

**Research Article**

**AN INVESTIGATION ON THE EFFECTS OF LEADING DIMENSIONS OF OCCUPATION ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT BASED ON HACKMAN & OLDFAM'S JOB CHARACTERISTICS MODEL (CASE STUDY: EMPLOYEES OF COPPER COMPANY, BABAK COUNTY, 2012-2013)**

**Sanjar Salajeghe<sup>1</sup>, \*Reza Farahmand<sup>2</sup> and Esmat Hassanpour<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Management, Kerman Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran

<sup>2</sup>Department of Management, Sharbabak Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sharbabak, Iran

<sup>3</sup>Department of Educational Sciences, Payame Noor University, Sharbabak, I.R. Iran

\*Author for Correspondence

**ABSTRACT**

The present research studies the organizational commitment for the important reason that organizations taking advantage of members with high level of commitment generally do well out of better performances and fewer absences, delays, and changes. This is, thus, to study the effects of job characteristics (variation of duties, job identity, occupational importance, independence, feedback) on organizational commitment through which absences and less working would be reduced. The statistical population included 214 who were selected according to Krejcie and Morgan table and 121 were picked out as the statistical sample. Allen and Meyer's Organizational Commitment scale and job qualifications questionnaire with Cronbach's alpha estimated at 0.85 and 0.78 were employed to collect data. Data were analyzed in SPSS 16 by means of Pearson correlation tests and regression analysis. Results revealed that there was a significant correlation between occupational dimensions and organizational commitment. As such, the importance of duties had the strongest and variation of tasks had the least impact on organizational commitment.

**Keywords:** *Organizational Commitment, Hackman & Oldham's Job Characteristics Model, Importance of Duties and Variation of Tasks*

**INTRODUCTION**

Given the dramatic rate at which organizational environment is changing, people are also affected by such environmental dynamism.

The most substantial changes are granting authority and the power of decision-making to members, for the reason that people who live in the era of information and communication and the scientific growth are attentive and competent ones searching for jurisdiction. Workers are under intense financial pressures and do not feel free from the cares of economic matters, they though search for works featuring with occupational independence to feel a sense of value.

Organizational commitment is an important provocative notion that has been spread throughout psychological, industrial and organizational studies in West (Ismaeili, 2004). Having a strong impact on employees' organizational behavior and productivity, organizational commitment refers to positive and negative insights people have into the whole of organization in which they work. Committed individuals have strong faith in their organization. Any factor raising commitment and strengthening organizational ties is of the utmost importance.

On the other hand, commitment is a sort of independence on and affection toward an organization. This is then a matter of employees' faith in their organization. It is truly a perpetual process in which members express their care and interest toward their organization and its prosperity and productivity (Majidi, 1997). The research studies the correlation between job characteristics and organizational commitments to answer this question that do these qualities have any impact on employees' organizational commitment?

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### **Research Literature**

#### **Organizational Commitment**

Meyer *et al.*, are of pioneers in multi-dimension approaches. Their three dimensional model of organizational commitment consists of affective, continuous and normative outlooks.

##### **A. Emotional Commitment**

Allen and Meyer define affective commitment as individuals' emotional dependence on their organizations and being identified through this. Emotional commitment, given this definition, includes three facets:

1. A form of affective dependence on the organization;
2. People's tendency to being identified by means of their organization; and
3. Tendency to continue the activities in the organization.

Buchanan (1974) calls organizational commitment as an affective and biased faith in organizational values and purposes. That is to say, it is a dependence on the role that individuals have in relation to the values and purposes of an organization due to the organization not because of its instrumental values.

##### **B. Continuous Commitment**

Allen and Mayer describe the continuous commitment as a psychological attachment to the organization which arises from what employees think they would lose by leaving the organization. To put it another way, the continuous commitment is being aware of the cost of leaving the organization. In this form of commitment, the major reason that causes employees to remain in organizations is an attempt to keep benefits obtained by working for them.

