4	3.2	3.2	54.8
	25.00	4	3.2	3.2	57.9
	26.00	4	3.2	3.2	61.1
	27.00	2	1.6	1.6	62.7
	28.00	2	1.6	1.6	64.3
	29.00	2	1.6	1.6	65.9
	30.00	3	2.4	2.4	68.3
	33.00	1	.8	.8	69.0
	34.00	1	.8	.8	69.8
	35.00	2	1.6	1.6	71.4
	36.00	4	3.2	3.2	74.6
	37.00	4	3.2	3.2	77.8
	39.00	2	1.6	1.6	79.4
	41.00	5	4.0	4.0	83.3
	42.00	3	2.4	2.4	85.7
	43.00	1	.8	.8	86.5
	45.00	2	1.6	1.6	88.1
	47.00	1	.8	.8	88.9
	48.00	1	.8	.8	89.7
	50.00	1	.8	.8	90.5
	52.00	1	.8	.8	91.3
	54.00	2	1.6	1.6	92.9
	55.00	1	.8	.8	93.7
	56.00	3	2.4	2.4	96.0
	58.00	1	.8	.8	96.8
	59.00	1	.8	.8	97.6
	60.00	2	1.6	1.6	99.2
	68.00	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

EDUCATION

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lower secondary school diploma	17	13.5	13.5	13.5
	Secondary school diploma	56	44.4	44.4	57.9
	University of applied sciences entrance qualification	4	3.2	3.2	61.1
	General university entrance qualification	10	7.9	7.9	69.0
	Completed apprenticeship	18	14.3	14.3	83.3
	Technician	6	4.8	4.8	88.1
	Master craftsman	10	7.9	7.9	96.0
	Diploma	5	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

TENURE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 1 year (≤1 year)	9	7.1	7.1	7.1
	Between 1 year and 2 years (>1 and ≤2 years)	34	27.0	27.0	34.1
	Between 3 and 5 years (>3 and ≤5 year)	46	36.5	36.5	70.6
	Between 5 and 15 years (>5 and ≤15 year)	23	18.3	18.3	88.9
	More than 15 years (>15 years)	14	11.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

		MENTORSHIP	TRUST	TEAM COMMITMENT	ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT
N	Valid	126	126	126	126
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.7716	3.9416	3.9016	3.6870
Std. Deviation		.92582	.85748	.78435	.74680

MENTORSHIP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.33	1	.8	.8	.8
	1.56	1	.8	.8	1.6
	1.78	4	3.2	3.2	4.8
	1.89	1	.8	.8	5.6
	2.00	1	.8	.8	6.3
	2.11	2	1.6	1.6	7.9
	2.33	2	1.6	1.6	9.5
	2.44	2	1.6	1.6	11.1
	2.56	3	2.4	2.4	13.5
	2.67	2	1.6	1.6	15.1
	2.78	1	.8	.8	15.9
	2.89	3	2.4	2.4	18.3
	3.00	5	4.0	4.0	22.2
	3.11	4	3.2	3.2	25.4
	3.22	6	4.8	4.8	30.2
	3.33	2	1.6	1.6	31.7
	3.44	1	.8	.8	32.5
	3.56	6	4.8	4.8	37.3
	3.67	6	4.8	4.8	42.1
	3.78	5	4.0	4.0	46.0
	3.89	9	7.1	7.1	53.2
	4.00	6	4.8	4.8	57.9
	4.11	4	3.2	3.2	61.1
	4.22	5	4.0	4.0	65.1
	4.33	5	4.0	4.0	69.0
	4.44	2	1.6	1.6	70.6
	4.56	7	5.6	5.6	76.2
	4.67	6	4.8	4.8	81.0
	4.78	11	8.7	8.7	89.7
	4.89	5	4.0	4.0	93.7
	5.00	8	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

