Employees of a large service organization based in the Southwest were surveyed to determine if individual levels of organizational commitment were related positively to perceptions of organizational climate and of communication climate. The results of the study suggest that employees' perceptions of organizational climate and communication climate were correlated positively with the level of employees' organizational commitment. Specifically, multiple regression analysis indicated that organizational clarity, participation, and superior-subordinate communication accounted for 41% of the variance in organizational commitment, with participation and organizational clarity emerging as significant predictors of commitment. Tenure was included in the study as a moderating variable, using Buchanan's conceptualization of tenure stages: Stage 1 representing the first year of employment, Stage 2 representing Years 2 through 4, and Stage 3 representing Year 5 and beyond. Results varied by tenure stage.

ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AND COMMUNICATION CLIMATE
Predictors of Commitment to the Organization

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Organizational climate has been identified as a critical link between the members of an organization and the organization itself. Welsch and LaVan's (1981) research directly associated organizational climate with organizational commitment. Specifically, they found that five organizational climate variables (communication, decision making, leadership, motivation, and goal setting) were significant predictors of organizational commitment.

Recently, communication climate has been considered separately from the larger context of organizational climate. Communication climate is distinguished from organizational climate in that

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it "includes only communicative phenomena, e.g., judgments concerning such things as receptivity of management to employees or the accuracy of information being disseminated in the organization" (Dillard, Wigand, & Boster, 1986, p. 87). A recent study by Trombetta and Rogers (1988) found support for the relationship between communication climate and organizational commitment. They tested the relationship between three communication climate variables (participation in decision making, communication openness, and information adequacy) and organizational commitment. Information adequacy emerged as a significant predictor of commitment.

The relationships between organizational climate, communication climate, and organizational commitment may be moderated by other variables. Buchanan (1974), for example, argues that members' perceptions of their organizational experiences vary with the length of time they have been employed by an organization (i.e., tenure). In his study of the socialization of managers, Buchanan found that not only did managers' perceptions of organizational experiences vary with tenure, but the specific experiences that predict organizational commitment also varied with tenure.

Although evidence is available of the relationship between organizational climate and organizational commitment and of the relationship between communication climate and organizational commitment, research that tests the relationship of both climate variables operating together as predictors of organizational commitment seemingly has not been undertaken.[1] In addition, tenure has not been used as a moderating variable in studies of climate. The purpose of the current study, therefore, was (a) to provide further evidence that organizational climate is positively related to organizational commitment, (b) to provide further evidence that communication climate is positively related to organizational commitment, and (c) to provide further evidence that the relationship between organizational climate, communication climate, and organizational commitment is moderated by tenure.

FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT

The importance of organizational commitment lies in its linkage with several significant organizational factors, such as turnover, absenteeism, and performance (see Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982, for a review of this literature). Commitment to the organization has been viewed primarily from two perspectives: (a) behaviorally oriented and externally motivated (e.g., pension fund; Becker, 1960) and (b) attitudinally oriented and internally motivated (e.g., internalization of organization's goals and values; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). This study focuses on the attitudinal form of organizational commitment, because it is associated with a longer lasting relationship that is suited well to the moderating variable of interest in the present study (i.e., tenure).

Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) noted that commitment of an attitudinal nature is characterized by at least three related factors: "(1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, (2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and (3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization" (p. 226). These three elements are likely to exist in new employees as well as in employees who have established lengthy tenure with the organization. For the new employee, the elements may exist merely because of a propensity to commit to the organization during the early stages of employment. For the tenured employee, the elements may exist from the psychological bonds to the organization that have formed over time or, perhaps, from cognitive dissonance (Brickman, Janoff-Bulman, & Rabinowitz, 1987).

ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

The importance of organizational climate is apparent. It is a link between the individual and the organization (Falcione, Sussman, & Herden, 1987; Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989; Poole, 1985; Schneider, 1983a, 1983b), because "it represents members' generalized beliefs

and attitudes about the organization" (Poole & McPhee, 1983, p. 196). If these beliefs and attitudes about the organization are favorable, it may then follow that the individual will be committed to the organization. Welsch and LaVan's (1981) research supports this view.