##### **C. Normative Commitment**

The third and the least widespread dimension is the normative commitment which is a sense of duty to continue cooperation with the organization. These committed ones feel that they are forced to remain in the current organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Randle and Kootie (1990) believe that the normative commitment is a moral duty that the person has against what an organization has invested on him/her. According to them, employees have such feeling and tend to stay when the organization is prepared to expend large sums in his/better better performances. Orilie *et al.*, (1991) assess the normative commitment based on values. They propose that this is the mutual relationship between the employee's values and the organization that shapes the organizational commitment. Defending this approach, Mayer and Scorman (1992) acknowledge the normative commitment as accepted goals and values of the organization by employees. Kiliti, Goldsmith and Boun conducted profound studies on identifying and explaining characteristics bringing about prosperity for managers and assisting clients to apply them to their own company or organization. The most impressive managers have identical act within five commitments (Rezaeian, 1995):

1. Commitment to clients
2. Commitment to self
3. Commitment to people
4. Commitment to duties
5. Commitment to the organization

#### **Factors Affecting Organizational Commitment**

In a study, Mowdey *et al.*, (1993) refer to factors affecting employees' organizational commitment:

1. Commitment is affected by different sides of occupation: employees who take jobs with high granted authorities, less repetition and more amiability are more committed. On the other hand, rare opportunity to progress, more tension and ambiguity in tasks would lessen the commitment to organization.
2. Commitment is affected by alternative employment opportunities: when a window of job opportunities is well open to an employee, he/she may show less commitment to his/her organization.
3. Commitment is affected by personal traits: older and more experienced employees and those who love their job are much more committed to their organization. Women were traditionally thought to display less commitment to their job. Recent studies, however, reject such differences and reveal that the sense of commitment is alike in both.

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4. Commitment is, finally, affected by environmental factors: employees who are satisfied of their supervisors and see that their performances are fairly assessed feel that their well-being is one of the challenges of the organization. They, thus, demonstrate a stronger commitment to it (Mowday *et al.*, 1993).

To evaluate and elaborate the preconditions of organizational commitment, Allen and Mayer list the prerequisites of affective commitment:

1. Job challenges
2. Clarity of roles
3. Clarity of goals
4. Difficulty of goals
5. Receptivity of management (i.e. the act of accepting employees' proposals by managers)
6. Solidarity of management
7. Devotion to the organization
8. Justice (i.e. a level in which employees are fairly treated)
9. Personal importance (i.e. a level in which employees think that they are important for the company)
10. Feedback (i.e. a level in which employees receive the feedback of their performances)
11. Participation (i.e. a level in which employees are allowed to make decision for their work).

### **Guidelines for Increasing Organizational Commitment**

As mentioned, organizational commitment seems to be spread out within organizations as an important subject. Here are several guidelines to improve the employees' commitment:

- Strengthening the employee's affective attachment to the organization and engaging them in organizational objectives;
- Improving the social communication networks at work;
- Engaging employees in decision-making;
- Explaining the organizational objectives and focusing on perspectives that create social values
- Eliminating working obstacles and developing a well-designed system of award and punishment
- Eliminating prejudiced opinions and incorrect relations people have at their workplace and a relative independence to do tasks
- Providing the ground for showing creativity and innovation

### **Theory of Job Characteristics**

Practicing the studies on personal differences, Hackman and Oldham proposed job characteristics theory. According to them, the psychological manners shape the core of the theory. They believe that psychological states demonstrate that how an employee response to his/her task is affected by job characteristics. The researchers define these states take form when:

- The job is meaningful
- The responsibility of the results is taken on
- There is awareness of the results

### **Theory of the Essential Job Characteristics**

Job characteristics-based method was proposed by Turner and Lawrence in mid 1960s. To measure the effects of career on employees' job satisfaction and the number of absences, they offered a research methodology. The researchers predicted that employees prefer jobs that are complicated and challenging. In simpler words, these jobs bring about satisfaction and reduce the number of absences. They defined the job complications according to six characteristics: (1) variation; (2) independence; (3) responsibility; (4) knowledge and skills; (5) social interactions which are required; and (6) social interactions which are arbitrary.