TRUST

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.55	1	.8	.8	.8
	1.82	1	.8	.8	1.6
	1.91	1	.8	.8	2.4
	2.18	1	.8	.8	3.2
	2.27	3	2.4	2.4	5.6
	2.36	3	2.4	2.4	7.9
	2.45	2	1.6	1.6	9.5
	2.55	1	.8	.8	10.3
	2.73	3	2.4	2.4	12.7
	2.82	2	1.6	1.6	14.3
	3.00	4	3.2	3.2	17.5
	3.09	2	1.6	1.6	19.0
	3.18	2	1.6	1.6	20.6
	3.27	5	4.0	4.0	24.6
	3.36	3	2.4	2.4	27.0
	3.45	1	.8	.8	27.8
	3.55	4	3.2	3.2	31.0
	3.64	3	2.4	2.4	33.3
	3.73	4	3.2	3.2	36.5
	3.82	3	2.4	2.4	38.9
	3.91	3	2.4	2.4	41.3
	4.00	4	3.2	3.2	44.4
	4.09	6	4.8	4.8	49.2
	4.18	8	6.3	6.3	55.6
	4.27	4	3.2	3.2	58.7
	4.36	2	1.6	1.6	60.3
	4.45	6	4.8	4.8	65.1
	4.55	12	9.5	9.5	74.6
	4.64	6	4.8	4.8	79.4
	4.73	4	3.2	3.2	82.5
	4.82	6	4.8	4.8	87.3
	4.91	4	3.2	3.2	90.5
	5.00	12	9.5	9.5	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

TEAM COMMITMENT

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2.20	1	.8	.8	.8
	2.30	1	.8	.8	1.6
	2.40	1	.8	.8	2.4
	2.60	4	3.2	3.2	5.6
	2.70	2	1.6	1.6	7.1
	2.80	3	2.4	2.4	9.5
	2.90	1	.8	.8	10.3
	3.00	8	6.3	6.3	16.7
	3.10	9	7.1	7.1	23.8
	3.20	2	1.6	1.6	25.4
	3.30	3	2.4	2.4	27.8
	3.40	6	4.8	4.8	32.5
	3.50	8	6.3	6.3	38.9
	3.60	5	4.0	4.0	42.9
	3.70	2	1.6	1.6	44.4
	3.80	3	2.4	2.4	46.8
	3.90	6	4.8	4.8	51.6
	4.00	3	2.4	2.4	54.0
	4.10	6	4.8	4.8	58.7
	4.20	4	3.2	3.2	61.9
	4.30	4	3.2	3.2	65.1
	4.40	6	4.8	4.8	69.8
	4.50	2	1.6	1.6	71.4
	4.60	6	4.8	4.8	76.2
	4.70	6	4.8	4.8	81.0
	4.80	4	3.2	3.2	84.1
	4.90	2	1.6	1.6	85.7
	5.00	18	14.3	14.3	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.73	2	1.6	1.6	1.6
	2.27	1	.8	.8	2.4
	2.33	1	.8	.8	3.2
	2.40	5	4.0	4.0	7.1
	2.53	2	1.6	1.6	8.7
	2.60	1	.8	.8	9.5
	2.67	1	.8	.8	10.3
	2.73	1	.8	.8	11.1
	2.80	1	.8	.8	11.9
	2.87	4	3.2	3.2	15.1
	2.93	2	1.6	1.6	16.7
	3.00	2	1.6	1.6	18.3
	3.07	7	5.6	5.6	23.8
	3.13	3	2.4	2.4	26.2
	3.20	6	4.8	4.8	31.0
	3.27	5	4.0	4.0	34.9
	3.33	3	2.4	2.4	37.3
	3.40	3	2.4	2.4	39.7
	3.47	3	2.4	2.4	42.1
	3.53	3	2.4	2.4	44.4
	3.60	2	1.6	1.6	46.0
	3.67	4	3.2	3.2	49.2
	3.73	4	3.2	3.2	52.4
	3.80	5	4.0	4.0	56.3
	3.87	3	2.4	2.4	58.7
	3.90	1	.8	.8	59.5
	3.93	1	.8	.8	60.3
	4.00	3	2.4	2.4	62.7
	4.07	1	.8	.8	63.5
	4.13	1	.8	.8	64.3
	4.20	6	4.8	4.8	69.0
	4.27	4	3.2	3.2	72.2
	4.33	2	1.6	1.6	73.8
	4.40	2	1.6	1.6	75.4
	4.47	8	6.3	6.3	81.7
	4.53	5	4.0	4.0	85.7
	4.60	6	4.8	4.8	90.5
	4.67	8	6.3	6.3	96.8
	4.73	3	2.4	2.4	99.2
	5.00	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