Although the importance of organizational climate has been established, its conceptualization is equivocal. Tagiuri (1968), for example, argues,

> Climate is the relatively enduring quality of the total environment that (a) is experienced by the occupants, (b) influences their behavior, and (c) can be described in terms of the values of a particular set of characteristics (or attributes) of the environment. (p. 25)

Tagiuri views climate as a property of the organization itself, identifiable by particular characteristics and interpreted by organizational members, that in turn "affects their attitudes and motivation" (p. 27).

Pritchard and Karasick (1973) take a different view of climate, seeing it as the result of behavior of organizational members:

> Organizational climate is a relatively enduring quality of an organization's internal environment distinguishing it from other organizations; (a) which results from the behavior and policies of members of organizations, especially top management; (b) which is perceived by members of the organization; (c) which serves as a basis for interpreting the situation; and (d) acts as a source of pressure for directing activity. (p. 126)

Recently, Ashforth (1985) argued that climate is a "joint property of both the organization and the individual" (p. 838). In other words, climate is an outcome of the interaction between organizational attributes and behavior of individuals. Taylor and Bowers (1972) dispute the notion that organizational climate refers to the "interaction between environmental and personal variables" (p. 62) or that it is the result of behavior of organizational members. Instead, they support Tagiuri's (1968) argument that organizational climate refers to a property of the organization itself that can be characterized by specific dimensions. They offer six such dimensions, which are described by Pace (1983) as (a) *human resource primacy*—the

extent to which the organization considers its employees to be a valuable resource within the organization; (b) *communication flow* — the extent to which information flows effectively upward, downward, and laterally in the organization; (c) *motivational practices* — the degree to which the work conditions and relationships in the environment are generally encouraging or discouraging in accomplishing tasks; (d) *decision-making practices* — the manner in which decisions are made: whether they are made effectively, at the right levels, and based on all available information; (e) *technological readiness* — the degree to which members consider the materials, procedures, and equipment to be up-to-date and well maintained; and (f) *lower-level influence* (also known as upward influence) — the extent to which employees feel that they have some influence over what happens in their departments. Numerous studies relate these dimensions with organizational outcomes (Kaczka & Kirk, 1967; Likert, 1961, 1967) and specifically with commitment-related outcomes, such as turnover (Kushell, 1979) and customers' and employees' intentions to leave an organization (Schneider & Bowen, 1985).

Taylor and Bowers's (1972) six dimensions of organizational climate are of particular interest in this study, and the research on these dimensions suggests one general hypothesis of the relationship between organizational climate and organizational commitment:

Hypothesis 1: The more favorable the perceived organizational climate, the higher the level of organizational commitment of employees.

COMMUNICATION CLIMATE

By virtue of being the medium by which organizational work is accomplished, communication is related to organizational climate. Pace (1983) alludes that communication climate is a subset of organizational climate by stating that the overall organizational climate consists of members' perceptions of dimensions of organizational life, including "information flow (i.e., perception of flow as adequate or inadequate) and some practices involving communication" (p. 126). He goes on to acknowledge, however, that

communication climate represents a separate dimension, apart from organizational climate, by stating that "some perceptions directly involve the climate in which communicating occurs. This is called the *organizational communication climate*" (p. 126). Poole (1985) also argues that as a distinct organizational practice, communication is expected to represent its own climate—communication climate—separate and apart from other climates in the organizational environment, such as motivational climate, achievement climate, and so on.

A study by Welsch and LaVan (1981) also supports the notion of communication climate as separate and apart from organizational climate. They found that five organizational climate variables (communication, decision making, leadership, motivation, and goal setting) were significantly and positively related to organizational commitment. The relationship between the communication variables (acceptance, accuracy, and all directional flow), however, was stronger than other climate variables, accounting for 38% of the variance in commitment. It is worthwhile to note here that although communication climate is conceptualized apart from organizational climate, "it appears that much of the research on communication climate shares considerable variance with organizational climate" (Falcione, Sussman, & Herden, 1987, p. 203).

Dennis (1974) defines communication climate as

> a subjectively experienced quality of the internal environment of an organization: the concept embraces a general cluster of inferred predispositions identifiable through reports of members' perceptions of messages and message-related events occurring in the organization. (p. 29)

Dennis argues that five factors are responsible for perceptions of communication climate. As listed in O'Connell (1979), these factors are superior-subordinate communication, quality of information, superior openness/candor, opportunities for upward communication, and reliability of information.

