



Type of contract in “Mondragon Humanity at work”: Ownership plans and their effect on attitudes and behaviors

A thesis on different types of contracts, perceived participation in decision making and the effects on affective commitment and extra effort

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Abstract

Different types of contracts would have different effects on behaviors and attitudes showed by employees. Although this reasoning seems valid, research on both behavioral and attitudinal outcomes is limited. Besides, different theories exist on whether employee ownership itself generates these favorable attitudes and behaviors or that the increase in participation in decision making generates these attitudes and behaviors. The purpose of this study is to examine whether co-owner workers engage in more extra effort mediated by affective commitment and if this relationship is moderated by the perception of participation in decision making compared with non-owner workers. Questionnaire data were gathered among 6091 respondents from a supermarket chain within “Mondragon Humanity at work”, a cooperative in the Basque region of Spain. Regression analysis was used in order to test hypotheses. Analyses revealed that affective commitment mediated the relationship between type of contract and extra effort. However, co-owner workers did not show more extra effort compared with non-owner workers. Furthermore, the relation between perception of participation in decision making and extra effort was mediated by affective commitment. Finally, results did not support the moderating and conditional effect from the perception of participation in decision making on the relationship between type of contract and affective commitment. These findings provide arguments for the dilemma cooperation’s deal with regarding more flexibility and hiring more non-owner workers or holding on to their democratic and participatory principles.

Key words: Type of Contract, Co-owner Workers, Non-owner Workers, Affective Commitment, Extra Effort, Perception of Participation in Decision Making

Introduction

For many years, the interest of researchers has been drawn to the success of “Mondragon Humanity at work”. This cooperative in the Basque region of Spain is a counterexample for the arguments that cooperatives are not able to accomplish long term growth or survival (Whyte, 1995). Its success has been founded on certain principles and the unique use of participatory methods in management like participation in decision making (Forcadell, 2005). According to Kasmir (1996) “The Myth of Mondragón” is a story in which worker ownership offers workers equality, democracy and job satisfaction. However, due to the globalization of the economy and the need to stay competitive with other firms, “Mondragon Humanity at work” is being pushed to hire more temporary workers which are non-owner workers. These temporary contracts increased the flexibility of the cooperative, but at the same time caused more employees to be in employment situations with little certainty (Flecha and Santa Cruz, 2011). Furthermore, there exists some tension between this flexibility on the one hand and on the other hand the principle of a democracy.

According to Agirre (2001) the success of “Mondragon Humanity at work” is largely based on one of the main idiosyncratic elements of a cooperative, namely the principle of a democratic organization. Co-owners control the organization and have the opportunity to participate in defining policies and decision making. Every co-owner has equal voting rights according to the “one man, one vote” principle. One could argue that the fact of being a co-owner of “Mondragon Humanity at work” offers certain benefits regarding participation in decision making in comparison with non-owner workers which have temporary or fixed contracts and no ownership privileges in the company.

However, a study of Kasmir (1996) concluded that the perception of participation in decision making for “Mondragon Humanity at work” co-owners is not as positive as one would think. He argued that workers’ feelings are often not considered or different in comparison with the feelings and experiences of managers’. Yet, most commonly these opinions and views from managers are described in literature (Kasmir, 1996). He also argued that the co-owners in practice do not have the proper knowledge or time to effectively participate in decision making. This is an interesting phenomenon to research, which is also in line with the study of Kuvaas (2003) that supports the notion that ownership could have a motivating effect on employees, but that this effect depends on how employees perceive the formal ownership plan which includes participation in decision making. Empirical evidence from Pierce, Rubinfeld and Morgan (1991) showed as well that the degree to which ownership generates behavioral effects depends on how the employees evaluate and perceive the ownership arrangements. The study of Kuvaas (2003) considered the perception of financial participation in relationship with the motivating effect that ownership could have. Financial participation is one of the two forms of employee participation (Ben-Ner and Jones, 1995). Control, which is linked to participation in decision making, is the second form of employee participation.

Thus, financial participation has already been examined as a conditional variable for the motivating effect of employee ownership and therefore this study focuses on the perception of participation in decision making.

Considering this motivating effect of employee ownership, it is suggested that ownership causes three effects: i) favorable attitudes towards the organization; ii) which in turn will lead to positive behavioral changes like extra effort; iii) which will eventually influence the performance of the organization (Pendleton, Wilson and Wright, 1998). Because this concept is difficult to test, most ownership research only considered the ownership-attitude linkage (Kuvaas, 2003). However, this study will consider the ownership-attitude linkage as well as the ownership-behavior linkage. Research of Kuvaas (2003) stated that ownership increases commitment because a long term common interest is established with the owner. Furthermore, employee ownership changes behavior by means of extra effort mediated by affective commitment.

Models underlying these theories are the intrinsic satisfaction model and the instrumental satisfaction model (Klein, 1987). The intrinsic satisfaction model suggests that the very fact of ownership itself increases the commitment of employees towards the company. According to this model, positive outcomes are the result of intrinsic feelings about ownership itself and not factors that have to do with organizational context or the ownership plan. The instrumental satisfaction model suggests that it is not ownership in itself, but the increase in participation in decision making that affects the attitudes and behaviors of the employees. Therefore the perception of participation in decision making is seen as a conditional variable in this study.

This study has both scientific and practical relevance and importance. The globalization and economic crisis brings challenges to remain competitive for “Mondragon Humanity at work” as well. Hiring more temporary and non-owner workers would provide the cooperative with some flexibility. However, this means that they will have to give in on their historical cooperative principles (Errasti, Heras, Bakaikoa and Elgoibar, 2003). This study provides opportunities to investigate the effects of ownership versus non-ownership within one organization. Outcomes provide arguments for the hiring process in cooperatives. Furthermore, up to now, few studies about ownership arrangements have taken into account perceived ownership in the minds of the employees. Therefore, this research provides insights in the effects of the perception of participation in decision making. Beside this scientific relevance, this study investigates both ownership-attitude linkage as well as ownership-behavior linkage, whereas most research investigated only the ownership-attitude linkage.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to gain insights about the following research question:

“To what extent do co-owners engage in more extra effort mediated by affective commitment and is this relationship moderated by participation in decision making in comparison to non-owner workers?”

