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How do demographic characteristics relate to organizational commitment? Evidence from Croatia

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ABSTRACT

Organizational commitment gets significant attention from both scientists and practitioners alike since the 1950s. This interest is evident in the literature in the area of management and organizational behaviour, in an impressive number of studies exploring the nature, antecedents, and outcomes of organizational commitment. The aim of this paper is to contribute to the clarification of the relationship between employees' demographic characteristics and their organizational commitment, since research studies imply mainly inconsistent results about this relationship. The empirical research was carried out in Croatia. The research sample includes 304 employees. A self-developed questionnaire was used for data collection, specifically about gender, age, tenure, education, and marital status. In order to assess organizational commitment, the Organizational Commitment Scale was applied. Research results showed no differences in organizational commitment regarding the employees' gender or marital status, while the differences in employees' organizational commitment exist regarding employees' age, tenure in organization and education. Dwelling into these differences, this paper demonstrates that the level of organizational commitment varies according to different subcategories of each demographic characteristic. In addition, this paper explains the origin and possible reasons of differences in organizational commitment regarding the different subcategories of each demographic characteristic.

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1. Introduction

Organizational commitment has attracted significant attention from both scientists and practitioners since the 1950s. This interest is evident in an impressive number of studies examining the nature, antecedents, and outcomes of organizational commitment. Two main reasons support this interest. The significance and impact of the organizational commitment on employees have not yet been fully understood. Additionally, the antecedents of organizational commitment that initiates from demographic, cultural and organizational structure have also not been clarified yet.

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Regarding to this, studying the organizational commitment factors in diverse situations and time stages still represents an important research topic (Ehtiyar & Üngüren, 2016).

Croatian researches have been recognize this fact, so the organizational commitment was also an interesting topic for them. Maslić-Seršić (2000) has dealt with the research instrument for organizational commitment assessment. Krapić et al. (2006) have explored the connection between big five-factor personality traits and organizational commitment. Vidić (2010) has dealt with organizational commitment of primary school teachers. Pomper and Malbašić (2016) have researched organizational commitment in the context of transformational leadership. Crleni et al. (2016), as well as Krapić et al. (2018) investigated the influences of values on organizational commitment.

This paper deals with the relationship between employee's demographic characteristics and organizational commitment. Although different authors have explored different antecedents of organizational commitment, research about demographic characteristics as predictors of organizational commitment, is scarce. Additionally, research about the relationship between employees' demographics characteristics and organizational commitment showed contradictory results. Therefore, this study aims (1) to contribute to the existing literature by clarifying the relationship between demographic characteristics and organizational commitment; (2) to provide comprehensive research into this relationship, not only by determining the existence of the differences in organizational commitment according to each demographic characteristic, but also by thoroughly exploring those differences; (3) to explain the origin and possible reasons to the differences in organizational commitment in regards to the different subcategories of each demographic characteristic.

This paper is organized in the following way. The theoretical framework as well as research hypotheses represent Section 2. In Section 3, the research methodology is explained, with clarification of the aim of the research, sample characteristics, research instrument and applied statistical methods. Section 4 includes research results. Section 5 presents the discussion, while section six includes conclusion, research limitations and recommendations for future research.

2. Theoretical framework and research hypotheses

2.1. Definition of organizational commitment

The authors with greater research contribution in the field of organizational commitment define this concept as follows. Organizational commitment is “a bond or linking of the individual to the organization” (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990, pp. 171). It “involves an active relationship with the organization such that individuals are willing to give something of themselves in order to contribute to the organization's well-being” (Mowday et al., 1979, pp. 226). According to Meyer and Allen (1991, pp. 61), organizational commitment is “a psychological state, reflecting a desire, a need and an obligation to maintain employment in an organization”.

Allen and Meyer (1990) additionally develop the three-component model of organizational commitment, which is the dominant model for organizational commitment

research, both for older and more recent research (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Avci & Erdem, 2017; Marmaya et al., 2011). This model classifies organizational commitment into three components, namely, affective, continuance and normative commitment.

Affective commitment is observed as the employee's emotional attachment to the organization; continuance commitment is "an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1997, pp. 11), while normative commitment represents a feeling of duty and moral obligation to remain a member of the organization.

2.2. Antecedents of organizational commitment

Many factors affect organizational commitment, such as: demographic variables, individual differences, work experiences and alternatives/investments (Avci & Erdem, 2017). Demographic variables or personal characteristics are the most studied antecedents of organizational commitment.