As mentioned earlier, Welsch and LaVan (1981) found that the communication variables of acceptance, accuracy, and all directional flow were positively related to organizational commitment. Accuracy is similar in nature to Dennis's (1974) factors of quality

of information and reliability of information, whereas all directional flow is similar in nature to Dennis's factors of superior-subordinate communication and opportunities for upward communication. Welsch and LaVan's findings, therefore, lend support to Dennis's suggested dimensions of communication climate.

Four of the five factors suggested by Dennis (1974) as responsible for perceptions of communication climate (superior-subordinate communication, quality of information, opportunities for upward communication, and reliability of information)[2] are of interest in the present study and form the basis for the following general hypothesis of the relationship between communication climate and organizational commitment:

Hypothesis 2: The more favorable the perceived communication climate, the higher the level of organizational commitment by employees.

TENURE

It appears that commitment, in its most stable form, grows slowly (Mowday et al., 1979; Werbel & Gould, 1984). The longer employees are with an organization, the more time there is to evaluate the relationship. Buchanan (1974) argues that the influence of organizational experiences varies with the length of time individuals have been employed. Subsequently, he argues that tenure moderates the relationship between organizational experiences and organizational commitment. Buchanan surveyed 279 business and government managers with regard to the relationship of 13 organizational experiences and organizational commitment. He found that for managers with up to 1 year of tenure, organizational commitment was predicted by group attitudes toward the organization and by the perception of the job as challenging. For managers with tenure of 2 through 4 years, organizational commitment was predicted by self-image reinforcement and personal importance. Finally, for those managers with tenure of 5 years or more, organizational commitment was predicted by group attitudes toward the organization, expectation realization, and work commitment norms.

Building on Buchanan's (1974) findings (i.e., the relationship between organizational experience, tenure, and organizational

commitment), tenure should moderate the relationship between organizational climate and communication climate and organizational commitment. For example, individuals who have been with the organization for less than 1 year would be expected to have less need for participation in decision making and greater need for accuracy of information than individuals who have been with the organization longer than 1 year. As noted earlier, both decision making and accuracy of information have been positively linked to organizational commitment (Welsch & LaVan, 1981). Tenure is, therefore, of interest in this study as a moderating variable and forms the basis for the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3: Tenure moderates the relationship between organizational climate and organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 4: Tenure moderates the relationship between communication climate and organizational commitment.

METHODOLOGY

RESPONDENTS

Participants in the study were employees of a large southwest service organization that has three locations. All locations are represented in the study. Surveys were distributed to all 370 employees; 250 (68%) employees completed and returned the survey. Of those who completed the survey, 237 indicated gender: 99 males and 138 females. In addition, 224 respondents indicated tenure with the company. The average length of employment was 4.6 years, the median 3.9 years, and the mode 2.0 years.

The work force in this organization is predominantly salaried workers (33%) and hourly workers (52%), with the remainder of the employees being paid by commission or some other unreported method. A majority of the respondents (68%) reported they have no supervisory responsibilities, 11% reported they have some supervisory responsibilities, and 14% reported they are part of middle or top management and consequently also have varied supervisory

responsibilities. The remaining 7% did not indicate supervisory or nonsupervisory status.[3]

PROCEDURES

An introductory letter was sent to all employees by the researcher one week before the survey. The letter explained the research project and guaranteed anonymity of responses. One week later the questionnaires were mailed to all employees through the organization's interoffice mail system. Accompanying each questionnaire was a stamped envelope preaddressed to the researcher. Employees were given instructions for completing the survey in a cover letter accompanying the questionnaire, and they were also advised that by using the preaddressed envelope to return completed questionnaires, they could ensure their anonymity. A deadline for response was also stated in the cover letter. One week after the questionnaires were mailed, a follow-up letter was mailed to all employees reminding them of the deadline for returning completed questionnaires. Upon expiration of the deadline, verified by postmark, responses were coded and analyzed.

MEASUREMENT

All questionnaire items were taken from existing scales. A description of the original scales used is presented first. Also included is a discussion of factor analysis of the questionnaire items that was conducted to guard against common method variance in the concepts under study.