In the following section, the main components of the conceptual model, which are *ownership structure*, *perception of participation in decision making*, *affective commitment* and *extra effort* are linked in the light of a theoretical framework and previous studies. Eventually, expected relationships between the components are hypothesized.

Theoretical Framework

Ownership structure and participation in decision making

The ownership structure of “Mondragon Humanity at work” is built on dimensions which are based on the principle “people in power”. The organizational democracy of the company is based on “one worker, one vote” regardless of the capital share owned (Forcadell, 2005). The input of work and capital is seen as a necessity for cooperatives which is consequently followed by returns in the form of decision making and profit sharing (Albizu and Basterretxea, 1998). However, cooperatives are not indifferent for the globalization, economic climate or internationalization and hiring more temporary and non-owner workers would offer them more flexibility. These temporary non-owner workers for example could be laid off during bad times in order to remain competitive with other firms (Moye, 1993). Nowadays, Basque law states that cooperatives are not allowed to offer temporary contracts for more than five years and that less than 20 percent of the workforce should have a temporary contract (Flecha and Santa Cruz, 2011). This law was introduced in order to improve the rights of non-owner workers to some extent. However, some authorities keep arguing that eventually “Mondragon Humanity at work” will have to make a choice between having a non-capitalist form of enterprise which is smaller, but still democratic, or become even bigger without a democracy and more non-owner workers (Flecha and Santa Cruz, 2011).

With regard to a democracy, participation is one of the basic principles in democratic management. However, the argument that participation is a “universal” practice that all workers feel comfortable with and expect as a logical consequence of their status, appeared not always to be the case (e.g. Kasmir, 1996; Kasmir, 1999). In light of this argument, which ought to be the key factor to “Mondragon Humanity at work” success, and the tension between hiring more non-owner workers or follow the democratic principles of the cooperative, it is interesting to investigate the effects of the perception of participation in decision making.

The 1990’s showed a renewed interest in participation because employers believed that productivity would increase if employees had opportunities to participate in decision making (Foley and Polanyi, 2006). Pierce et al., (1991) argued that the degree to which employee ownership generates positive attitudinal and behavioral effects depends on the perceptions of employees regarding ownership arrangements like participation in decision making. Thus, the perception of participation in decision making is a conditional variable for ownership to generate an attitudinal effect.

According to Forcadell (2005) there are three different levels through which progress in participation in ownership and results is possible; i) non participation; ii) participation in the results and/or minority participation in the ownership; and iii) majority ownership in the firm. The third level of participation coincides with participation in ownership and results for the co-owner workers within “Mondragon Humanity at work”. Considering participation in decision making, there are three levels as well through which progress is possible; i) autocracy; ii) participation in the operational area; and iii) participation in decision making regarding the strategic area (Forcadell, 2005). This third level of participation in decision making can be applied to the co-owner workers at “Mondragon Humanity at work”. However, the co-owner workers do not participate directly, but through representatives elected to a governing council or through representatives on the board of directors (Forcadell, 2005). A gap between ownership and democratic management may occur when the employees have ownership rights and benefits, but refuse to participate in decision making.

The study of Kuvaas (2003) investigated the relationship between ownership and participation in financial results. This type of participation was seen as a mechanism which enhanced their loyalty, cooperation and work effort. This study will investigate the effects of the perception of participation in decision making. According to Kasmir (1999) owner workers in cooperatives have broader rights to participate in decision making than non-owner workers, but sometimes they lack the knowledge and time to turn these rights into powers. The result is that co-owners become disillusioned and disinterested in participating in decision making. Thus, for “Mondragon Humanity at work” the group that does have the ownership and/or benefits, but does not participate in decision making, needs attention. They are not benefitting from their ownership and not participating in the democratic management of the cooperation. Furthermore, Kuvaas (2003) argued that it could also be possible that the fact of ownership itself is thought to positively influence attitudes by establishing long term common interests between the employee and the employer.

The intrinsic satisfaction model provides a theory for this last argument and states that the very fact of ownership itself increases favorable attitudes of employees towards the company, in particular commitment (Kuvaas, 2003). According to this model, positive outcomes emerge because of intrinsic feelings of ownership instead of feelings regarding the ownership plan or the organizational context. This model is also known as the direct effects model of employee ownership (Klein, 1987). As Kuvaas (2003) stated, the intrinsic satisfaction model has received little support for the hypothesis that ownership itself could increase organizational attitudes like affective commitment (Kuvaas, 2003). However, he also stated that the lack of support for this hypothesis does not take away the fact that ownership may cause more favorable behaviors towards the company.

To summarize so far, the independent variable, *type of ownership* is discussed (non-owner workers and owner-workers). Furthermore, the *conditional variable*, *perception of participation in decision making* which influences the motivational effect of ownership according to empirical evidence, is further elaborated on.

Besides this effect, Kuvaas (2003) argued that ownership itself also has a direct effect on attitudes and through these attitudes also on the behaviors of employees. Below, these effects are further elaborated on based on theoretical arguments and models.