Accordingly, the higher the score, the more complicated the job would be. This theory is important for three reasons: Firstly, it can be proved that employees show different reactions to different job opportunities; secondly, a set of characteristics can be enumerated in order to assess the jobs; and thirdly, personal demands are taken into consideration to see how personal differences cause different reactions to different jobs (Robins, 2004).

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**Job Characteristics Model**

The theory Turner and Lawrence offered based on job preconditions is the foundation of what we can now define as job characteristics and find the relation between motivation, performance and job satisfaction. This means that Hackman and Oldham could design a model for job characteristics accordingly (Robins, 2004).

Stoner *et al.*, (2003) stated that Hackman *et al.*, thought that employees required high motivations to do their job and they considered five dimensions. Based on job characteristics model, any job can be described on five leading perspectives:

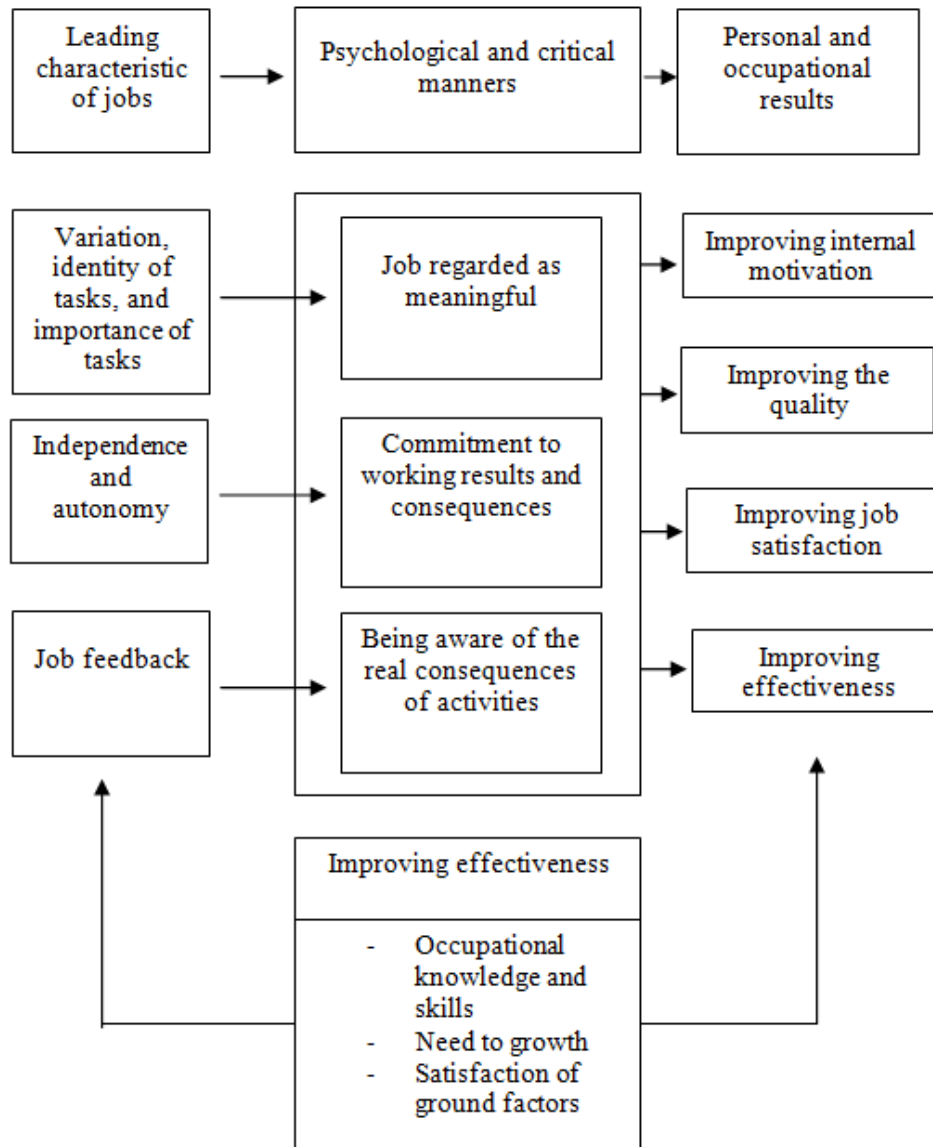
Variation: jobs include various tasks and people may benefit from various skills to carry out them.