Organizational commitment. Organizational commitment was measured by the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Porter et al. (1974). Organizational commitment is defined as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Mowday et al., 1979, p. 226). The OCQ taps the three related factors of this definition, which are identified by Mowday and his associates as "(1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals

and values; (2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization" (p. 226). The 15-item version of the OCQ, which contains 6 negatively stated items, was chosen for this study. A 5-point Likert-type response scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, indicating low commitment; 5 = *strongly agree*, indicating high commitment) was used to measure responses.

Mowday et al. (1979) interpret the reliability and validity of the OCQ from the results of its administration to over 2,500 respondents working in a wide variety of jobs across nine different organizations. High internal consistency is reported, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .82 to .93. Mowday et al. also cite evidence of convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity.

Organizational climate. Organizational climate was measured with 22 items selected from the Organizational Climate measure developed by Taylor and Bowers (1972). Taylor and Bowers (1972) drew from Likert's (1967) list of basic organizational processes in developing their questionnaire. Specifically, they focused on the character of motivational forces, communication processes, coordination processes, decision-making and goal-setting practices, and control and influence processes. The 22 items selected for the present study are representative of the previously mentioned organizational processes around which Taylor and Bowers designed their questionnaire. A 5-point Likert-type response scale (1 = *to very little extent*; 5 = *to very great extent*) was used to measure responses to all but 4 of the items. These 4 items had descriptive response categories.

As a result of extensive factor analysis, Taylor and Bowers (1972) report four distinct dimensions of their scale: (a) human resource primacy, (b) communication flow, (c) motivational conditions, and (d) decision-making practices. Additionally, they identify two dimensions as "tentative" and in need of further testing: technological readiness and lower-level influence. Their reported internal reliabilities for the composite indices is as follows: (a) human resource primacy, .80 to .90; (b) communication flow, .78 to .84; (c) motivational conditions, .79 to .80; (d) decision-making prac-

tices, .79 to .87; (e) technological readiness, .58 to .80; and (f) lower-level influence, .70.

Communication climate. Communication climate was measured with 20 items selected from the Communication Climate Scale developed by Dennis (1974) and listed in O'Connell (1979). Four of the five dimensions reported by Dennis were used: (a) superior-subordinate communication, (b) quality and accuracy of downward information, (c) upward communication, and (d) perception of reliability. A 5-point Likert-type response scale (1 = *to a very little extent*, 5 = *to a very great extent*) was used to measure responses. Reliabilities for the four dimensions were reported by Lockhart (1987) as .94, .88, .89, and .83, respectively.

Tenure. Tenure was measured with a single item requesting that respondents indicate years and months of employment with the organization.

FACTOR ANALYSIS

Several of the questionnaire items across the various measures were similar in nature. To guard against common method variance, therefore, exploratory factor analysis was conducted using SPSS^{x}. All items measuring organizational commitment, organizational climate, and communication climate were included in the factor analysis. No specific factor solution was specified and a four-factor solution emerged.[4]

Fourteen of the 15 items from the OCQ loaded on Factor 1 (see Table 1). The eigenvalue for the factor was 20.303, and it accounted for 36% of the variance. Internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the 14 OCQ items identified by the factor analysis in this study was .92.

Seven of the 20 items selected from Dennis's (1974) Communication Climate Scale had acceptable loadings on Factor 2. The items involve communication between superiors and subordinates, and therefore, the factor is referred to hereafter as superior-subordinate communication (see Table 1). These 7 items represent items originally identified by Dennis (1974) to measure superior-subordinate

TABLE 1: Exploratory Factor Analysis of Items Measuring Organizational Commitment, Superior-Subordinate Communication, Organizational Clarity, and Participation: Four-Factor Solution[a]