Participation in decision making, Affective Commitment and Extra Effort

Employee ownership has a motivational effect with regard to positive attitudes directed to the organization. In general, there are three dimensions in the definition of commitment; i) commitment as an affective attachment to the organization; ii) commitment as a perceived cost associated with leaving the organization; and iii) commitment as an obligation to remain with the organization (Bansal, Irving and Taylor, 2004). These forms of commitment are referred to as affective, continuance, and normative commitment respectively. Employees with a strong affective commitment stay with the organization because they want to. Employees with strong continuance commitment stay with the organization because the cost of leaving it would be too high. Finally, employees with strong normative commitment stay with the organization because they consider it as an obligation (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Affective commitment is particularly relevant because it involves important consequences for the organization like work effort and inclined feelings of remaining with the organization. Furthermore, it has the strongest correlations with organization-relevant and employee-relevant outcomes (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky 2002). If the experiences of employees within the organization are consistent with their expectations and satisfy their basic needs, employees tend to develop a stronger affective attachment to the organization than those whose experiences are less satisfying and not consistent with their expectations (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

Participation in decision making is such an expectation that co-owner workers may have as a consequence of their type of contract. It is an intervening variable and one of the key dimensions of feelings of ownership which is also termed as “psychological ownership” by Pierce et al., (1991). Moreover, it is argued that if employees feel a greater sense of ownership, their attitudes are likely to change in favor of the organization. On the other hand, if employees do not experience “psychological ownership”, their attitudes are likely to remain unchanged (Pendleton et al., 1998). For this reason it is interesting to investigate whether the perception of participation in decision making moderates the relationship between type of contract and affective commitment. This relationship is compared with non-owner workers which is consistent with most empirical ownership research (e.g. Buchko, 1992; Long, 1978a). These non-owner workers generally do not benefit from their type of contract by means of participation in decision making.

The theory on which this argument is based is called the instrumental satisfaction model (Klein, 1987). According to the view of this instrumental satisfaction model, it is not just ownership itself that has a direct effect on the attitudes and behaviors of employees, but the increase in participation in decision making that affects the relationship between different types of contract and the attitudes and behaviors of employees.

Employee ownership has a positive impact on employee attitudes if the company provides significant opportunities for worker participation in decision making (Long 1978a, 1978b, 1979). The emphasis here is on “psychological ownership”, whereby feelings of ownership are positively related to organizational commitment (Pendleton et al., 1998). Psychological ownership refers to the extent to which employees really feel they are the owners of the company. Thus, it incorporates the perception of participation in decision making. The extent to which employee ownership brings the right to participate in decision making is a determinant of the strength of this feeling (Pierce et al., 1991).

Finally, this motivating effect of employee ownership on favorable attitudes, like commitment towards the organization will in turn lead to positive behavioral changes like extra effort (Pendleton et al., 1998). In general, there are three components of this organizational commitment; i) a strong belief in and acceptance of the goals and values of the organization; ii) the willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization and; iii) the desire to remain a member of the organization. These three components of organizational commitment all indicate actions towards pro-social behavior (Brief and Motowidlo, 1986). A form of pro-social behavior is the behavior that is not formally specified in role requirements. According to Brief and Motowidlo (1986) the willingness to engage in extra effort on behalf of the organization is an important consequence of organizational commitment. This behavior is showed when committed individuals are willing to give something in return in order to contribute to the performance of the organization. It is a positive form of social behavior which is not specifically assigned to employees as a part of their tasks (Katz, 1964). To prevent the model from becoming too complex, this study will investigate extra effort only as a result from affective commitment. Figure 1 shows the conceptual model.

In order to test these propositions and theoretical models the following hypotheses are stated:

Hypothesis 1: As compared to non-owner workers, co-owners are inclined to show more extra effort mediated by affective commitment.

Hypothesis 2: The higher the level of perception of participation in decision making, the more extra effort is shown mediated by affective commitment.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between type of ownership and affective commitment is moderated by participation in decision making. This relationship is stronger when the perceptions of participation in decision making are higher.

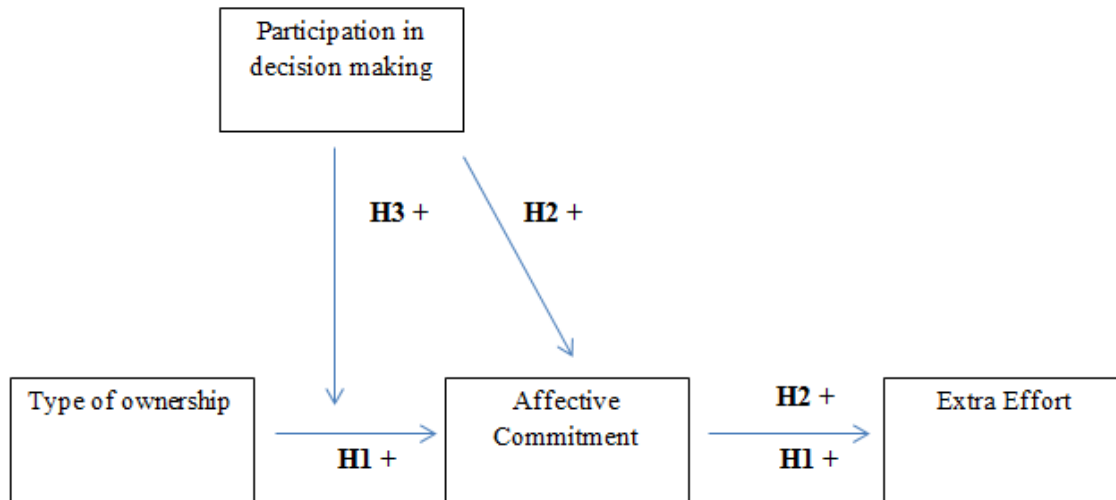


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Methods

Research Design

Quantitative measures were used in order to test the conceptual model. Data was collected by two questionnaires. One questionnaire was handed out to the employees and another one to the managers. Responses obtained from the employees were measured at the individual level and responses obtained from the managers were measured at the organizational level and group level. Overall, the two questionnaires contained the same topics, but had a different reference point. This study focused on individual level data in order to understand the different behavioral outcomes and attitudinal outcomes in relationship with type of ownership. The behavioral outcomes investigated in this study are participation in decision making and extra effort and the attitudinal outcome investigated in this study is affective commitment. The design of this study was cross-sectional.

Research Procedure

Data was collected by using purposive sampling within “Mondragon Humanity at work.” Employees and managers were asked to complete the questionnaire in order to be able to analyze and improve the organizational culture of the company. For this specific research, only a part of the employee questionnaire was used. A cover letter attached to the questionnaires contained information about the purpose, instructions and anonymity of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were collected back by consultants of the Otalora management training institute in Mondragón. The company level results were sent to the managing director, so that he could decide how to inform on the results. Organizations benefited from participating in the research because this provided them with the opportunity to benchmark the data about their organizations.