Job identity: tasks are designated from the very beginning to the end to particular individuals. Employees, in fact, have a clear image of their occupational tasks. This is a substantial part of job.

Importance: jobs are important and have noticeable effect on people’s life and career.

Independence: employees need to have relative autonomy in planning and defining their tasks.

Feedback: jobs are defined as to present clear and direct information about the effectiveness of results and performances.



**Figure 1: Job characteristics model by Hackman and Oldham**

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### Provocative Power of Jobs

As a job may be regarded as higher in rank based on some characteristics and one lower, it is a good idea to define an occupational status according to all features and characteristics. This can be accomplished by providing a benchmark consisting of five job characteristics. When scores are obtained, the provocative power of jobs can be achieved by means of the following formula:

$$\text{Provocative Power} = \frac{\text{Feedback} \times \text{Independence} \times \{ \text{Importance} + \text{Identity} + \text{Variation} \}}{3}$$

As understood from the above formula, a job with high provocative power requires at least one or more of triple dimensions that make job meaningful and should bring about high independence and feedback to employees. Lower scores for independence and feedback would radically reduce the provocative power. Therefore, to improve internal motivation, there should be higher commitment to consequences. The above psychological states would be high unless there are not improved level of independence and feedback. To put it differently, lower scores in any of job characteristics having nothing to do with meaningfulness may not significantly decrease the provocative power of jobs. In fact, other features contributing to meaningfulness can roughly make for the low scores in one or two mentioned characteristics (Hackman and Oldham, 1992).

### Research Hypothesis

#### Leading Hypothesis

There is a significant correlation between job characteristics and employees' organizational commitment.

#### Secondary Hypotheses

1. There is a significant correlation between job variation and employees' organizational commitment.
2. There is a significant correlation between job meaningfulness and employees' organizational commitment.
3. There is a significant correlation between job importance and employees' organizational commitment.
4. There is a significant correlation between independence and employees' organizational commitment.
5. There is a significant correlation between job feedback and employees' organizational commitment.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

As studies the correlation of variables, this is descriptive correlation research and a cross-sectional study in case of collecting data. The statistical population includes all 214 employees of Copper Company, Babak County. 121 were selected as the statistical sample according to Krejcie and Morgan table. Data was collected by means of Allen and Meyer's Organizational Commitment scale consisting of 24 questions and job characteristics questionnaire with 15 questions. Cronbach's alphas were estimated at 0.85 and 0.78. The research hypotheses were tested by Pearson correlation coefficient in order to estimate the model by linear regression.

### Data Analysis

#### Leading Hypothesis

There is a significant correlation between job characteristics and employees' organizational commitment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is a significant correlation between job characteristics and employees' organizational commitment.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is not any significant correlation between job characteristics and employees' organizational commitment.

According to the above level of significance (p<0.05), it is concluded that there is a significant correlation between employees' job characteristics and organizational commitment. Given the correlation coefficient 0.41, the intensity is average for the relation and its direction is straight. This means that job characteristics have strong effect on organizational commitment.

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**Table 1: Pearson correlation test results, the leading hypothesis**

		Job Dimensions	Organizational Commitment
Organizational Commitment	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	1	.410
	Significance	-	.000
	Number	121	121
Job Dimensions	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	.410	1
	Significance	.000	-
	Number	121	121

**Leading Hypothesis**

*First Hypothesis:* There is a significant correlation between task variations and employees’ organizational commitment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is a significant correlation between task variations and employees’ organizational commitment.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is not any significant correlation between task variations and employees’ organizational commitment.