8.3 Appendix 3: Reliabilities

Mentorship scale:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.896	9

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
MENT.1 My supervisor takes a personal interest in my career.	30.0159	56.240	.626	.887
MENT.2 My supervisor helps me coordinate professional goals.	29.7698	57.859	.643	.886
MENT.3 My supervisor has devoted special time and consideration to my career.	30.3333	54.464	.744	.877
MENT.4 I share personal problems with my supervisor.	30.5476	54.426	.581	.892
MENT.5 I exchange confidences with my supervisor.	29.8095	55.019	.703	.881
MENT.6 I consider my supervisor to be a friend.	30.7619	53.575	.675	.883
MENT.7 I try to model my behavior after my supervisor.	30.2381	57.063	.629	.886
MENT.8 I admire my supervisor' s ability to motivate others.	30.2302	54.419	.742	.878
MENT.9 I respect my supervisor' s ability to teach others.	29.8492	57.089	.617	.887

Trust scale:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.903	11

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
TRST.1 We have a sharing relationship. We can both freely share our ideas, feelings, and hopes.	39.7063	68.017	.737	.889
TRST.2 I can talk freely to my supervisor about difficulties I am having at work and know that (s)he will want to listen.	39.2857	69.854	.767	.887
TRST.3 We would both feel a sense of loss if one of us was transferred, and we could no longer work together.	39.7698	68.803	.726	.890
TRST.4 If I shared my problems with my supervisor, I know (s)he would respond constructively and caringly.	39.3175	70.250	.805	.886
TRST.5 I would have to say that we have both made considerable emotional investments in our working relationship.	40.0000	69.952	.702	.891
TRST.6 My supervisor approaches his/her job with professionalism and dedication.	38.8333	77.084	.577	.898
TRST.7 Given my supervisor's track record, I see no reason to doubt his/her competence and preparation for the job.	38.8651	76.102	.690	.894
TRST.8 I can rely on my supervisor not to make my job more difficult by careless work.	39.1349	73.734	.724	.891
TRST.9 Most people, even those who aren't close friends of my supervisor, trust and respect him/her as a coworker.	39.1429	72.763	.748	.890
TRST.10 Other work associates of mine who must interact with my supervisor consider him/her to be trustworthy.	39.1111	75.172	.700	.893
TRST.11_R	39.7698	83.507	.096	.927

Team commitment scale:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.853	10

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
TC.1 I am proud to tell others that my company uses the team concept.	35.1111	48.964	.639	.832
TC.2 I am extremely glad our company chose the team concept over other ideas.	35.1190	48.346	.647	.831
TC.3_R	35.0476	48.734	.576	.837
TC.4_R	34.8413	50.151	.509	.844
TC.5 I talk up the team concept to may peers as a positive change for our company.	35.2698	50.583	.548	.840
TC.6 The team concept rally inspires the best in me in the way of job performance.	35.1349	49.878	.578	.837
TC.7 I really care about the success of the team concept.	34.7222	51.210	.551	.840
TC.8 I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help the team concept be successful.	34.6746	52.173	.557	.840
TC.9_R	35.1032	50.989	.440	.850
TC.10_R	34.9762	48.999	.547	.840

