

The Mediating Role of Job Characteristics in the Relationship between Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

The study aims at examining the influence of organizational commitment on job characteristics and job satisfaction. Moreover, it aims at investigating the influence of job characteristics and job satisfaction. A random sample was selected from non-managerial employees working at three malls in Amman, the capital city of Jordan. It consists of 750 participants. A total of 731 questionnaires were completed and returned. The results supported the hypothesized paths among constructs. As such, there is a significant and positive influence of organizational commitment on job characteristics and job satisfaction. Additionally, there is a significant and positive influence of job characteristics and job satisfaction. Hence, malls in Jordan should pay more attention to organizational commitment since it increases job satisfaction and improves job characteristics from the employees' perspective. This research paper contributes to job satisfaction literature; job satisfaction should be enhanced by organizational commitment and job characteristics.

Keywords: organizational commitment, job characteristics, job satisfaction, non-managerial employees, malls, Amman

1. Introduction

Job satisfaction can be viewed as an endogenous variable of organizational commitment (Adekola, 2012). Numerous research papers have discussed the interconnection between organizational commitment, job characteristics, and job satisfaction. Pool and Pool (2007) investigated the nature of organizational commitment within a learning organization, and its impact on executives' motivational level in providing job satisfaction. According to their results, organizational commitment showed strong support as an antecedent of job satisfaction. Kord and Tamini (2012) examined the relationship between these two constructs and found that sub-scales of organizational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment) and total scores of organizational commitment have significant correlation with job satisfaction.

The aim of a study by Amiri, Mirhashemi, and Parsamoein (2013) was to predict the organizational commitment level based on employees' job characteristics and job roles. Their study revealed that variables of job characteristics and roles can predict organizational commitment. Using a purposive sample of 150 managers from various banks, Hadi and Adil (2010) investigated job characteristics as predictors of work motivation and job satisfaction in bank managers. The results revealed that job characteristics predict motivation and job satisfaction.

According to Yiing and Ahmad (2009), organizational commitment was found to be significantly associated with job satisfaction. In their 2012 study, Yucel and Bektas asserted the positive correlation between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Yap, Holmes, Hannan, and Cukier (2010) investigated the association between employees' perceptions of the provision of diversity training and effectiveness with organizational commitment and career satisfaction. Their paper showed that employees who perceived diversity training as effectively were significantly more committed to their organizations and more satisfied with their careers.

Rayton (2007) indicated that studying the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction is very important due to the fact that these constructs have an important impact on organizational performance.

Despite the intensive literature on relationships between these constructs, little attention has been paid to studying the relationships among them on samples of non-managerial employees working in malls in a non-Western settings. Accordingly, on the one hand, this study aims at examining relationships between organizational commitment and job characteristics and job satisfaction. On the other hand, the study aims at investigating the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction.

This research paper contributes to job satisfaction literature; job satisfaction could be enhanced by organizational commitment and job characteristics. One of the influences studied by Na-Nan and Pukkeeree (2013) was the influence of job characteristics on job satisfaction. The study concluded that job characteristics had a direct effect on job satisfaction.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Organizational Commitment and Job Characteristics

Organizational commitment has been defined as “an active relationship with the organization such that individuals are willing to give something of themselves in orders to contribute to the organization’s well-being” (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1979, p. 226). On the other hand, job characteristics were defined by Oyewobi, Suleiman and Jamil (2012, p. 182) as “aspects of the individual employee’s job and tasks that shape how the individual perceives his or her particular role in the organization”.

According to Hackman and Oldham (1975), job characteristics comprise five core dimensions: skill variety, task identity, task significance, task autonomy, and feedback. Skill variety refers to the various skills and talents that are required for jobs to be completed (Kwon & Banks, 2004). Task identity measures the ability of an employee to perform a specific task that results in an identifiable outcome (Hadi & Adil, 2010). Task significance refers to employee feelings toward the impact of a task on the lives of others in an organization or in society (Morris & Venkatesh, 2010). Task autonomy represents freedom and independence provided to the employee to make task-related decisions, e.g., work scheduling and procedures selection (Na-Nan & Pukkeeree, 2013). Feedback refers to information received by an employee about his or her performance.

Amiri et al. (2013) predicted the organizational commitment level based on the employees’ job characteristics and job roles. Using a sample from a learning organization consisting of 293 participants, they found that there is a significant correlation between the components of job characteristics (autonomy, task identity, feedback, and job challenge) and organizational commitment.

Allen, Lambert, Pasupuleti, Tolar, and Ventura (2004) also asserted that all dimensions of job characteristics have a positive correlation with organizational commitment. It is expected that organizational commitment would be positively associated to these characteristics. Therefore, the following hypothesis is presumed:

H1. Organizational commitment is positively correlated to job characteristics.

2.2 Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction

According to Yamaguchi (2013) job satisfaction is the extent to which employees are happy with their jobs. Pool and Pool (2007) measured the impact of organizational commitment on job satisfaction among executives in a learning organization. The results of their research paper found a strong relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Antonaki and Trivellas (2014) found the relationship between psychological contract breach and job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The results of Dirani and Kuchinke (2011) have shown that satisfaction was a good predictor of commitment.

