

# Effect of Work Environment Characteristics on Job Involvement in an Organization: An Empirical Review

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify antecedents apart of personality traits that would influence job involvement in an organization. Considering the paucity of research on antecedents related to work environment characteristics particularly integrated factors that would affect employee job involvement. This study determines a set of work related characteristics that would predict job involvement. This paper follows the literature survey method and examines the effects of work environment characteristics on job involvement. On the basis of literature reviewed, it concludes that job involvement is significantly predicted by work environment characteristics such as organizational justice, formalization, communication, organizational support, employee empowerment, job nature, & leadership style.

## 1. Introduction

Job involvement has become a very prominent topic in the world as it can influence the organizational performance, individual performance, a nation and the world at large. The more the number of individual involve in their job in an organization, the higher will be the production which in turn leads to better economy. Job involvement influences employee productivity which in turn affects organizational performance (Sethi & Mittal, 2016). Job involved individuals find their job as a source of happiness and put extra efforts in their work on the other hand people who sees their job as burdensome show laziness in their work. Different scholars and organizations shows a great interest in employee job involvement as many organizations are facing challenges of managing and empowering their employees so that they can actively contribute towards better performance. The degree of job involvement has proven to be a predictor of both the effort an employee is willing to make and the performance that comes from this. Job involvement stimulates motivational processes that influence motivation, efforts, and ultimately the performance Brown (1996). Khalid and Rehman (2011) posits that job involvement can be described as a motivation to carry out work and it is highly compatible between individual and organizational goals, which encourage motivation among the employees to give positive and favorable work outcomes.

Hung (2008) identified job involvement as a fixed variable which critically control the employees' work attitudes, such as job satisfaction, tendency to resign, and organizational commitment. People who are highly involved in their job will take their job more seriously and are concern about their work because they will have higher self esteem in their job. Earlier researches on job involvement were linked with employees attitude and behavior such as leader-member exchange

(Ouyang et al., 2010); OCB (Ueda, 2012); job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust (Ouyang et al., 2010; Ekmekci, 2011; Toga & Mjoli, 2013; Ahamed & Islam, 2014; Rahati et al., 2015; Farhangian, 2016; Culibrk et al., 2018); pshychological empowerment (Razak et al., 2017); individual competency (Narayanawamy & Rao, 2014); emotional labor and psychological capital (Sheue FU, 2015); job performance (Rotenberry & Moberg, 2007; Mildred, 2016; Aleinein, 2016); personality traits (Liao & Lee, 2009) such as caring behavior (Chan et al., 2015); work life balance (Asarkaya & Erdogan, 2014); quality of work life (Salem & Jarad, 2015); turnover intention (Sjoberg & Sverke, 2000); intrinsic motivation and employee retention (Mgedezi et al., 2014); talent management (Beheshtifar & Ziaadini, 2012).

Demographic variables effect on job involvement of employees (Kalpana & Gunasundari, 2016; Kalpana & Dharamraj, 2018); gender and organizational politics (Tochukwu et al., 2015). Researches revealed that both personality and environmental traits are important antecedent of job involvement (Rabinowitz, et al., 1977; Newton and Keenan, 1983; McKelvey & Sekaran, 1977). But most of the studies had studied the effect of various antecedents related to personality traits on job involvement. Impact of workplace characteristics on job involvement had also grab the attention of the scholars but they analyzed the individual workplace characteristics such as organizational support, organizational climate etc in separation. The current study identified the integrated factors that are related with work environment characteristics. Table 1. illustrated antecedents of job involvement identified by different researchers:

Table 1. Review of Antecedents identified

| S.N | Author           | Antecedents Identified  | Outcome  |
|-----|------------------|---|--|
| 1.  | Wyk et al (2003) | Job satisfaction, personality variable, entrepreneurial attitude, career orientation, type A behaviour, locus of control and self | Significant positive relation was found between all antecedents and job involvement. |

|     |                                    |  |  |
|-----|------------------------------------|--|--|
|     |                                    | concept  |  |
| 2.  | <b>Carmeli (2005)</b>              | Personal–related factors (protestant work ethic & normative); situational-related factors (perceived external prestige, job satisfaction and affective commitment) | Both personal-related & situational –related factor predict job involvement  |
| 3.  | <b>Hao et al (2009)</b>            | Perceived organizational support and peer relationship   | Both had significant effect on job involvement.  |
| 4.  | <b>Seng et al (2012)</b>           | Motivational, personal factor, training and job characteristics  | All factors had significant positive relationship with employee job involvement.   |
| 5.  | <b>Nkrumah (2013)</b>              | Organizational Trust and Organizational Empowerment  | Both had a positive relation with job involvement.   |
| 6.  | <b>Lubakaya, (2014)</b>            | Motivation, employee personality, training and job characteristics   | All identified factors help in increasing the level of job involvement.  |
| 7.  | <b>Ravangard et al (2014)</b>      | Personality traits such as Risk taking orientation, Internal locus of control, Achievement orientation   | Significant & positive relations were found with achievement orientation and being formal and official.  |
| 8.  | <b>Aderemi et al (2015)</b>        | Psychological factors (incentives, staff discipline, religiosity, self esteem and length of service).  | Result revealed that all the factors jointly significantly predict job involvement. But individually only incentives, staff discipline and self-esteem had significant influence while religiosity and length of service does not influence job involvement. |
| 9.  | <b>Sukri et al (2015)</b>          | Motivation, OCB and Job Satisfaction   | OCB and job satisfaction influence job involvement while motivation was not found related to job involvement   |
| 10. | <b>Alshammari et al (2016)</b>     | Organizational attractiveness, pay satisfaction and organizational support   | Result revealed that none of the predictor had significant influence on Job Involvement.   |
| 11. | <b>Bolelli &amp; Durmus (2017)</b> | Work attitudes   | Generation Y work attitude influence job involvement as they consider their jobs in the center of their lives and also builds their personal lives around it.  |

Source: Compiled by researcher

**1.1. Job Involvement**

Job involvement is the degree to which a person is identifies themselves psychologically with their work, or the importance of it in their total self image (Stoner, & Gallagher, 2010). The concept of job involvement was first given by Lodahl and Kejiner (1965). It has been defined in many ways by different researchers in the literature. Griffin et al. (2010) refer job involvement as the degree to which a person identifies the significance of a job in his or her life. Job involvement is the degree to which the person believes that job situation is crucial & central part of his or her identity (Lawler and Hall, 1970). Based in the various definition given by researchers job involvement can be classified into four categories 1) Active contribution to the job 2) Work is considered as a central life of interest 3) Performance compatibility with the self-concepts, 4) Performance as central to self-esteem and 5) Fulfill individual cognitive needs (Ishfaq and Talat, 2011; Hung, 2008). Job involvement can be defined more accurately when it is considered as set of attitudes comprising of emotional and behavioral component that are influenced by environment Nazem & Mozaiini (2014). This approach regarding job involvement shows the impact of organizational characteristics on the level of job involvement.

Brown (1996) argues that job involvement can be enhanced when the work environment 1) makes an individual believe that their work is important, 2) provide authority or control over how work should be done, 3) maintains a clear cut behavioural norms, 4) provide proper feedback, and 5) maintain supportive and co-operative relations with supervisors and co-workers. Job involvement is very much related to job identity. Involved person know his job as himself demonstrator. These people put their all effort to accomplish organizational goals. Hence, job involvement is an area of great concern for the management of any organization.

**2. Objective of the study**

The primary objective of the current paper is to study the effect of various work-related characteristics on the job involvement of an individual.

**3. Research Design**

The study would provide evidence from the existing literature showing the effect of work environment characteristics on job involvement. Following theoretical framework will provide an idea of the present study:



#### 4. Antecedents of Job Involvement: Literature Review

Individual's level of job involvement can be influenced by three possible sources such as 1) personal background and socialization (Dubin, 1956; Lodahl, 1964), 2) job characteristics (Vroom, 1962; McGregor, 1960) or 3) a combination of job and personal factors (Lawler & Hall, 1970; Farris, 1971; Lodahl & Keijner, 1965). Glisson and Durick (1988) identified three types of factors; organizational, task and worker characteristics. This paper studied the effect of work environment characteristics on job involvement. Job characteristics refers to work-related factors that include the nature of the work itself and job-related skills, benefits, organizational climate, culture, autonomy, salary, job security, challenges, feedback, knowledge acquired, interpersonal relationships as well as developmental opportunities (Chen and Chiu, 2009). Previous researches have taken only single or few dimensions of work-related characteristics. This paper makes an attempt to identify some more work-related characteristics based on the literature available. Scott, (2000) in one of his study reported that working conditions is associated with employees' job involvement. Following are antecedents of job involvement:

##### 4.1 Organisational Justice

The issues of justice and fairness are key concern areas for the employees of organizations. Researchers identified three dimensions of organizational justice such as distributive justice that is concerns with distribution of rewards, procedural justice concerns with decision-making procedure related to employees and the last dimension is interactional justice which deals with fairness in the interpersonal relations among employer and employee (Kim and Leung, 2007; Golparvar and Nadi, 2010). All three dimensions of justice were considered significant workplace variable in shaping job involvement (Kaya, 2013). Greenberg (1990) suggested that organizational justice research results in various behavioural outcomes such as trust, job involvement and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) (Moorman, 1991; Na'ami and Shokrkon, 2006). Distributive and Procedural Justice had significantly positive impact while Interactional Justice had negative impact on Job Involvement (Ahmadi, 2011). However, (Akintayo & Ayodele, 2012) revealed that all dimensions of organizational justice had significant influence on job involvement. Abrow et al., 2013 concluded that organizational justice affects organizational trust which in turn leads to job involvement.

##### 4.2 Formalization

Formalization refers to the rules and regulation which (written) are established and known by organizational members (Bluedorn, 1982; Price & Mueller, 1986). Formalization provides guidance to the staff to do their job effectively which in turn allows staff the chance of being successful at their jobs, and in turn increases their level of job involvement. On the other hand an unclear environment where employees do not understand how to work effectively leads to job stress. Perception of formalization, structural factors and instrumental communication (i.e salient work information is transferred) had significant and positive relationship with job

involvement (Sharma, 2016; Lambert et al., 2016). However, too much formalization act as constraining factor for business performance and therefore negatively related to individual and business performance (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004).

##### 4.3 Organizational Climate

Organizational climate reveals employees perception of their work environment and their interpretation of the organization. A better perception of organization can effect job involvement. Significant relationship was found between organization climate and job involvement (Gheisari et al., 2014; Pourkaini et al., 2014; Puri & Sexena, 2015). Organizational climate can be defined as the behavioral pattern, attitudes and feeling which is repetitive in nature that characterizes life in the organization (Isaksen & Ekvall, 2007). Employees having healthy work environment would progress by applying all their power in order to achieve greater efficiency (Gonzalez & Grazzo, 2006). Brown and leigh (1996) noted that the perception of favourable psychological climate would accentuate an individual's clarity and attachment to his/her job and would increase his/her level of job involvement. Ebrahimi & Mohamadkhani (2014) found significant relationship between some of the dimension of organizational climate such as aloofness and production emphasis and job involvement while no relationship found between dimensions such as hindrance, intimacy, and consideration and job involvement.

##### 4.4 Communication

It is the degree to which information about the job is formally communicated by an organization to its members (Agho, Mueller, & Price, 1993). Effective communication helps employees to receive important information so they can function more effectively at their jobs and in the organization (Bluedorn, 1982; Price & Mueller, 1986). Brown (1996) considers communication as supervisory variables in influencing job involvement. Gibbons (2006) claims that managers are required to communicate effectively to elevate employees involvement in the workplace and drive organizational success (Dasgupta et al., 2012; Lolli, 2013). Akinbola (2011) also claimed that communication is one of the factors that significantly influence job involvement. Failure in effective communication on manager's part would directly or indirectly affect individuals and organizations (Pretorius & Roux, 2011; Rudd & Mills, 2015). Fahimi & Mahoomi (2014) identified that different communication style of managers such as control style, style equality, structural style and dynamic style had significant and positive impact on job involvement. A study by Kim et al (2015) concludes that communication influence job involvement partially mediated by emotion. It is believed that human express their emotions through their communication skills (Harris, 2008).