Organizational commitment scale:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.920	15

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
OC.1 I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.	53.4524	144.490	.561	.917
OC.2 I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.	53.5000	138.556	.701	.913
OC.3_R	53.7857	136.986	.596	.917
OC.4 I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	54.4921	140.588	.505	.920
OC.5 I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.	53.8571	138.667	.713	.913
OC.6 I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	53.5476	137.114	.803	.910
OC.7_R	54.6587	143.251	.410	.923
OC.8 This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way ofjob performance.	53.6984	140.148	.678	.914
OC.9_R	53.7937	136.565	.701	.913
OC.10 I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.	53.5476	137.098	.764	.911
OC.11_R	54.0000	136.288	.664	.914
OC.12_R	54.2857	142.430	.451	.921
OC.13 I really care about the fate of this organization.	53.6667	139.024	.699	.913
OC.14 For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.	53.9286	135.779	.774	.910
OC.15_R	53.3413	139.971	.604	.916

8.4 Appendix 4: Regression for Hypothesis 1

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Mentorship[b]	.	Enter
2	TENURE, EDUCATION, AGE[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.747[a]	.558	.554	.49859
2	.777[b]	.603	.590	.47800

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mentorship

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mentorship, TENURE, EDUCATION, AGE

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	38.888	1	38.888	156.434	<.001[b]
	Residual	30.825	124	.249		
	Total	69.713	125			
2	Regression	42.067	4	10.517	46.029	<.001[c]
	Residual	27.646	121	.228		
	Total	69.713	125			

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mentorship

c. Predictors: (Constant), Mentorship, TENURE, EDUCATION, AGE

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.415	.187		7.565	<.001
	Mentorship	.602	.048	.747	12.507	<.001
2	(Constant)	1.231	.205		6.007	<.001
	Mentorship	.562	.048	.697	11.721	<.001
	TENURE	-.033	.058	-.048	-.571	.569
	EDUCATION	.012	.027	.033	.443	.658
	AGE	.013	.006	.230	2.341	.021

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment

Excluded Variables[a]

Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance
1	TENURE	.130[b]	2.199	.030	.194	.986
	EDUCATION	.154[b]	2.547	.012	.224	.933
	AGE	.214[b]	3.678	<.001	.315	.957

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Mentorship

8.5 Appendix 5: Hypothesis Testing with Hayes' PROCESS Macro Model 8

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

***************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 *****************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.       www.afhayes.com
    Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**************************************************************************
Model  : 8
    Y  : OC
    X  : MENT
    M  : TC
    W  : TRST

Covariates:
 SEX      AGE      EDU      TEN

Sample
Size:  126

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 TC

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .7076      .5007      .3254    16.9016     7.0000   118.0000      .0000

Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     3.4699      .2571    13.4955      .0000     2.9607     3.9790
MENT          .2473      .1024     2.4150      .0173      .0445      .4501
TRST          .4894      .1210     4.0430      .0001      .2497      .7291
Int_1         .2396      .0686     3.4913      .0007      .1037      .3756
SEX           .3620      .2132     1.6977      .0922     -.0603      .7842
AGE           .0013      .0070      .1810      .8567     -.0127      .0152
EDU          -.0062      .0326     -.1904      .8493     -.0708      .0584
TEN          -.0404      .0697     -.5805      .5627     -.1784      .0975

Product terms key:
 Int_1    :        MENT     x        TRST

Covariance matrix of regression parameter estimates:
           constant       MENT       TRST      Int_1        SEX        AGE        EDU        TEN
constant      .0661     -.0010      .0041     -.0004     -.0422      .0000     -.0012     -.0039
MENT         -.0010      .0105     -.0096      .0003     -.0001      .0001     -.0002     -.0004
TRST          .0041     -.0096      .0147      .0026     -.0009     -.0002     -.0003      .0007
Int_1        -.0004      .0003      .0026      .0047     -.0005      .0000     -.0002     -.0001
SEX          -.0422     -.0001     -.0009     -.0005      .0455      .0001     -.0005     -.0018
AGE           .0000      .0001     -.0002      .0000      .0001      .0000     -.0001     -.0003
EDU          -.0012     -.0002     -.0003     -.0002     -.0005     -.0001      .0011      .0001
TEN          -.0039     -.0004      .0007     -.0001     -.0018     -.0003      .0001      .0049