Research Sample

This research examines the behavior and attitudes of different types of employees at “Mondragon Humanity at work”. The data was collected through purposive sampling within a supermarket chain. A total of 6091 respondents completed the questionnaire. Specifically, 80% of the respondents were female and 20% of the respondents were male. Most of the respondents had a tenure ranging from three to 15 years, specifically 64.3%. A tenure ranging from three years or less corresponded with 17% of the respondents and 18.6% had tenure of more than 15 years. Regarding the type of contract, 71.8% of the respondents were “Socios” (owner-workers), 14.9% of the respondents had a “Fijo” (fixed) contract and 13.4% of the respondents represented the “Eventuales” (temporary) contracts. The last two types of contract represent the two different variables of non-owner workers in this study. Information about age and educational level were not available because of the anonymity which would have been harmed due to the small numbers of employees in some companies. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the population sample.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Sample

	Socios	Fijos	Eventuales	Percentage
Gender				
- Female	3376	697	626	80%
- Male	836	176	161	20%
Percentage	71.7%	14.9%	13.4%	100%
Tenure				
- 3 years or less	182	112	723	17.3%
- Between 3 and 15 years	3124	599	52	64.2%
- More than 15 years	915	165	5	18.5%
Percentage	71.8%	14.9%	13.3%	100%

Instruments

The employee questionnaire was based on previous research, but at the same time developed new items. Concepts were measured by scales that already existed and had been used in literature. All of the items were measured in Spanish. The complete list of items can be found in the appendix (Appendix A). In order to prevent spuriousness, control variables were included in this study as well. The variables used in this study were individual level variables and therefore data from the employee questionnaire only was used. Construct validity of the measures were examined by factor analysis. Scale reliability was evaluated by using Cronbach's Alpha.

Type of ownership - The measurement of type of ownership was based on one item in the questionnaire. This item asked whether employees were "Socios" which indicated that they were co-owners of the cooperation, "Fijos" which indicated that employees had a fixed contract and "Eventuales" which indicated that employees had a temporary contract. The last two types of contract represent the two different variables of non-owner workers. To analyze the influence of potential group differences on the hypothesized relationships, two dummy variables for the three different groups were used. The reference category 0 - represented the "Socios", the co-owner workers.

Perceived participation in decision making - This concept was measured by using a scale following earlier work from Appelbaum et al. (2000), Becker and Huselid (1998), Arthur (1994), Gardner et al. (2000) and Delery and Doty (1996). This concept contained three items. Participants answered on a 6 point Likert scale (1= "strongly disagree", 6= "strongly agree") to describe the extent to which they agreed with items such as "I have the chance to participate in important decisions about the future of my department/section" and "I participate in the definition, control and monitoring of the business plan on an annual basis". Factor analysis revealed that all items of perceived participation in decision making loaded on one main component above .30 and the explained variance of the scale was 76.7%. Furthermore, KMO measure of sampling adequacy was .72 which is higher than the recommended value of .60. The reliability of the scale was .85 (Cronbach's Alpha). High scores represented a high perception of participation in decision making.

Affective Commitment - In this study affective commitment was measured by using three items. Participants answered on a 6 point Likert scale (1= "strongly disagree", 6= "strongly agree") to describe the extent to which they agreed with items such as "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own" and "I feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization". High scores represented a high level of affective commitment. Factor analysis revealed that all items of affective commitment loaded on one main component above .30 and the explained variance of the scale was 74.1%. Furthermore, KMO measure of sampling adequacy was .71 which is higher than the recommended value of .60. The reliability of the scale was .82 (Cronbach's Alpha).

Extra Effort - In this study extra effort was measured by using three items based on Borman and Motowidlo (1993) and Brief and Motowidlo (1986). Participants answered on a 6 point Likert scale (1= “strongly disagree”, 6= “strongly agree”) to describe the extent to which they agreed with items such as “I strive to continually improve the products/services of my field of work” and “I put all the effort in my job to satisfy my customers”. Items of this concept are introduced by the sentence “In my team/section/business unit...” High scores represented a high level of extra effort. Factor analysis revealed that all items of extra effort loaded on one main component above .30 and the explained variance of the scale was 64%. Furthermore, KMO measure of sampling adequacy was .63 which is slightly higher than the recommended value of .60. The reliability of the scale was .69 (Cronbach’s Alpha).

Control variables - In order to check spurious relationships between variables, the descriptive variable “seniority” was included in the analyses. Employees could indicate whether their organizational tenure ranged from 0-3 years, from 3-15 years, or more than 15 years. Furthermore, the control variable gender was included as well.

Results

This section contains two parts. In the first section descriptive statistics and correlations are showed. In the last part, results of the model test are explained to test the hypothesis.

Descriptive statistics and correlations

Table two shows an overview of the means, standard deviations and correlations of the variables used in this study. The mean scores for the value of the perception of participation in decision making, affective commitment and extra effort were all above average ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.07$, $M = 4.22$, $SD = 1.07$ and $M = 5.01$, $SD = 0.62$) respectively. The relationships between the different types of contract and the perception on participation in decision making were not very strong, but significant. The correlation between the co-owner workers, “Socio”, and participation in decision making was positive and significant ($r = .086$, $p < .01$), the correlation between non-owner workers, “Fijo”, and participation in decision making was negative and significant ($r = -.029$, $p < .05$) and the correlation between the last type of non-owner workers contract “Eventuales” and participation in decision making was negative as well and significant ($r = -.102$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, the correlations for the different types of contract and affective commitment were significantly related as well and only positively related for “Socio” ($r = .138$, $p < .01$), whereas “Fijo” and “Eventuales” were negatively related with affective commitment ($r = -.100$, $p < .01$) and ($r = -.092$, $p < .01$) respectively. Interesting was the fact that the behavioral component extra effort in relation with the different types of contract showed different directions of the correlations compared with the relation between the attitudinal component affective commitment, and the different types of contract. It appeared that the relationship between “Socio” and extra effort was negative and significant ($r = -.061$, $p < .01$). Unfortunately, the weak negative relationship between “Fijo” and extra effort was not significant ($r = -.004$, $p > .05$). However, the relationship between “Eventuales” and extra effort was positive and significant ($r = .080$, $p < .01$). The descriptive statistics indicated that employees who were able to participate in strategic decision making, showed affective commitment ($r = .509$, $p < .01$) and extra effort as well ($r = .265$, $p < .01$).