Items	*Factor Loadings*			
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*
1. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.	.726[b]	.091	.176	.305
2. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	.722	.035	.232	.276
3. Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part.	−.718	−.124	−.111	−.032
4. For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.	.715	.025	.312	.126
5. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.	.664	.151	.064	.148
6. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization.	−.641	−.172	−.098	.046
7. I really care about the fate of this organization.	.634	.144	.282	.231
8. I feel very little loyalty to this organization.	−.617	−.146	−.052	−.172
9. There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely.	−.590	−.182	−.056	−.246
10. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	.581	.209	.377	.138
11. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.	.565	.222	.069	.336
12. I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar.	−.545	−.140	.112	.100
13. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.	.488	.087	.167	.281
14. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	.471	−.066	.231	−.067
15. To what extent does your superior listen to you when you tell him/her about things that are bothering you?	.130	.843	.061	.222
16. To what extent does your superior make you feel free to talk with him/her?	.174	.840	.117	.142
17. To what extent does your superior really understand your job problems?	.106	.828	.200	.075
18. To what extent does your superior really understand you?	.210	.826	.130	.137
19. To what extent does your superior encourage you to let him/her know when things are going wrong on the job?	.056	.814	.075	.146

TABLE 1: Continued

Items	*Factor Loadings*			
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*
20. To what extent does your superior make you feel that things you tell him/her are really important?	.102	*.804*	.136	.266
21. To what extent does your superior make it easy for you to do your best work?	.173	*.776*	.261	.038
22. How much does this organization try to improve working conditions?	.293	.205	*.714*	.092
23. To what extent is this organization generally quick to use improved work methods?	.149	.187	*.694*	.168
24. To what extent do different units or departments plan together and coordinate their efforts?	.085	.113	*.655*	.031
25. To what extent are the equipment and resources you have to do your work with adequate, efficient, and well maintained?	.106	.159	*.603*	.270
26. To what extent are work activities sensibly organized at this organization?	.295	.198	*.559*	.180
27. How adequate for your needs is the amount of information you get about what is going on in other departments?	.044	.053	*.540*	.303
28. People at all levels of an organization usually have know-how that could be of use to decision makers. To what extent is information widely shared in this organization, so that those who make decisions have access to all available know-how?	.128	.057	*.494*	.260
29. To what extent does this organization have clear-cut, reasonable goals and objectives?	.286	.182	*.413*	.015
30. To what extent do you believe your views have real influence in your organization?	.242	.147	.249	*.735*
31. To what extent can you expect that recommendations you make will be heard and seriously considered?	.243	.183	.275	*.712*
32. To what extent does your superior let you participate in the planning of your own work?	.113	.374	.064	*.704*
33. To what extent does your opinion make a difference in the day-to-day decisions that affect your job?	.175	.231	.154	*.647*
34. To what extent are members of your work group able to establish their own goals and objectives?	.219	.302	.176	*.594*
35. To what extent do you think that information received from your top management is reliable?	.259	–.010	.313	*.587*

(continued)

TABLE 1: Continued

Items	*Factor Loadings*			
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*
36. To what extent do you think that information received from your superior is really reliable?	.175	.364	.269	*.574*
37. To what extent are you satisfied with explanations you get from top management about why things are done as they are?	.260	.014	.313	*.471*
Eigenvalue	20.303	3.992	3.233	2.116
Percentage of variance	35.600	7.000	5.700	3.700

a. Only those items that loaded on a factor are shown in the table.
b. Italics indicate items used to define factors.

communication. The eigenvalue for the factor was 3.992, and it accounted for 7% of the variance. Internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for the superior-subordinate communication scale in the present study was .94.

Eight of the 22 items selected from Taylor and Bowers's (1972) organizational climate measure had acceptable loadings on Factor 3. The items focus on the clarity of information, and therefore, the factor is referred to hereafter as organizational clarity (see Table 1). The eigenvalue for the factor was 3.233, and it accounted for 6% of the variance. The 8-item organizational clarity scale had an internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of .87 in this study.

Eight of the 20 items selected from Dennis's (1974) Communication Climate Scale had acceptable loadings on Factor 4. The 8 items focus on employees' participation in the organization, and therefore, the factor is referred to hereafter as participation (see Table 1). The eigenvalue for the factor was 2.116, and it accounted for 4% of the variance. Internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for the participation scale in this study was .91.

RESULTS

Pearson correlation coefficients for the dependent and independent variables appear in Table 2. Forced-entry multiple regression

TABLE 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficients[a]

Variable	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
1. Organizational commitment	1.000	.404	.577	.591
2. Superior-subordinate communication		1.000	.438	.506
3. Organizational clarity			1.000	.660
4. Participation				1.000

a. All correlations are significant, $p < .01$.