Using 400 participants from the University of Malaya part-time Master of Business Administration (MBA) students and the researchers’ working peers, Yiing and Ahmad (2009) found a significant association between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Anari (2012) investigated the relationships between emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Among the findings, there is a positive significant relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The researchers also found that organizational commitment is related to job satisfaction (Falkenburg & Schyns, 2007; Humborstad & Perry, 2011; Appelbaum, et. al 2013; Olson, Bao & Parayitam, 2014).

Yucel and Bektas (2012) examined job satisfaction, organizational commitment and demographic characteristics among teachers in secondary schools in Turkey. They found that organizational commitment positively correlated with job satisfaction. Kord and Tamini (2012) concurrently confirmed that organizational commitment is significantly correlated to job satisfaction. The results of Kuruüzüm, Çetin, and Irmak (2009) have shown that job affective commitment, and normative commitment increase job satisfaction. Based on the above studies, it seems that highly committed individuals tend to be more satisfied. Hence, the following hypothesis is drawn:

H2. Organizational commitment is positively correlated to job satisfaction.

2.3 Job Characteristics and Job Satisfaction

According to job characteristics theory, Hackman and Oldham (1980) concluded that core characteristics like skill variety, task identity, task significance, task autonomy, and feedback are antecedents for organization to ensure a high level of employees' job satisfaction. Numerous previous studies revealed that all these characteristics increase job satisfaction (Ali, Said, Yunus, Abd-Kader, Ab-Latif, & Munap, 2014; Bashir & Ramay, 2008; Bhatti, Syed, & Shaikh, 2012; Kassem & Sarhan, 2013; Morris & Venkatesh, 2010; Oluwafemi, 2009; Said & Munap, 2011; Thomas, Buboltz, & Winkelspecht, 2004). Al-Tit and Hunitie (2015) found a positive link between feedback and job satisfaction.

In particular, task identity and task significance were positively related to job satisfaction (Morris & Venkatesh, 2010). Task autonomy and performance feedback were found by Mohr and Burgess (2011) to influence job satisfaction. Hadi and Adil (2010) pointed out that skill variety, task significance, and task identity were related to job satisfaction. Ling and Loo (2015) argued that the most important job characteristics that affect job satisfaction are work autonomy and task significance. One important result in Djastuti's (2010) study indicated the influence of job characteristics on job satisfaction. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was suggested:

H3. Job characteristics are positively correlated to job satisfaction.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

A representative sample of non-managerial employees consisting of 750 participants were selected randomly from three malls in Amman, Jordan. Questionnaires were self-administered to the employees. Of the distributed questionnaires, 731 were completed and returned, with a response rate of 97.5%. A total of 688 questionnaires were valid for statistical analysis. Respondents were asked to complete questionnaires based on a five-point Likert measurement scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree).

3.2 Measures

3.2.1 Organizational Commitment

The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Meyer and Allen (1993) was used for this study to measure organizational commitment (ORG COM). The scale was designed to measure three dimensions of organizational commitment: affective (AF), continuance (CO), and normative (NR) commitment. According to Meyer and Allen (1993), this scale is reliable and valid. OCQ was used by Ibrahim and Perez (2014) in the context of UAE organizations.

3.2.2 Job Characteristics

The Job Characteristics Scale (JCS) developed by Hackman and Oldham (1975) was used for this study to measure job characteristics (JOB CAR). The scale covers five job characteristics: skill variety (SV), task identity (TI), task significance (TS), task autonomy (TA), and feedback (FD). Previous studies conducted by Samad (2006) and Harry, Joe-Akunne and Oguebe (2013) confirmed the reliability and validity of this scale.

3.2.3 Job Satisfaction

The job satisfaction (JOB SAT) level of participants was measured using the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by Spector (1997). This instrument covers (14) dimensions of job satisfaction: organization's policies and procedures (PP), appreciation (AP), communication (CM), co-workers (CW), fringe benefits (FB), job conditions (JC), nature of the work itself (NW), pay (PY), personal growth (PG), promotion opportunities (PO), recognition (RC), security (SC), supervision (SU), and the nature of the organization itself (NO). The JSS was used by Jahrami, AlShuwaikh, Panchasharam and Saif (2011) to assess the job satisfaction level of healthcare workers in Bahrain.

4. Validity and Reliability

Face validity for the measure was investigated by six academic experts from Jordanian universities. Reliability, which ensures stability and consistency of the results, was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. According to Rao, Goldsby, Griffis and Iyengar (2011), a recommended value of alpha is 0.7 or more. The results of this test are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha of the scale

Variable	Dimensions	Cronbach's alpha
Commitment	Affective (AF)	0.871
	Continuance (CO)	0.779
	Normative (NR)	0.785
Job Characteristics	Skill variety (SV)	0.821
	Task identity (TI)	0.811
	Task significance (TS)	0.799
	Task autonomy (TA)	0.765
	Feedback (FD)	0.801
Job satisfaction	Organization's policies and procedures (PP)	0.875
	Appreciation (AP)	0.892
	Communication (CM)	0.793
	Co-Workers (CW)	0.788
	Fringe benefits (FB)	0.821
	Job conditions (JC)	0.831
	Nature of the work itself (NW)	0.891
	Pay (PY)	0.822
	Personal growth (PG)	0.719
	Promotion opportunities (PO)	0.766
	Recognition (RC)	0.890
	Security (SC)	0.871
	Supervision (SU)	0.831
	The nature of the organization itself (NO)	0.889