Table 2

Correlation Matrix

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Socio	0.69	0.46	-							
Fijo	0.14	0.35	(-.621**)	-						
Eventuales	0.13	0.34	(-.583**)	(-.158**)	-					
Participation	4.05	1.07	.086**	-.029*	-.102**	-				
Affective Commitment	4.22	1.07	.138**	-.100**	-.092**	.509**	-			
Extra Effort	5.01	0.62	-.061**	-.004	.080**	.265**	.365**	-		
Gender Female = 1 Male = 2	1.20	0.40	-.003	-.002	.005	.050**	.045**	-.021	-	
Tenure	2.02	0.60	.404**	-.031*	-.605**	.023	.042**	-.095**	.033**	-

Note * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
 ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
 Tenure: 0-3 years = 1, 3-15 years = 2, > 15 years = 3

Correlations between brackets should not be interpreted because employees have either one of these three contracts

One-way ANOVA analysis

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the means of three different types of contract on participation in decision making, affective commitment, extra effort, gender and tenure (see Appendix B, table 6). The test was conducted in order to test whether the groups in the sample differed. There was a significant effect of type of contract on participation in decision making [$F(2, 5800) = 36,23, p = 0.000$], affective commitment [$F(2, 5795) = 66,60, p = 0.000$], extra effort [$F(2, 5831) = 20,26, p = 0.000$] and tenure [$F(2, 5874) = 1771,82, p = 0.000$] among the three conditions. There was no significant effect of type of contract on gender [$F(2, 5869) = .088, p = .916$] among the three conditions. In order to determine which groups in the sample differed, a post-hoc Tukey test was conducted. For type of contract and participation in decision making it appeared that co-owner workers (Socios) perceived significantly more participation in decision making than the two different groups of non-owner workers (Fijos and Eventuales). Furthermore, Fijos perceived significantly more participation in decision making than Eventuales. For type of contract and affective commitment it appeared that co-owner workers showed more affective commitment than the two different groups of non-owner workers (Fijos and Eventuales). However, Fijos showed less affective commitment than Eventuales although this relationship was not significant. For type of contract and extra effort it appeared that employees with a temporary contract (Eventuales) showed significantly more extra effort than the employees with a fixed contract (Fijos) and the co-owner workers (Socios). The co-owner workers showed even less extra effort than the non-owner workers with a fixed contract (Fijos), however, this difference was not significant. For type of contract and tenure it appeared that co-owner workers (Socios) had significantly more tenure than both groups of non-owner workers (Fijos and Eventuales). Furthermore, it appeared that the group of non-owner workers with a fixed contract (Fijos) had significantly more tenure than the group of non-owner workers with a temporary contract (Eventuales).

Model and hypothesis testing

This study represents a case of moderated mediation. The amount to which the mediator *affective commitment* (Me) translates the effect of the independent variable *type of contract* (IV) on the dependent variable *extra effort* (DV) may depend on the levels of the moderator *perception of participation in decision making* (Mo). In order to test the conceptual model and the hypotheses of this study a two staged analyses was performed. First, to test the mediating effect of affective commitment, a simple mediation analyses with use of the Sobel test was performed. Thus, the mediating role of affective commitment on extra effort was evaluated. Second, an interaction term was added (Type of contract * Perception of participation in decision making) to the model in order to compare main effects with the interaction term. Furthermore, centered values were used because participants may differ in the way they use the response scales of the items.

Mediation analyses

The first hypothesis claims that co-owner workers (Socios) as compared with the two different groups of non-owner workers (Fijos and Eventuales) are inclined to show more extra effort mediated by affective commitment. According to Baron and Kenny (1986) there are four steps which have to be taken in order to analyze mediation: i) conduct a simple regression analysis with the independent variable predicting the dependent variable, ii) conduct a simple regression analysis with the independent variable predicting the mediator, iii) conduct a simple regression analysis with the mediator predicting the dependent variable, iv) conduct a multiple regression analysis with the independent variable and the mediator predicting the dependent. When step one to three is significant, one proceeds to step four. In step four, mediation is supported if the effect from affective commitment remains significant after controlling for type of contract. If type of contract is non-significant when affective commitment is controlled, the finding supports full mediation. If type of contract is significant, the finding supports partial mediation (Baron and Kenny, 1986). To test the indirect pathway, a Sobel test was performed (Sobel, 1982).

In order to test the direct effect of type of contract on affective commitment, two dummy variables “Fijo” and “Eventual” representing two different groups of non-owner workers, compared with “Socios”, were regressed on affective commitment. The direct effect from “Fijo” on affective commitment (Me) was significant ($\beta = -.118, p = .000$, see table 3). The direct effect from “Eventual” on affective commitment was significant and negative as well ($\beta = -.111, p = .000$). However, the direct effect from “Fijo” on extra effort, the dependent variable, was analyzed as well and showed no significant effect ($\beta = .008, p = .518$). On the other hand, the direct effect from “Eventual” on extra effort showed a significant, but small effect ($\beta = .081, p = .000$). After including affective commitment as an explanatory variable (step 2), both “Fijo” and “Eventuales” relation with extra effort was positive and significant ($\beta = .053, p = .000$) and ($\beta = .123, p = .000$) respectively, compared with co-owner workers (Socios).