TABLE 3: Summary of Forced-Entry Multiple Regression Analysis—Organizational Commitment

Variable	b	SE *of* b	*Beta*	*Tolerance*	t	p
Participation	.527	.107	.336	.506	4.910	.000
Superior-subordinate communication	.155	.092	.096	.724	1.680	.094
Organizational clarity	.574	.120	.314	.550	4.783	.000

was performed to test the hypotheses. In addition, separate regression analyses were conducted using tenure as a moderating variable.

Results of multiple regression analysis indicated that the independent variables (organizational clarity, superior-subordinate communication, and participation) accounted for 41% of the variance in commitment ($R = .647$, $R^2 = .418$, adjusted $R^2 = .411$; $F[3, 246] = 58.987$, $p < .001$). Of the independent variables, two were significant predictors of organizational commitment: participation ($b = .527$, Beta = .336, $t = 4.910$, $p < .001$); and organizational clarity ($b = .574$, Beta = .314, $t = 4.783$, $p < .001$). Tolerances for all variables were acceptable, suggesting no multicollinearity (see Table 3).

Buchanan's (1974) three tenure stages were employed in this study to determine if tenure moderates the relationship between organizational commitment and the three independent variables. Stage 1 represents the first year of employment, Stage 2 represents Years 2 through 4 of employment, and Stage 3 represents Years 5 and beyond of employment with the organization.

TABLE 4: Summary of Forced-Entry Multiple Regression Analysis – Organizational Commitment for Tenure Stage 1

Variable	b	SE *of* b	*Beta*	*Tolerance*	t	p
Participation	.034	.430	.018	.521	.078	.939
Superior-subordinate communication	.124	.314	.082	.668	.394	.699
Organizational clarity	1.323	.491	.668	.475	2.695	.016

TABLE 5: Summary of Forced-Entry Multiple Regression Analysis – Organizational Commitment for Tenure Stage 2

Variable	b	SE *of* b	*Beta*	*Tolerance*	t	p
Participation	.804	.185	.463	.557	4.353	.000
Superior-subordinate communication	.077	.154	.046	.740	.500	.618
Organizational clarity	.384	.198	.190	.655	1.942	.055

For those respondents in Stage 1 of tenure, the three independent variables accounted for 45% of the variance in organizational commitment ($R = .730$, $R^2 = .533$, adjusted $R^2 = .445$; $F[3, 16] = 6.080$, $p < .01$). Only one independent variable, however, emerged as a significant predictor of organizational commitment: organizational clarity ($b = 1.323$, Beta = .668, $t = 2.695$, $p < .05$). Tolerances for all variables were acceptable, suggesting no multicollinearity (see Table 4).

For those respondents in Stage 2 of tenure, the three independent variables accounted for 36% of the variance ($R = .619$, $R^2 = .383$, adjusted $R^2 = .364$; $F[3, 98] = 20.278$, $p < .001$). Only one independent variable, however, emerged as a significant predictor of organizational commitment in Stage 2 of tenure: participation ($b = .804$, Beta = .463, $t = 4.353$, $p < .001$).[5] Tolerances for all variables were acceptable, suggesting no multicollinearity (see Table 5).

Finally, for those respondents in Stage 3 of tenure, the three independent variables accounted for 50% of the variance in commitment ($R = .716$, $R^2 = .513$, adjusted $R^2 = .498$; $F[3, 98] = 34.365$, $p < .001$). Two independent variables emerged as significant predictors of organizational commitment in Stage 3 of tenure: partic-

TABLE 6: Summary of Forced-Entry Multiple Regression Analysis – Organizational Commitment for Tenure Stage 3

Variable	b	SE *of* b	*Beta*	*Tolerance*	t	p
Participation	.549	.164	.381	.383	3.350	.001
Superior-subordinate communication	.145	.143	.091	.623	1.014	.313
Organizational clarity	.561	.194	.319	.411	2.897	.005

ipation ($b = .549$, Beta = .382, $t = 3.350$, $p < .001$) and organizational clarity ($b = .561$, Beta = .319, $t = 2.897$, $p < .01$). Tolerances for all variables were acceptable, suggesting no multicollinearity (see Table 6).[6]