2.2.1. Gender and organizational commitment

Exploration of the relationship between gender and organizational commitment is usually based on two theories or models: the job model and the gender model (Aven et al., 1993; Marsden et al., 1993). The job model indicates that employees, regardless of sex, who are working in a similar working environment, demonstrate the comparable levels of organizational commitment (Ngo & Tsang, 1998; Rajesh & Li-Ping Tang, 2015). On the contrary, the gender model states that men and women have different levels of organizational commitment (Eagly et al., 2000; Sheikh, 2017). Despite an extensive amount of research, the relationship between gender and organizational commitment remains unclear. Some studies are in line with the job model, and have not discovered any relation between gender and organizational commitment (Ajayi, 2017; Aven et al., 1993; Mahanta, 2012; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002; Ngo & Tsang, 1998; Rabindarang et al., 2014). Therefore, another set of studies suggests the presence of the correlation between gender and organizational commitment. Some of them report greater commitment expressed by women (Marsden et al., 1993; Messner, 2017; Mowday et al., 1982; Opayemi, 2004), while some others observed higher organizational commitment in the case of men (Aydin et al., 2011; Jena, 2015; Kumasey et al., 2014; Marsden et al., 1993).

Based on job model and due to increasing equality between men and women at the workplace the hypothesis 1 of this paper is defined as: *There are no differences in organizational commitment between men and women.*

2.2.2. Age and organizational commitment

Empirical research has uncovered contradicting results for the age and organizational commitment connection. Much research has discovered a positive correlation between age and organizational commitment (Affum-Osei et al., 2015; Allen & Meyer, 1990, 1993; Amangala, 2013; Elkhdr & Kanbur, 2018; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Nifadkar & Dongre, 2014; Sheikh, 2017). Possible explanations for these results are that older employees have better positions and higher satisfaction with their jobs (Khan &

Zafar, 2013), they have lower number of available employment options (Mowday et al., 1982) and they observe high cost of leaving the company. Additionally, older people lower their expectations to more realistic levels and adjust themselves better to their work situations (Newstrom, 2007). However, several research studies have not discovered a significant correlation between age and organizational commitment (Akinyemi, 2014; Booth-Kewley et al., 2017; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002).

In line with above reasoning, it is anticipated that older employees have higher level of organizational commitment. Therefore, the hypothesis 2 is: *The oldest employees demonstrate the highest level of organizational commitment.*

2.2.3. Tenure and organizational commitment

Tenure is a reliable organizational commitment predictor. Longer an employee works in an organization more likely s/he is to develop emotions and loyalty towards the organization; s/he may experience promotions and advancements, gain increased salary and other benefits. Furthermore, all of that develops a sense of belonging. Additionally, a positive relationship between tenure and organizational commitment might be a result of the fact that employees with the low level of organizational commitment leave an organization, while employees with a high level of organizational commitment stay (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Research results mainly confirm this by reporting a positive correlation between tenure and organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Amangala, 2013; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Newstrom, 2007; Nifadkar & Dongre, 2014; Sheikh, 2017). On the other hand, there are some research studies that have not found any correlation between tenure and organizational commitment (Avci & Erdem, 2017; Booth-Kewley et al., 2017; Mahanta, 2012), while Liou and Nyhan (1994) and Boon and Safa (2006) determined a significant negative correlation between tenure and organizational commitment.

Based on the reasons stated above, the hypothesis 3 is: *Employees with the longest tenure report the highest level of organizational commitment.*

2.2.4. Education and organizational commitment

In today's environment characterized by lifelong learning, clarifying the connection between education and organizational commitment is especially important. Some research studies have discovered a positive correlation between education and organizational commitment (Akintayo et al., 2010; Amangala, 2013). This means that higher educated employees report a greater level of organizational commitment. However, the majority of research suggests a negative relationship between education and organizational commitment, which means that higher employee educational qualifications leads to lower organizational commitment (Khan et al., 2013; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mowday et al., 1982; Newstrom, 2007). Kwon and Banks (2004) explained this by fact that the employees with the higher education have the higher number of job possibilities. Additional explanation is that highly educated people may have greater expectations from their organization which the organization might not be able to satisfy (Joiner & Bakalis, 2006; Mowday et al., 1982). Furthermore,

organization could face the difficulty in offering satisfactory rewards for employees who have higher educational qualifications (Joiner & Bakalis, 2006). Moreover, people with low educational qualifications find it difficult to find new jobs and because of that, they are more committed to their organizations (Khan et al., 2013). In addition, employees with low educational qualifications usually do not have skills needed for engagement in other organizations (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Joiner & Bakalis, 2006). However, there are research that have not found any correlation between organizational commitment and employees' education (Booth-Kewley et al., 2017; Rabindarang et al., 2014).