Finally, the direct effect from affective commitment on extra effort showed a significant and positive effect ($\beta = .382, p = .000$). The findings were still stable after replicated with control variables. Because this procedure does not indicate the size of the indirect effect or whether the indirect effect of type of contract (IV) through affective commitment (Me) is significant, another test was performed. There are two tests to test significance, the Sobel test and the bootstrapping approach. Because the sample is large enough, bootstrapping appeared to have no effect. Thus, a Sobel test was performed in order to test whether the indirect effect of type of contract (IV) on extra effort (DV) through affective commitment (Me) was significantly greater than zero. The unstandardized coefficients and standard errors were used. First, a Sobel test was performed for the independent variable “Eventuales” ($a = -.111, b = .0382, sa = .041, sb = .007$) which showed a significant effect ($p = .007$). Then, a Sobel test was performed for the independent variable “Fijo” ($a = -.118, b = .0382, sa = .039, sb = .007$) which showed a significant effect as well ($p = .003$). Results indicated that affective commitment mediated the relationship between type of contract and extra effort. The second model showed a significant improvement ($R^2\Delta = .143, p = .000$). However, co-owner workers did not show more extra effort than non-owner workers ($(\beta = .053, p = .000)$ and $(\beta = .123, p = .000)$ for Fijo and Eventuales respectively), but less instead. Thus, the first hypothesis was not supported.

Table 3

Regression analysis on Extra Effort and Direct Effects on Affective Commitment

	Extra effort			Affective commitment
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1
	β	β	β	
Fijo	.008	.053**	.050**	-.118**
Eventuales	.081**	.123**	.087**	-.111**
Affective commitment		.382**	.383**	
Sexo			-.036**	
Permanencia			-.059**	
R ²	.006	.149	.152	.022
R ² change	.006	.143	.004	.022
F change	19.143	992.467	12.823	67.260
Sig. F change	.000	.000	.000	.000

N: 5882

Note * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$

The second hypothesis stated that the higher the level of perception of participation in decision making, the more extra effort is shown mediated by affective commitment. First the perception of participation in decision making was regressed on affective commitment. Second, the perception of participation in decision making was regressed on extra effort. Finally, affective commitment was regressed on extra effort. Results show that participation had a very strong direct relationship with affective commitment ($\beta = .509, p = .000$) as well as with extra effort ($\beta = .265, p = .000$).

When affective commitment was included as an explanatory variable (step 2) the relationship between participation and extra effort became smaller but remained significant ($\beta = .107$, $p = .000$). The relation between affective commitment and extra effort was positive and significant as well ($\beta = .311$, $p = .000$). The second model showed a significant small improvement ($R^2\Delta = .072$, $p = .000$). Because β in the second model of extra effort on participation is smaller than the β in the first model we can speak of full mediation. Therefore, the second hypothesis is supported. Again, to indicate the size of the indirect effect, a Sobel test was performed for participation ($a = .509$, $b = .311$, $sa = .011$, $sb = .008$) which showed a significant effect ($p = .000$).

Table 4

Regression analysis on Extra effort and Direct Effects on Affective Commitment

	Extra Effort			Affective commitment
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1
	β	β	β	β
Participation	.265**	.107**	.109**	.509**
Affective commitment		.311**	.316**	
Sexo			-.037**	
Permanencia			-.110**	
R ²	.070	.142	.156	.259
R ² change	.070	.072	.014	.259
F change	445.250	490.699	47.560	2050.057
Sig. F change	.000	.000	.000	.000

N: 5882

Note * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$

Moderation analysis

To understand the moderating effect of the perception of participation in decision making on the relationship between type of contract and affective commitment, two interaction terms (Fijo * perception of participation in decision making and Eventuales * perception of participation in decision making) were taken into account in order to compare the interaction terms with the main effects. Centered values were used in this regression analysis. For the proposed relationship between type of contract, perception of participation in decision making and affective commitment, the third hypothesis was tested using hierarchical regression analysis. Consequently, the significant improvement of the model by adding the interaction variable could be analyzed (ΔR^2 , F change $< \alpha$, see table 5). In the first step, all explanatory variables were entered as main effects. In the second step, the interaction terms (Fijo * perception of participation in decision making and Eventuales * perception of participation in decision making) were entered to test the interaction effect. Finally, control variables were added to control for spuriousness of the findings.

Results showed that the fixed type of contract “Fijo” was negatively related to affective commitment and significant compared with co-owner workers “Socio” when participation in decision making was included as an explanatory variable ($\beta = -.095$, $p = .000$, model 1, table 5). The same results were given for employees with a temporary type of contract “Eventuales”, but the relationship was less strong ($\beta = -.056$, $p = .000$). Thus, “Fijos” and “Eventuales”, both non-owner worker contracts, showed less affective commitment in comparison with “Socios”, the co-owner workers. Furthermore, participation in decision making was strongly related to affective commitment ($\beta = .500$, $p = .000$). The second model in table 5 shows that the relationship between “Fijos” and affective commitment remained stable compared with “Socios” when the interaction terms were added ($\beta = -.094$, $p = .000$). The relationship between “Eventuales” and affective commitment compared with “Socios” remained almost stable as well after including the interaction effects as explanatory variables ($\beta = -.060$, $p = .000$). However, the interaction terms both appeared not to be significant. The results of the second hierarchical regression revealed that the second model was non-significant either ($R^2\Delta = .001$, $p = .157$). This means that the perception of participation in decision making does not moderate the relationship between type of contract and affective commitment. When control variables were included, there was no increase in explained variance and results remained stable. Thus, the third hypothesis about the moderating effect of perception of participation in decision making on the relationship between type of contract and affective commitment was not supported.

Table 5
Regression analysis on affective commitment

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	β	β	β
Fijo	-.095**	-.094**	-.094**
Eventuales	-.056**	-.060**	-.060**
Participation	.500**	.501**	.500**
*D1Part		-.011	-.011
*D2Part		.017	.016
Sexo			.020
Permanencia			.000
R ²	.269	.270	.270
R ² change	.269	.000	.000
F change	720.700	1.852	1.649
Sig. F change	.000**	.157	.192

N: 5882

Note * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$

*D1Part = interaction term (Fijo * participation)

*D2Part = interaction term (Eventual * participation)

Discussion and conclusion

The goal of this research was to investigate to what extent co-owners engage in more extra effort mediated by affective commitment than non-owner workers and if this relationship was moderated by participation in decision making. The research site was one of most successful cooperation's in Spain, "Mondragon Humanity at work." One of the key factors of their success is their unique participatory and democratic management, but at the same time they have to stay competitive in this rough, globalizing economy. Questions about having a non-capitalist form of enterprise which is smaller, but still democratic, or becoming bigger without a democracy and more non-owner workers were raised and this study is a step further in this dilemma.

