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When Commitment Is Not Enough: How Stress and Individual-Organization Interface Affect Activists' Persistence

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ABSTRACT

In light of collective action and community development research, this study aims at testing a model of activist persistence that takes into account both individual and organizational levels. The proposed model predicted that commitment to a group/organization or its cause does affect an activists' persistence. This relationship is mediated by two variables, namely the individual-organization interface and stress management processes. The model was empirically tested through a path analysis on a sample of 278 (N = 278; 43.9% female) participants recruited among active members in a variety of community groups/organizations. The results supported the pattern described by the model, showing that commitment is a precursor to activists' persistence. However its direct impact is weaker than the impact exerted by stress levels and the fit between the individual and the group/organization. Applications for community development practice are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Collective Action, Community Development, Activist Persistence, Activist Retention, Organizational Commitment, Stress, Coping, Social Support

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