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
       R2-chng          F        df1        df2          p
X*W      .0516    12.1895     1.0000   118.0000      .0007
----------
    Focal predict: MENT     (X)
          Mod var: TRST     (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

       TRST     Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
     -.8575      .0418      .1157      .3616      .7183     -.1872      .2709
      .0000      .2473      .1024     2.4150      .0173      .0445      .4501
      .8575      .4528      .1205     3.7574      .0003      .2142      .6915

**************************************************************************
```

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
OC

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.8515	.7251	.1638	38.5720	8.0000	117.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2.2465	.2909	7.7219	.0000	1.6704	2.8227
MENT	.2386	.0744	3.2051	.0017	.0912	.3860
TC	.3721	.0653	5.6969	.0000	.2427	.5014
TRST	.1894	.0916	2.0669	.0410	.0079	.3709
Int_1	-.0026	.0512	-.0509	.9595	-.1039	.0987
SEX	-.2560	.1531	-1.6719	.0972	-.5592	.0472
AGE	.0077	.0050	1.5429	.1256	-.0022	.0176
EDU	.0080	.0231	.3473	.7290	-.0378	.0539
TEN	.0025	.0495	.0510	.9594	-.0955	.1006

Product terms key:
Int_1 : MENT x TRST

Covariance matrix of regression parameter estimates:

	constant	MENT	TC	TRST	Int_1	SEX	AGE	EDU	TEN
constant	.0846	.0032	-.0148	.0093	.0034	-.0159	.0000	-.0007	-.0025
MENT	.0032	.0055	-.0011	-.0043	.0004	.0003	.0001	-.0001	-.0002
TC	-.0148	-.0011	.0043	-.0021	-.0010	-.0015	.0000	.0000	.0002
TRST	.0093	-.0043	-.0021	.0084	.0018	.0003	-.0001	-.0001	.0003
Int_1	.0034	.0004	-.0010	.0018	.0026	.0001	.0000	-.0001	-.0001
SEX	-.0159	.0003	-.0015	.0003	.0001	.0234	.0000	-.0003	-.0010
AGE	.0000	.0001	.0000	-.0001	.0000	.0000	.0000	-.0001	-.0002
EDU	-.0007	-.0001	.0000	-.0001	-.0001	-.0003	-.0001	.0005	.0001
TEN	-.0025	-.0002	.0002	.0003	-.0001	-.0010	-.0002	.0001	.0025

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	.0000	.0026	1.0000	117.0000	.9595

****************** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****************

Conditional direct effects of X on Y

TRST	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-.8575	.2408	.0821	2.9324	.0040	.0782	.4034
.0000	.2386	.0744	3.2051	.0017	.0912	.3860
.8575	.2363	.0905	2.6123	.0102	.0572	.4155

Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:

INDIRECT EFFECT:
MENT -> TC -> OC

TRST	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
-.8575	.0156	.0515	-.0737	.1275
.0000	.0920	.0585	-.0063	.2168
.8575	.1685	.0756	.0418	.3317

Index of moderated mediation:

	Index	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TRST	.0892	.0324	.0301	.1537

*********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ************************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
5000

W values in conditional tables are the mean and +/- SD from the mean.

NOTE: The following variables were mean centered prior to analysis:
TRST MENT

NOTE: Standardized coefficients are not available for models with moderators.

NOTE: Due to estimation problems, some bootstrap samples had to be replaced.
The number of times this happened was:
1

------ END MATRIX -----