A full confirmation was found for the expectation that affective commitment mediated the relationship between different types of contract and extra effort. However, co-owner workers did not engage in more extra effort than the two groups of non-owner workers, employees with a fixed contract and employees with a temporary contract. Therefore, the first hypothesis was not supported. Furthermore, this study showed that the relationship between the perception of participation in decision making and extra effort was fully mediated by affective commitment. Thus, the second hypothesis was confirmed. Finally, results showed that the perception of participation in decision making is not a moderating or conditional variable for the relationship between type of contract and affective commitment. This result indicated that there is no support for the third hypothesis either. These findings will be explained in greater detail in the next section.

As expected, non-owner workers (Fijos and Eventuales) showed less affective commitment in comparison with owner-workers (Socios). This is in line with the study of Kuvaas (2003) who stated that the very fact of ownership itself increases commitment because of the establishment of a long term common interest. At the same time, this result supported the theory of the intrinsic satisfaction model or the direct effects model for employee ownership which relates ownership with positive attitudes like affective commitment (Klein, 1987).

On the other hand and different from what is expected and hypothesized, co-owners do not show more extra effort mediated by affective commitment compared with non-owner workers. A possible explanation for this finding could be found in the effort-reward imbalance theory (Siegrist, 1996). This theory states that work contracts are often not fully symmetric in exchange with the possibility of an imbalance between job security and effort. According to Siegrist et al. (2004), these contracts may be accepted for strategic reasons like the improvement of chances for a career promotion at a later stage. Besides, these non-symmetric contracts are more common in a global economy characterized by job insecurity, which would explain the higher level of extra effort for the non-owner workers with temporary contracts (Eventuales) in this case. Furthermore, this study showed that greater affective commitment itself will not automatically lead to more extra effort while literature from Pendleton et al., (1998) does state that it is an automatic reaction evolving from higher commitment. Organizational support and job satisfaction could be conditional factors in this matter.

Moreover, it appeared that the higher the level of perception of participation in decision making, the more extra effort was shown mediated by affective commitment (hypothesis 2). This result is in line with the studies of Long (1978a, 1978b, 1979) who stated that employee attitudes like affective commitment improve when the employees' influence in decision making is increased. Therefore, the instrumental satisfaction model which states that it is not just the fact of ownership itself, but the increase in participation in decision making that goes with it, that affects employee attitudes and behavior is supported. It is supported in the way that it indicates that a higher perception of participation in decision making itself can already enhance positive attitudes and behavior. According to Brief and Motowidlo (1986) affective commitment will in turn lead to positive behavioral attitudes like extra effort which is confirmed by the second hypothesis in this study. Another explanation for the support of the second hypothesis could be the fact that the perception of participation in decision making could be related with co-ownership, and seen as part of this formal ownership agreement, which in turn increases affective commitment.

Finally, it appeared that the perception of participation in decision making did not moderate the relationship between type of contract and affective commitment (hypothesis 3). Co-owner workers relation with affective commitment did turn out higher when controlled for participation in decision making compared with non-owner workers with a fixed contract (Fijo) and non-owner workers with a temporary contract (Eventuales). However, the relationship between the different types of contract and affective commitment appeared not to be moderated by the perception of participation in decision making and the interaction effects were not significant. This result could be explained by the fact that non-owner workers have not that many opportunities to participate in decision making. Hence, the conditional variable, namely participation in decision making, which would lead to the presence of more affective commitment is not that much represented in their contract agreement compared to the co-owner workers. Moreover, the argument from Kashmir (1996) that co-owners do not have the proper knowledge or time to actively participate in decision making seems to be true to some extent looking at the small relation in the descriptive results. However, the perception of participation in decision making from co-owner workers is positive compared with the perception from non-owner workers indicating the importance of the feeling of "psychological ownership" Pierce et al. (1991).

Limitations and future research

This study has some limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting the results. First, the fact that data was obtained from one single organization at a certain point in time should be considered when looking at the generalizability of the results. However, the fact that it is a single site study made it possible to collect data from employees who have all experienced the same characteristics of the different types of contract they belong to, with the same experiences of employees regarding organizational history.

Furthermore, the results of this cross sectional study do not make it possible to look at changes in variation and their effects over a longer period of time or rule out reversed causality. Employees' attitudes and behaviors could change over time and the effects of those changes remain untested until now. A longitudinal research would give insight in changes over time and would provide more solid results looking at causality of relationships.

Moreover, the fact that "Mondragon Humanity at work" has to operate in an economic climate which is quite hard these days could have an impact on the affective commitment shown by employees. A lot of employees are the co-owners of the company which consequently provides them with a long term common interest. Ensuring that the corporation remains competitive is of great value for those employees and they may feel inclined to show more affective commitment. Incorporating measurement of affective commitment and extra effort based on effort-rewards or extra effort and affective commitment measurement based on reciprocating feelings because of the difficult circumstances the company has to deal with, could control this fact.

As stated by Kuvaas (2003), affective commitment may be influenced by a number of individual and contextual factors. This study only controlled for gender and tenure and therefore future research should also include age and education and contextual factors like organizational support and the social work environment. Besides, the perception of participation in decision making may differ because of the indirect form of participation. Differences between the co-owner workers which are the representatives and the other co-owner workers may exist.

It should also be noted that the large size of the sample consequently provided sufficient statistical power for many of the hypothesized relationships, albeit that the effect sizes are not so large.

Theoretical implications

This study is one of the few studies that investigated both ownership-attitude linkage as well as ownership-behavior linkage, whereas most research investigated only the ownership-attitude linkage. A possible explanation is the fact that it is difficult, both methodologically and conceptually, to track the progression from favorable attitudes towards the organization which should in turn lead to positive individual behaviors.