Based on the results of the majority of research regarding the relationship between education and organizational commitment, the hypothesis 4 proposes: *The higher employee's education means lower organizational commitment.*

2.2.5. Marital status and organizational commitment

It is reasonable to state that marital status is logical determinant of organizational commitment. Married people have additional family responsibilities and obligations, which requires certain security of their jobs. Consequently, they invest more in their jobs in every respect; they are more motivated, hard and overtime working, and finally, more loyal to their organizations (Khan et al., 2013). Research results mainly confirm these considerations (Elkhdr & Kanbur, 2018; Jena, 2015; Mrinali, 2015; Nifadkar & Dongre, 2014; Sheikh, 2017). However, some studies have not found correlation between marital status and organizational commitment (Avci & Erdem, 2017; Mahanta, 2012; Rabindarang et al., 2014; Shah et al., 2020).

The hypothesis 5 of this paper is grounded in the last-mentioned research results and due to the need of all employees to realize themselves in working environment and to fit in some organization, regardless of marital status. So, hypothesis 5 proposes: *There are no differences in organizational commitment regarding employees' marital status.*

3. Methodology

3.1. Aim of the study

Research studies presented above imply mainly inconsistent results about the relation between demographic characteristics and organizational commitment, which indicates the considerable complexity of this relation and insufficient knowledge about it. Moreover, the lack of this kind of research is evident in Croatia. In that context, the aim of this study is to clarify the relationship between employees' demographic characteristics and their organizational commitment by focusing on Croatian companies as the research polygon.

3.2. Research sample and procedure

The empirical research of this paper was carried out in Croatia. Data collection took place over four months, from February to May 2018. A convenience sample was used. The research was conducted in five companies, which agreed to participate in the research. In each company, about 60 employees have participated. The selected

Table 1. Research sample characteristics.

Characteristic	Respondents		Organizational commitment	
	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Range
Gender				
Male	127	41.8	3.3079	1.17–5.00
Female	177	58.2	3.1582	1.11–5.00
Age				
Under 30	51	16.8	3.1372	1.39–4.78
31 – 40	91	29.9	2.9211	1.11–5.00
41 – 50	78	25.7	3.2946	1.17–5.00
51 and older	84	27.6	3.5276	1.44–5.00
Tenure in organization				
Less than 10 years	125	41.1	3.0960	1.39–5.00
11 – 20	79	26.0	3.0778	1.11–5.00
21 and more	100	32.9	3.4897	1.17–5.00
Education				
Secondary education/vocational education	109	35.9	3.3134	1.44–5.00
Higher education (university education)	130	42.8	3.0125	1.11–4.78
Master's degree or doctoral degree	65	21.4	3.4819	1.89–4.64
Marital status				
Single	94	30.9	3.1323	1.39–5.00
Married	165	54.3	3.2423	1.11–5.00
Divorced	37	12.2	3.3239	1.28–5.00
Widowed	8	2.6	3.3404	1.78–5.00

Source: Author's research.

companies were the biggest ones from different industries (hospital, secondary school, hotel, confectionery products, retail) and from the same region, Splitsko–Dalmatinska County. The companies' management first approved the research, which was subsequently conducted by HR department or by the contact person from each company. At the beginning of the survey, employees were informed about the purpose of the study that their participation is voluntary, that the anonymity is guaranteed, that they can quit at any point without explanation, and that the data would be used for scientific purposes only. The employees who were willing to participate in the research filled in the paper-and-pencil questionnaire. In total, 304 employees have participated in this research. A similar sample size (200–400) was used in the earlier research of this topic (Su et al., 2009; Khan & Zafar, 2013).

Table 1 represents research sample characteristics.

The majority of respondents were women (58.2%), those aged 31 – 40 (29.9%), those having less than 10 years of tenure (41.1%), those with high education (42.8%) and those who are married (54.3%).

3.3. Research instrument

A self-developed questionnaire was used to gather data on employees' personal characteristics, specifically, gender, age, tenure, education, and marital status. The Organizational Commitment Scale (Meyer et al., 1993) was used to evaluate the organizational commitment. Maslić-Seršić (2000) has translated this scale into Croatian language and confirmed its validity. This scale includes 18 items. A 5-point Likert scale was applied for participants' answers. The meaning of scale is as follows: 1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 4 – agree, 5 – strongly agree. Cronbach's Alpha demonstrated high reliability of organizational

Table 2. Correlations among demographic characteristics.