Of the three independent variables, organizational clarity emerged as the most consistent predictor of organizational commitment throughout the three tenure stages. At Stages 1 and 3 it emerged as a significant predictor, and at Stage 2 it was quite close to significant ($p = .055$). Further analysis was performed to test whether there were differences in the magnitude of unstandardized regression weights (i.e., b) for the organizational clarity variable across sample subgroups. Tests of significance of the differences between weights observed in different samples were completed. In each case, there were no significant differences from sample group to sample group.[7]

DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1 (the more favorable the perceived organizational climate, the higher the level of organizational commitment of employees) received strong support. Organizational clarity emerged as a predictor of commitment in the overall regression analysis. These results support Meyer's (1968) contention that organizational clarity is a dimension of organizational climate.

Hypothesis 2 (the more favorable the perceived communication climate, the higher the level of organizational commitment of employees) also received support. Participation, one dimension of

communication climate, emerged as a predictor of commitment in the overall regression analysis. Numerous studies have found a positive relationship between organizational commitment and participation in decision making (Alutto & Acito, 1974; Hall, 1977; Ivancevich, 1979; Patchen, 1970; Welsch & LaVan, 1981). In addition, Hall and Schneider (1972) report a positive relationship between organizational commitment and participation in goal setting.

Contrary to previous research that established a relationship between organizational commitment and superior-subordinate communication (Dennis, 1975), superior-subordinate communication did not emerge as a predictor of organizational commitment in the overall regression analysis. These findings may be explained in part by the specific nature of the items used to measure superior-subordinate communication in this study as they relate to previous research. For example, in an earlier study (Guzley, 1989) I examined the relationship between perceived supervisory interaction involvement and organizational commitment. Interaction involvement has been defined as "the extent to which an individual participates with another in conversation" (Cegala, 1981, p. 229). It was measured by three dimensions identified by Cegala and colleagues (Cegala, 1981; Cegala, Savage, Brunner, & Conrad, 1982) as (a) attentiveness, (b) perceptiveness, and (c) responsiveness. I found that attentiveness and perceptiveness were predictors of employees' level of organizational commitment. Responsiveness, however, did not emerge as a predictor of commitment. In the current study several of the items used to measure superior-subordinate communication relate to the perceived responsiveness of the superior. It appears that although particular dimensions of superior-subordinate communication lend themselves to a positive relationship with organizational commitment, other dimensions do not.

Hypothesis 3 (tenure moderates the relationship between organizational climate and organizational commitment) also received support in the current study. Organizational clarity emerged as a significant predictor of organizational commitment for employees in Stages 1 and 3 of tenure. One possible explanation for why organizational clarity did not emerge as a significant predictor of commitment for employees at Stage 2 may be found in Buchanan's

(1974) description of this stage. He states that employees at Stage 2 of tenure have not yet invested themselves completely in the organization and have probably focused their attention instead on achievement and recognition.

Finally, Hypothesis 4 (tenure moderates the relationship between communication climate and organizational commitment) received support in the current study. Participation emerged as a significant predictor of commitment for employees in Stages 2 and 3 of tenure. A possible explanation why participation did not emerge as a predictor of commitment at Stage 1 is that at this early stage in employees' careers with an organization, the primary focus is on learning the basics of one's job. Participating in decision making or goal setting may not be an issue for new employees until they feel comfortable doing their assigned job, have a better sense of what is expected of them, know how the organization operates, and feel accepted by the organization. In other words, participation may become a more salient issue once employees feel a greater sense of control over their job situation. Once a sense of control and acceptance has been established, employees' need to feel that their communication has influence may gain importance. In fact, without a sense of such influence employees may become dissatisfied and leave the organization (Albrecht, 1988); that is, their organizational commitment is likely to decrease.

The findings of this study enhance what is known in general about the relationship between organizational climate, communication climate, and organizational commitment. There is, however, other specific value to be gained from the findings that bears mentioning. Changes in normal organizational conditions 3 months prior to the distribution of the survey (i.e., layoffs and buy out) could be considered a limitation of the current study. The changes that occurred represent stressful events that are likely to dramatically increase employees' uncertainty about the future and negatively affect their level of commitment to the organization. On the other hand, tests of those variables that affect organizational commitment during times of change are seen infrequently and are needed, given the frequency of takeovers, mergers, and the like in the business community today (Larkey, 1990).