##### 4.5 Organizational Support

Eisenberger et al (1986) defined perceived organizational support (POS) as the extent to which the organization values its employee's contributions and cares about their wellbeing. Riggles et al (2009) noted that POS has a positive effect on employees' job involvement. Organizational support as per the

needs, desire and expectation of the employees leads to increased job involvement (**Tuazon, 2016**). In other words, when an organization provides support to their employees then this would increase their quality of work as well as job involvement. If employees do not perceive the organization as supportive then the employees may view their tasks as unpleasant and this would lead to job dissatisfaction, consequently leading to less job involvement. Meaningful relationship exists between perceived organizational support and job involvement (**Gorji et al., 2014**). When the organization supports its employees by actively involved in the welfare of employees, by providing a good pay, improved working conditions, cordial working relation and a satisfying working environment then this lead to active employee participation and employee satisfaction hence enhancing job involvement which ultimately leads to effectiveness.

#### 4.6 Employee Empowerment

Employee empowerment comprises of motivational techniques that are required to increase the participation of employees to enhance their performance (**Vecchio, 2000**). Participation into decision making had a positive effect on job involvement (**Lambert & Paoline, III 2012**). When employees are having higher decision-making authority and their contributions affect their company's success or failure, then their job involvement will increase. Employees' empowerment increases job involvement and encourages good employee relationship in an organization. When management involve its employees in decision making process of the organizations they feel motivated. Significant positive relationship found between employee empowerment and job involvement (**Noorliza and Hasni, 2006**). Empowered employees make the organization to survive, grow and face challenges with confidence **Hamed (2010)**. Pshychological empowerment directly influences job involvement (**Behtooee, 2016**).

#### 4.7 Job Nature

In 1980, Hackman & Oldham establish job characteristics theory and propose main dimensions of the theory such as skill variety, job nature, job importance, autonomy or independence, feedback from job (**Zhao, Ghiselli Law & Ma, 2016**). It is said that higher the skill variety, job nature, job value, independence-seeking, and job feedback of the employees the greater will be their motivation, enthusiasm and job involvement (**Davani, 2016**). If a job is designed in such a way that it requires different activities, skills and talent then such job not only creates a feeling of satisfaction and non-

monotony but also creates a feeling of motivation and involvement for the job in the person. When job nature or the responsibilities related to the job are clearly defined to the staff and the staff has complete knowledge of their job then this would lead more satisfaction, motivation, and job involvement. High motivating job characteristics such as skill variety, task significance, task identity, autonomy and feedback are positively related to employees' job involvement. Job involvement is influenced by job characteristics as employees motivation can be increased by core job characteristics **Lubakaya (2014)**.

#### 4.8 Leadership style

Relatively stable patterns of behavior displayed by leaders are found to be positively related to job involvement (**Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & Engen, 2003**). **Catano, Pond & Kelloway (2001)** noted that from all the leadership styles, transformational leadership has a positive influence on the work involvement of employees. **Bakker (2014)** concluded that transformational leadership is an antecedent of job involvement as transformational leaders focused on inspiring the workers and encouraging them to develop in their job. Transformational leaders inspire their followers to be involved in the task and challenges to accomplish it properly. A research by **Nazem & Mozaiini (2014)** indicate that there exist a relationship between the leadership style and employees' job involvement. **Cohen (1995)** in his study concluded that there exists a strong relationship between leadership style and job involvement. **Fang (2011)** had also concluded that transformational leadership styles and pragmatic leadership style influence the job involvement. **Padhy (2015)** found that transformational leadership improved employee performance through organizational commitment and job involvement.

### 5. Conclusion and Practical Implications

This study makes an important contribution to the literature on job involvement. This study also identifies some of the antecedents related to work environment characteristics and examines its effects. It highlights the significance of job involvement among employees to achieve organizational effectiveness. Job involvement is predicted by work environment characteristics such as organizational justice, formalization, communication, organizational support, employee empowerment, job nature, & leadership style. This paper will be helpful to the organization and top management in identifying such antecedents which effect employees' job involvement and in turn organizational performance.

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