	Gender	Age	Tenure	Education	Marital status
Gender	1	-.022	.020	-.111	-.029
Age	-.022	1	.799**	-.049	.412**
Tenure	.020	.799**	1	-.060	.345**
Education	-.111	-.049	-.060	1	.117*
Marital status	-.029	.412**	.345**	-.117*	1

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Source: Author's research.

commitment scale ($\alpha=.948$). The total score of organizational commitment represents the average value of participants' answers on all items.

3.4. Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 23 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Statistical procedures applied in this research are Cronbach's alpha, Normality tests, Levene's test, Independent Sample *t* test, one-way ANOVA, Kruskal–Wallis test, post hoc tests, and descriptive statistics.

4. Research results

4.1. Correlations and descriptive statistics

In order to properly understand research results, the correlations among demographic characteristics are presented in Table 2.

Statistically significant correlations are the ones between employees' age and tenure (strong), between age and marital status (moderate), between tenure and marital status (moderate) and between education and marital status (weak).

Descriptive statistics on organizational commitment and its components is presented in Table 3.

The organizational commitment reported by the participants in this study is moderate, as well as its dimensions. Namely, the mean value of organizational commitment is 3.2, and the mean of organizational commitment dimensions' is as follows: affective commitment 3.4, continuance commitment 3.2, and normative commitment is 3.1. Similar levels of organizational commitment in Croatian organizations have been discovered in earlier research (Agušaj, 2016; Krapić et al., 2006; Markovina, 2013). On the other hand, Vidić (2010) in her research on organizational commitment of teachers identified higher level of organizational commitment ($M=4.1$ on the scale from 1 to 5).

4.2. Gender and organizational commitment

The analysis of the relationship between gender and organizational commitment starts by testing the normality of the distribution. The Shapiro–Wilk's test ($p > 0.05$), for both groups, males and females, as well as a visual inspection of their histograms, normal Q–Q plots and box plots showed that the organizational commitment is

Table 3. Descriptive statistics.

	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. dev.	Min	Max	N
Organizational commitment	3.221	3.277	3.00	.8399	1.11	5.00	304
Affective commitment	3.393	3.333	3.00	.9736	1.00	5.00	304
Continuance commitment	3.212	3.167	3.00	.9225	1.00	5.00	304
Normative commitment	3.058	3.000	3.00	.9917	1.00	5.00	304

Source: Author's research.

approximately normally distributed for both males and females, with a skewness of -0.345 ($SE = 0.215$) and kurtosis of -0.409 ($SE = 0.427$) for males, and a skewness of 0.100 ($SE = 0.183$) and kurtosis of -0.458 ($SE = 0.363$) for the females. According to this, the independent sample t test could be applied which analyzes whether organizational commitment levels show a significant difference in terms of gender. It is presented in Table 4.

Independent sample t test showed no statistically significant difference in mean value of organizational commitment between men and women [$t(302) = 1.536$, $p = .126$]. This confirms hypothesis 1.

4.3. Age and organizational commitment

The Shapiro–Wilk's test ($p > 0.05$), for all observed groups as well as a visual inspection of their histograms, normal Q–Q plots and box plots showed that the organizational commitment is approximately normally distributed for all ages groups, with a skewness of 0.087 ($SE = 0.333$) and kurtosis of -1.042 ($SE = 0.656$) age group under 30, a skewness 0.122 ($SE = 0.253$) and kurtosis of 0.096 ($SE = 0.500$) for age group 31 to 40, a skewness of -0.121 ($SE = 0.275$) and kurtosis of -0.305 ($SE = 0.538$) for age group 41 to 40, and skewness of -0.421 ($SE = 0.263$) and kurtosis of -0.069 ($SE = 0.520$) for age group over 51 years.

The Levene's test of homogeneity of variances was not significant [$F(3,300) = 1.73$, $p = 0.161$] which means that variances are equal, and groups are not statistically significant different, so additional precondition for the one-way ANOVA is satisfied.

The results of one-way ANOVA (Table 5) showed statistically significant differences in organizational commitment among different age groups [$F(3, 300) = 8.56$, $p < .001$].

Tests presented in Tables 6 and 7 determined the means that were different from each other.