Furthermore, this study considered perceived ownership in the minds of employees regarding their perception of participation in decision making. The instrumental satisfaction model stated that it is not ownership in itself that generates positive attitudinal and behavioral attitudes, but the increase in decision making that goes with ownership that enhances positive attitudes and behavior. However, as this study showed, the perception of participation in decision making, which is part of the formal ownership agreement, played no moderating and conditional role with regard to the relationship between type of contract and affective commitment. On the other hand, as an independent and explanatory variable, the perception of participation in decision making was related to extra effort mediated by affective commitment.

Besides, the lack of support for intrinsic feelings of ownership had been taken as evidence that intrinsic motivation played a limited role in explaining the relationship between ownership and attitudes (Klein, 1987). However, this study showed that ownership in itself generates positive attitudes like affective commitment towards the organization.

Finally, most ownership research did not investigate the differences between the types of contract within one corporation and therefore this research could provide different insights regarding this matter as well.

Practical implications

This study provides an insight in how employees from “Mondragon Humanity at work” with different ownership arrangements perceive participation in decision making and to what extent they show affective commitment and engage in extra effort.

First of all, the study provides arguments for HR practitioners to ensure more opportunities for participation in decision making in order to enhance affective commitment. Furthermore, it appeared that participation in decision making positively influenced extra effort. Therefore, the unique participatory and democratic management of “Mondragon Humanity at work” actually plays a big role in the success of the firm. Hiring more non-owner workers would provide them with more flexibility, but would not benefit the affective commitment towards the company. On the other hand, according to this study, the level of extra effort would increase when “Mondragon Humanity at work” would decide to hire more non-owner workers. Disadvantages and advantages regarding this dilemma should be carefully considered before choices regarding this topic are made.

Finally, it seems justified to warn practitioners that differences in the perception of participation in decision making and in formal ownership agreements could have negative effects as well regarding the disruption of relationships between different employees in the company which could eventually negatively impact their affective commitment and extra effort.

Conclusion

Overall, this study showed that perceived feelings of ownership in the minds of employees, like perception of participation in decision making, play an important role in positive attitudinal and behavioral consequences directed at the organization. Considering the globalization and need to stay competitive, “Mondragon Humanity at work” should carefully consider whether to focus on their key factor of their success, namely their cooperative principles or to focus on their flexibility regarding the contracts they offer. It appeared that differences between types of contracts may impact organizational effectiveness in the end through different effects on attitudes and behaviors. Further research is needed in order to make sure that “The Myth of Mondragón” lives on and remains a counterexample for the argument that cooperation’s do not survive in the long run.

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Appendix A

Questions for items

Type of contract (Tipo de contrato)

Socio (1 = partner) Fijo (2 = fixed contract) Eventual (3 = temporary contract)

Extra effort

1. Muy en desacuerdo (completely disagree) 2. En desacuerdo (disagree) 3. Algo desacuerdo (partially disagree) 4. Algo de acuerdo (partially agree) 5. De acuerdo (agree) 6. Muy de acuerdo (completely agree)
64. Me esfuerzo continuamente para mejorar la calidad del servicio que ofrezco a los clientes.
(I constantly strive to improve the quality of service which I offer to the clients)
67. Frecuentemente hago un esfuerzo extra para ayudar a los clientes.
(Frequently, I do something extra to help the clients)
69. Pongo todo mi empeño para satisfacer a los clientes en mi puesto (ámbito, área) de trabajo.
(I put all my effort in satisfying the clients)

Affective commitment

1. Muy en desacuerdo (completely disagree) 2. En desacuerdo (disagree) 3. Algo desacuerdo (partially disagree) 4. Algo de acuerdo (partially agree) 5. De acuerdo (agree) 6. Muy de acuerdo (completely agree)
73. Estoy orgulloso de pertenecer a esta empresa.
(I am proud to belong to this organization).
74. Me siento propietario de esta empresa.
(I feel like an owner of this company)
75. Siento que los problemas de esta empresa son los míos propios.
(I feel like the problems of this company are my own problems)

Participation in decision making

1. Muy en desacuerdo (completely disagree) 2. En desacuerdo (disagree) 3. Algo desacuerdo (partially disagree) 4. Algo de acuerdo (partially agree) 5. De acuerdo (agree) 6. Muy de acuerdo (completely agree)

16. Participo en la definición de los objetivos anuales de mi departamento/sección.

(I participate in the definition of the annual targets for my department/section)

17. Participo en la definición, control y seguimiento del plan de gestión anualmente.

(I participate in the definition, control and monitoring of the business plan on an annual basis)

18. Tengo oportunidades de participar en las decisiones importantes sobre el futuro de mi departamento/sección.

(I have the chance to participate in important decisions about the future of my department/section)

Control variables

Permanencia:

3 años o menos (1)/ 3 years or less (1)

Entre 3 y 15 años (2)/ between 3 and 15 years (2)

Más de 15 años (3)/more than 15 years (3)

Gender:

Mujer (1), Hombre (2)/ Female (1), Male (2)

Appendix B

Anova analyses

Table 6a

ANOVA for the Regression Equation, Type of Contract on Participation in Decision Making

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Regression	81,513	2	40,756	36,233**
Residual	6524,059	5800	1,125	
Total	6605,572	5802		

**p < 0.01

Table 6b

ANOVA for the Regression Equation, Type of Contract on Affective Commitment

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Regression	148,644	2	74,322	66,603**
Residual	6466,553	5795	1,116	
Total	6615,196	5797		

**p < 0.01

Table 6c

ANOVA for the Regression Equation, Type of Contract on Extra Effort

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Regression	15,497	2	7,749	20,255**
Residual	2230,692	5831	0,383	
Total	2246,189	5833		

**p < 0.01

Table 6d

ANOVA for the Regression Equation, Type of Contract on Sexo

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Regression	,028	2	,014	.088
Residual	938,652	5869	,160	
Total	938,680	5871		

**p < 0.01

Table 6e

ANOVA for the Regression Equation, Type of Contract on Permanencia

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Regression	790,638	2	395,319	1771,82**
Residual	1310,576	5874	,223	
Total	2101,213	5876		

**p < 0.01