5. Results

5.1 Measurement Model and SEM

The overall fit of the model factors was done using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The results supported the goodness of fit of the model to the data ($\chi^2/df = 2.87$; goodness of fit index (GFI) = 0.931; comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.942; incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.91; root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.048. As such, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to analyze organizational commitment, job characteristics, and job satisfaction. The results of SEM are depicted in Figure 1.

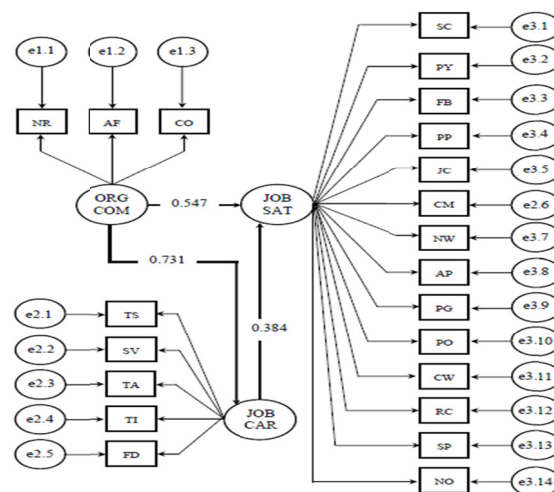


Figure 1. Results of SEM

Figure 1 shows that organizational commitment has a positive influence on job characteristics (path coefficient = 0.731). The figure also indicated that organizational commitment has a positive influence on job satisfaction (path coefficient = 0.547). Finally, the figure presents a positive influence of job characteristics on job

satisfaction (path coefficient = 0.384).

5.2 Hypotheses Test

Hypothesis 1 proposed that organizational commitment is positively correlated to job characteristics. The results indicated that organizational commitment dimensions have a positive influence on job characteristics ($\beta = 0.731$, $P < 0.001$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is supported. The results supported Hypothesis 2, which suggested that organizational commitment would be positively associated with job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.547$, $P < 0.001$). Finally, Hypothesis 3, which presumed a positive association between job characteristics and job satisfaction, was also supported ($\beta = 0.384$, $P < 0.001$).

Table 2. Results of hypothesis testing

H	IV	Path	DV	Path Coefficients	t*	P**	Results
H1:	OC	→	JC	0.731	6.871	0.000	Accepted
H2:	OC	→	JS	0.547	7.312	0.001	Accepted
H3:	JC	→	JS	0.384	5.531	0.000	Accepted

Notes. H: hypotheses, IV: independent variables, DV: dependent variables;

$\chi^2/df = 2.87$; GFI = 0.931; CFI = 0.942; RMSE = 0.048;

** significant at $P < 0.001$.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between organizational commitment, job characteristic, and job satisfaction. The required data were collected using questionnaires from 750 non-managerial participants working at three malls in Amman, the capital of Jordan. Three questionnaires were used to collect data on organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1993), job characteristics (Hackman & Oldham, 1975), and job satisfaction (Spector, 1997). Consistent to Hypothesis 1 and previous results (Allen et al., 2004, Amiri et al., 2013; Na-Nan & Pukkeeree, 2013), the results indicate that there is a positive association between organizational commitment and job characteristics. Hypothesis 2 stated that organizational commitment is positively correlated to job satisfaction. The findings supported this hypothesis. According to Yiing and Ahmad (2009); Anari (2012); Yucel and Bektas (2012); Kord and Tamini (2012) and Kuruüzüm et al. (2009), there is a significant and positive association between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. The association between job characteristics and job satisfaction, which was hypothesized by H3, was also accepted. These results are similar to those of previous studies (Ali et al., 2014; Bashir and Ramay, 2008; Bhatti et al., 2012; Kassem & Sarhan, 2013; Morris & Venkatesh, 2010; Oluwafemi, 2009; Said & Munap, 2011; Thomas et al., 2004).

In conclusion, for organizations to enhance employees' job satisfaction, more attention should be paid to organizational commitment and job characteristics, due to the implication of these findings for the organization itself. Employees who are more committed to their organizations are more satisfied with their jobs. Organizational commitment is positively correlated to job characteristics. Hence, organizational commitment predicts job satisfaction through job characteristics.

7. Limitations and Future Study

The first limitation of this study is the sample. It was selected from non-managerial employees working at three malls in Amman, Jordan. The three constructs of this study, i.e. organizational commitment, job characteristics, and job satisfaction are supposed to be measured by three questionnaires: The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Meyer and Allen (1993), The Job Characteristics Scale (JCS) developed by Hackman and Oldham (1975), and The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by Spector (1997). Future research could examine the same variables from managers' perspectives and/or in other settings.

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