Statistically significant difference in organizational commitments existed within the age group of 31 – 40 years ($M = 2.92$) comparing to the age group 41 – 50 ($M = 3.29$). In this case, a mean difference was $.37344$ and a p value was $.032$. A statistically significant difference in organizational commitment also existed within the age group of 31 – 40 ($M = 2.92$) comparing to the age group 51 and over ($M = 3.53$). In this case, a mean difference was $.60648$ and a p value was $.000$. Thus, the findings implied that the observed significant differences in organizational commitment regarding the employees' age existed because of the variation in organizational commitment level between employees' age group 31 – 40 years, age group 41 – 50 and age group 51 and over. The test of homogenous subsets further clarified these findings.

Table 4. Independent sample *t* test.

	Levene's test of equality of variances		<i>t</i> test for equality of means						
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (two-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Organizational commitment	.067	.797	1.536	302	.126	.14968	.09745	-.04210	.34145
Equal variances assumed									
Equal variances not assumed			1.529	267.321	.127	.14968	.09787	-.04302	.34238

Source: Author's research.

Table 5. One-way ANOVA – age and organizational commitment.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	16.860	3	5.620	8.564	.000
Within groups	196.885	300	.656		
Total	213.745	303			

Source: Author's research.

Table 6. Scheffe's post hoc test of multiple comparisons.

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. error	Sig.	95% Confidence interval	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
Under 30	31–40	.21605	.14170	.509	–.1823	.6144
	41–50	–.15738	.14588	.762	–.5675	.2528
	51 and over	–.39043	.14381	.063	–.7947	.2528
31–40	Under 30	–.21605	.14170	.509	–.6144	.1823
	41–50	–.37344*	.12500	.032	–.7249	–.0220
	51 and over	–.60648*	.12258	.000	–.9511	–.2619
41–50	Under 30	.15738	.14588	.762	–.2528	.5675
	31–40	.37344*	.12500	.032	.0220	.7249
	51 and over	–.23305	.12738	.343	–.5912	.1251
51 and over	Under 30	.39043	.14381	.063	–.0139	.7947
	31–40	.60648*	.12258	.000	.2619	.9511
	41–50	.23305	.12738	.343	–.1251	.5912

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Source: Author's research.

Table 7. Scheffe's post hoc test of homogenous subsets.

Age	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
31 – 40	91	2.92	
Under 30	51	3.14	
41 – 50	78	3.29	3.29
51 and over	84		3.53
Sig.		.055	.394

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

^aUses harmonic mean sample size = 72.304.^bThe group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed. Source: Author's research.

Namely, the mean rank indicated that employees between 31 and 40 demonstrated the lowest organizational commitment compared to all age groups. The mean rank indicated that the mean value of organizational commitment in the case of employees under 30 is 3.14. The employees in age group 31 – 40 reported a lower level of their organizational commitment ($M = 2.92$). For age group 41 – 50 the level of organizational commitment increased ($M = 3.29$) and additionally increased for age group 51 and over ($M = 3.53$). This confirms hypothesis 2.

4.4. Tenure in organization and organizational commitment

The Shapiro–Wilk's test ($p > 0.05$) for all groups, as well as a visual inspection of their histograms, normal Q–Q plots and box plots showed that the organizational commitment is approximately normally distributed regarding the tenure in the

Table 8. One-way ANOVA – tenure in organization and organizational commitment.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.793	2	5.396	8.004	.000
Within Groups	202.952	301	.674		
Total	213.745	303			

Source: Author's research.

Table 9. Scheffe's post hoc test of multiple comparisons.

(I) Tenure	(J) Tenure	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. error	Sig.	95% Confidence interval	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
Less than 10 years	11 – 20	.01819	.11802	.988	-.2721	.3085
	21 and over	-.39370*	.11017	.002	-.6647	-.1227
11 – 20	Less than 10 years	-.01819	.11802	.988	-.3085	.2721
	21 and over	-.41189*	.12360	.004	-.7160	-.1078
21 and over	Less than 10 years	.39370*	.11017	.002	.1227	.6647
	11 – 20	.41189*	.12360	.004	.1078	.7160

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Source: Author's research.

organization, with a skewness of 0.164 (SE = 0.217) and kurtosis of -0.590 (SE = 0.430) for tenure of less than 10 years, a skewness of -0.182 (SE = 0.271) and kurtosis of -0.309 (SE = -0.535) for tenure in the range of 11–20 years and a skewness of -0.374 (SE = 0.241) and kurtosis of -0.199 (SE = 0.478) for tenure of 21 years and more.