The results of this study suggest that organizational clarity and participation are predictors of organizational commitment, perhaps particularly during times of change in the organization. It appears that when changes are taking place in the organization, employees will maintain their commitment to the organization if they sense some form of clarity or orderliness exists for work activities, goals, objectives, and the like. The importance of that clarity in relation to employees' commitment to the organization, however, varies with tenure. Employees apparently also will maintain their commitment to the organization if they are allowed to participate in making recommendations and in decision making, and if they perceive that management shares accurate information with them. The strength of these relationships also varies with the tenure of employees. These findings represent a foundation for future research exploring the predictors of organizational commitment both under normal conditions and during times of change in the organization.

The current study focused on communication climate primarily from the perspective of vertical communication. The importance of communication networks, however, as a dimension of communication climate and subsequent predictor of organizational commitment cannot be overlooked. For example, Eisenberg, Monge, and Miller (1983) found that job involvement and communication network involvement interacted as predictors of organizational commitment.

To conclude, the results of the current study indicate that organizational clarity as an aspect of organizational climate and participation as an aspect of communication climate are significant predictors of employees' level of commitment to the organization. These results held to varying degrees across employees' length of tenure with the organization. Further research is needed to establish the generalizability of these findings.

NOTES

1. Although Welsch and LaVan (1981) included communication variables (i.e., acceptance, accuracy, and all-directional flow) in their study of the relationship between organi-

zational climate and organizational commitment, the communication variables were considered a dimension of organizational climate.

2. The questions in Dennis's (1974) Factor 3 (superior openness/candor) relate to superiors' perceptions of subordinates. Because the majority of the sample for this study were nonsupervisors, this factor was omitted. This condition led to the rewording of one question in Factor 5.

3. At the same time of survey distribution, the organization studied had recently undergone a series of traumatic events. Within 3 months of the distribution of the survey, employees had experienced a leveraged buy out and layoffs. Although organizational change was not the intended focus of this study, it is considered an important factor in interpreting the results.

4. Factor analysis (using the absolute eigenvalue) revealed a total of nine factors, but only four factors had more than two items with acceptable loadings on a single factor. In general, items loading above .40 on a single factor and with a .20 difference from other loadings were used to define items as loading on a factor. Exceptions were made for two items that did not have a .20 difference from other loadings (see Items 28 and 36 on Table 1). Both items were included in their respective factors because they conceptually fit the factor with the strongest loading.

5. The strength of organizational clarity as a predictor of commitment at Stage 2 of tenure was quite close to significant (p = .055), indicating that it also deserves recognition as a predictor of commitment.

6. Although gender was not a variable of interest in the current study, multiple regression analyses were conducted controlling for gender to see if differences existed between males and females. For males, the three independent variables accounted for 35% of the variance in commitment (R = .608, R^2 = .370, adjusted R^2 = .349; F[3, 93] = 18.191, $p < .001$). Participation (b = .743, Beta = .440, t = 4.302, $p < .001$) and organizational clarity (b = .419, Beta = .223, t = 2.229, $p < .05$) emerged as significant predictors. For females, the three independent variables accounted for 45% of the variance in commitment (R = .681, R^2 = .464, adjusted R^2 = .451; F[3, 130] = 37.465, $p < .001$). Once again, participation (b = .519, Beta = .324, t = 3.293, $p < .001$) and organizational clarity (b = .633, Beta = .344, t = 3.737, $p < .001$) emerged as significant predictors.

7. Test statistics were computed using the formula presented by Cohen and Cohen (1983) for contrasting unstandardized regression weights from different samples (see pp. 55-56). Given that this comparison involved the use of three sample groups, the formula was adapted for unequal sample sizes and from use of ts with pooled standard deviation estimates computed from standard errors of regression weights to Fs computed with pooled variance estimates similarly computed. For the unstandardized regression weights, the observed F value was less than 1 ($p > .05$), with 2 and 221 degrees of freedom.

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