The Levene's test of homogeneity of variances was not significant [$F(2,301)=0.037$, $p=0.964$] which means that variances are equal, or groups are not statistically significantly different, so an additional precondition for one-way ANOVA was satisfied.

One-way ANOVA, presented in Table 8, showed that there were statistically significant differences in organizational commitment regarding the employees' tenure in organization [$F(2, 301)=8.004$, $p<.001$].

Tests presented in Tables 9 and 10 determined the means that were different to each other.

The organizational commitment of the employees with less than 10 years of tenure in organization ($M=3.10$) was statistically significantly different from the organizational commitment of the employees with tenure of 21 years and over ($M=3.50$). A mean difference is reported in Table 9. A statistically significant difference also existed between the level of organizational commitments of employees with 11–20 years of tenure ($M=3.08$) and the employees with the tenure of 21 years and over ($M=3.52$). The value of mean difference in this case is also reported in Table 9. Thus, the findings implied that the observed differences in organizational commitment regarding employees' tenure were the result of the variation in organizational commitment between employees with tenure of 11 – 20 years and employees with 21 and more years of tenure; than between employees with tenure of 21 years and above, and employees with tenure of less than 10 years; and finally between employees with tenure of 21 years and more and employees with tenure between 11 and 20 years. To summarize, the results of presented post hoc test showed no statistically significant difference in the level of organizational commitment except between the employees with less than 10 years of tenure and employees with tenure of 11 – 20 years.

Table 10. Scheffe's post hoc test of homogenous subsets.

Tenure	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
11 – 20	79	3.0778	
Less than 10 years	125	3.0960	3
21 and over	100		3.4897
Sig.		.988	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

^aUses harmonic mean sample size = 97.853.

^bThe group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Source: Author's research.

Table 11. Independent-samples Kruskal–Wallis test.

Total N	304
Test statistic	15.295 ^a
Degree of freedom	2
Asymptotic sig. (two-sided test)	.000

^aThe test statistic is adjusted for ties.

Source: Author's research.

Additionally, the test of homogenous subsets of means (Table 10) detected that the mean rank of organizational commitment was the lowest in the case of employees with tenure between 11 and 20 years ($M = 3.08$); followed by the mean rank of organizational commitment of employees with tenure of less than 10 years ($M = 3.10$); while in the case of employees with 21 and more years of tenure, the mean rank of organizational commitment was the highest ($M = 3.49$). These results confirm hypothesis 3.

4.5. Education and organizational commitment

Since the distribution of organizational commitment regarding employees' education was not normally distributed, the nonparametric method was applied (Table 11).

Kruskal–Wallis test suggested the existence of statistically significant differences in organizational commitment according to employees' education [$H(2) = 15.295$, $P < .001$].

Post hoc test (Table 12) is used to test pairwise comparisons.

Each row tests the null hypothesis that the Samples 1 and 2 distribution are the same.

Asymptotic significances (2-sides tests) are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Post hoc test showed that the organizational commitment of employees with higher (university) education significantly statistically differed from the organizational commitment of the employees with secondary/vocational education ($p = .043$). Additionally, the significant statistical difference in organizational commitment of employees with higher (university) education and employees with master's or doctoral degree ($p = .001$) was determined. Organizational commitment of employees with secondary/vocational education and those with master's or doctoral degree, was not significantly statistically different ($p = .316$).

Observing the mean ranks, the level of organizational commitment in respect to education, becomes clearer (Table 13).

Table 12. Pairwise comparisons on education.

Sample 1–Sample 2	Test statistic	Std. error	Std. test statistic	Sig.	Adj. sig.
Higher education (University education) – secondary/vocational education	27.932	11.414	2.447	.014	.043
Higher education (University education) – Master's degree or doctoral degree	–50.242	13.350	–3.763	.000	.001
Secondary/vocational education – Master's degree or doctoral degree	–22.310	13.772	–1.620	.105	.316

Source: Author's research.

Table 13. Organizational commitment according to employees' education.

	Education	N	Mean rank
Organizational commitment	Secondary education/Vocational education	109	159.67
	Higher education (University Education)	130	131.74
	Master's degree or doctoral degree	65	181.98
	Total	304	

Source: Author's research.

Employees with higher education (university) reported the lowest level of organizational commitment ($M = 131.74$) followed by the employees with secondary/vocational education ($M = 159.67$), and employees with master's or doctoral degree ($M = 181.98$). These results do not confirm hypothesis 4.

4.6. Marital status and organizational commitment

The Shapiro–Wilk's test ($p > 0.05$) for all observed groups, as well as a visual inspection of their histograms, normal Q–Q plots and box plots showed that the organizational commitment was approximately normally distributed regarding to employees' marital status, with a skewness of 0.046 ($SE = 0.249$) and kurtosis of -0.629 ($SE = 0.493$) for single status, a skewness of -0.133 ($SE = 0.189$) and kurtosis of -0.380 ($SE = 0.376$) for those married, a skewness of -0.388 ($SE = 0.388$) and kurtosis of -0.298 ($SE = 0.759$) for those divorced and a skewness of 0.109 ($SE = 0.752$) and kurtosis of -0.875 ($SE = 1.481$) for widows/widowers.

The Levene's test of homogeneity of variances was not significant [$F(3,300) = 0.772$, $p = 0.511$] which means that variances were equal, or groups were not statistically significant different, so an additional precondition for one-way ANOVA was satisfied. The results of one-way ANOVA are presented in Table 14.

One-way ANOVA showed no significant statistical differences in organizational commitment regarding the employees' marital status [$F(3, 300) = .622$, $p > .05$]. This confirms hypothesis 5.

5. Discussion

This paper examined the relationship between employees' demographic characteristics and organizational commitment. The research showed that there are no differences in organizational commitment by employees' gender. Recent research has showed the

Table 14. One-way ANOVA – marital status and organizational commitment.

	Sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Between groups	1.320	3	.440	.622	.602
Within groups	212.425	300	.708		
Total	213.745	303			

Source: Author's research.

same results (Ajayi, 2017; Mahanta, 2012; Meyer et al., 2002). These results could have their origin in the increasing equality between women and men at work. It appears women are becoming more educated, more ambitions, more and more engaged in jobs that were predominantly male, so the differences between women and men at work are gradually disappearing as well as the differences in their organizational commitment.

Regarding age, the results demonstrated significant differences in organizational commitment by employees' age, which is in line with previous research (Affum-Osei et al., 2015; Allen & Meyer, 1993; Amangala, 2013; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Nifadkar & Dongre, 2014). This research results indicated that the young employees have a certain level of organizational commitment but a few years later, the level of their organizational commitment decreases, probably because of some situations that do not meet their expectations. Perhaps they experience so-called "reality shock" which negatively influences their organizational commitment. Therefore, in those years they reported lower levels of organizational commitment. This could be the breaking point for some employees and they leave the organization. Therefore, the "older" employees (above 40) reported greater organizational commitment. These are the employees who stayed in the organization, and probably they experienced promotion, higher salaries, emotional attachment, better status, organizational human resources investments, sense of obligation, and lack of opportunities especially in the older years, etc. As time passes, their level of organizational commitment additionally increases. Therefore, the oldest employees have the highest level of organizational commitment.

Differences in organizational commitment exist regarding the employees' tenure, which is confirmed by the results of this paper, as well as by the previous research (Amangala, 2013; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Newstrom, 2007). The results showed that the employees at the beginning of their career have greater organizational commitment, since they are usually young and enthusiastic, ready to work, to take advance of opportunities and they easily become attached to their organizations. After a while, their organizational commitment decreases. Perhaps they become aware that their expectations have not been met, they experience some problems related to work and their co-workers, they become ready for a job or career change. Some of them leave the organization. The employees who stay perhaps experience promotion, better status, and different organizational investments in their growth and development. Also over the years, their number of job opportunities outside of the organization decreases. Therefore, their organizational commitment grows. Consequently, the organizational commitment of employees with tenure of 21 and more years is the highest.

The results on the relationship between education and organizational commitment indicated the existence of differences in organizational commitment according to

employees' education. Comparing three groups of employees (completed secondary school/vocational education; higher education; masters' degree or doctorate), it was shown that employees with higher education have the lowest level of organizational commitment. Those employees probably have higher expectations and desires that are not met by their organizations. Therefore, they cannot develop higher organizational commitment contrary to the employees with lower education (secondary/vocational education), who maybe have lower expectations and ambitions as well as a smaller number of job opportunities; and the employees with master's or doctoral degree whose aspirations and aims are probably better fulfilled. Some other authors offer similar explanations of the relationship between education and organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Joiner & Bakalis, 2006; Khan et al., 2013; Mowday et al., 1982).

Organizational commitment does not differentiate depending on marital status. Previous research showed contradictory results on this matter. Nevertheless, the reason for this result could be explained by the universal need to realize own ambitions and to belong to some organization, no matter one's marital status, and on the other hand, by the growing opportunities that today's organizations offer their employees.

The theoretical framework of this paper suggests that the research implies mainly inconsistent results about the relationship between demographic factors and organizational commitment, which indicates the significant complexity of this relationship and insufficient knowledge about it. Additionally, although Croatian authors have explored different antecedents of organizational commitment, research about demographic characteristics as predictors of organizational commitment, is scarce. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature, especially in Croatia, and better comprehension of the relationship between employees' demographic characteristics and organizational commitment by providing comprehensive research into this relationship, not only by determining the existence of the differences in organizational commitment according to each demographic characteristic, but by deeply exploring those differences.

The results of this paper offer important insights for managers, employees and policy makers. Managers could use them for creating an inspiring working environment for organizational commitment improvement by reviewing existing HR practices and adopting them to employees' demographic differences. More concretely, the results suggested that there is no need to differentiate HR practice regarding organizational commitment improvements according to employees' gender and marital status. However, regarding the employees' age and tenure, companies should pay attention to employees in the 31 – 40 age group and to employees with 11–20 years of tenure because they have the lowest level of organizational commitment. Additionally, attention should also be on employees with a high level of education who also have the lowest level of organizational commitment. Managers should develop special HR policies in planning, rewarding, promotion, motivation, training and development in order to improve the organizational commitment of these groups of employees.

By the results of this paper, employees could improve the understanding of their attitudes, specific organizational commitment, and the changes they can feel regarding it. By that, they can more clearly address their needs towards company's management, and in mutual coordination improve the organizational commitment. The knowledge

gleaned by this paper could advise policymakers about the specifics of organizational commitment regarding different employees' demographic characteristics that they can incorporate into their practices for organizational commitment developments.

6. Conclusion

Since previous research showed inconsistent results about the relationship between employees' demographic characteristics and organizational commitment, the aim of this paper was to help to clarify this relationship. The majority of previous research explores the relation between employees' demographic characteristics and organizational commitment examining just the correlations between these two variables, or the existence of differences in organizational commitment within each demographic category (Akinyemi, 2014; Avci & Erdem, 2017; Jena, 2015; Joiner & Bakalis, 2006; Kwon & Banks, 2004; Mahanta, 2012). Few papers explored the origin of these differences.

Dwelling into these differences, this paper demonstrates that the level of organizational commitment varies according to different subcategories of each demographic characteristic. In addition, this paper explains the origin and possible reasons of differences in organizational commitment regarding the different subcategories of each demographic characteristic. The results of this paper are in line with the results of the papers that have dealt with the reasons of these differences (Ajayi, 2017; Aven et al., 1993; Mahanta, 2012; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002; Ngo & Tsang, 1998) regarding the gender (Khan & Zafar, 2013; Mowday et al., 1982; Newstrom, 2007) regarding the age (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Amangala, 2013; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Newstrom, 2007; Nifadkar & Dongre, 2014) regarding the tenure (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Joiner & Bakalis, 2006; Khan et al., 2013; Mowday et al., 1982) regarding the education (Avci & Erdem, 2017; Mahanta, 2012) regarding marital status. Therefore, this paper contributes to the formulation of some more general conclusions.

In the Croatian context, this paper contributes to the literature in the area of organizational commitment, where there is the lack of research about the relation between employees' demographic characteristics and organizational commitment. In addition, findings of this paper could contribute to the organizational practice in the field of human resource management. According to the results of this paper, companies could adapt their HR practices for each demographic category in order to improve organizational commitment.

However, the conclusions of this paper should be perceived within the research limitations. The main limitation of this research is the research sample, which is limited in size and scope and restricts conclusion generalizations. The number of companies (5) that have participated in the research, as well as the number of participants in each company (60) are relatively small. Moreover, number of respondents within each demographic subcategory is not the same, which limits the conclusions based on these comparisons. The scale of answers for demographic questions in the case of age, tenure and education could be broader. The broader scale could provide the results about additional specifics of each demographic characteristic in relation to organizational commitment.

Further research could separately analyse each dimension of organizational commitment (affective, continuance, normative) according to employees' demographic characteristics. Additionally, further research could examine demographic characteristics as moderators between some organizational antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment (such as leadership style, employee engagement, compensations, culture, etc.). That could provide a holistic model for organizational commitment observation.

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