**Table 2: Pearson correlation test results, the first hypothesis**

		Task Variations	Organizational Commitment
Task Variations	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	1	.050
	Level of Significance	-	.592
	Number	121	121
Organizational Commitment	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	.050	1
	Level of Significance	.592	-
	Number	121	121

According to table 2, as the level of significance is higher than 0.05, there is a significant correlation between task variations and employees’ organizational commitment.

*Second Hypothesis:* There is a significant correlation between the identity of jobs and employees’ organizational commitment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is a significant correlation between the identity of jobs and employees’ organizational commitment.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is not any significant correlation between the identity of jobs and employees’ organizational commitment.

**Table 3: Pearson correlation test results, the second hypothesis**

		The Identity of Jobs	Organizational Commitment
The Identity of Jobs	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	1	.162
	Significance	-	.068
	Number	121	121
Organizational Commitment	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	.162	1
	Significance	.068	-
	Number	121	121

According to table 3, as the level of significance is higher than 0.05, there is a significant correlation between the identity of jobs and employees’ organizational commitment.



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**Third Hypothesis:** There is a significant correlation between job importance and employees’ organizational commitment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is a significant correlation between job importance and employees’ organizational commitment.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is not any significant correlation between job importance and employees’ organizational commitment.

**Table 4: Pearson correlation test results, the third hypothesis**

			<b>Job Importance</b>	<b>Organizational Commitment</b>
Jobs Importance	Pearson	Correlation	1	.352
	Coefficient			
	Significance		-	.000
	Number		121	121
Organizational Commitment	Pearson	Correlation	.352	1
	Coefficient			
	Significance		.000	-
	Number		121	121

According to table 4, as the level of significance is less than 0.05, there is a significant correlation between job importance and employees’ organizational commitment. Regarding the correlation coefficient 0.35, the intensity is average for the relation.

**Fourth Hypothesis:** There is a significant correlation between job independence and employees’ organizational commitment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is a significant correlation between job independence and employees’ organizational commitment.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is not any significant correlation between job independence and employees’ organizational commitment.

**Table 5: Pearson correlation test results, the fourth hypothesis**

			<b>Job Independence</b>	<b>Organizational Commitment</b>
Job Independence	Pearson	Correlation	1	.186
	Coefficient			
	Significance		-	.034
	Number		121	121
Organizational Commitment	Pearson	Correlation	.186	1
	Coefficient			
	Significance		.034	-
	Number		121	121

**Table 6: Pearson correlation test results, the fifth hypothesis**

			<b>Job Feedback</b>	<b>Organizational Commitment</b>
Job Feedback	Pearson	Correlation	1	.228
	Coefficient			
	Significance		-	.12
	Number		121	121
Organizational Commitment	Pearson	Correlation	.228	1
	Coefficient			
	Significance		.012	-
	Number		121	121

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According to table 5, as the level of significance is less than 0.05, there is a significant correlation between job independence and employees’ organizational commitment.

**Fifth Hypothesis:** There is a significant correlation between job feedback and employees’ organizational commitment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is a significant correlation between job feedback and employees’ organizational commitment.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is not any significant correlation between job feedback and employees’ organizational commitment.

According to table 6, as the level of significance is less than 0.05, there is a significant correlation between job feedback and employees’ organizational commitment.

**Multiple-Linear Regression**

Having studied all variables, ones pertaining to job characteristics are examined by multiple-linear regression. Independent variables are first considered along with organizational commitment by step by step method.

**Table 7: Multiple correlational coefficients in regression model**

Model	Standard Deviation of Multiple Coefficient	Standard Multiple Coefficient	Multiple Coefficient	Multiple Correlational Coefficient
1	.32235	.129	.139	.352
2	.31061	.197	.208	.463

According to table 7 and model 1, when there is the variable of job importance, the correlational coefficient is estimated at 0.352.

On the other hand, the standard-multiple coefficient in model 2 is 0.197 which shows that the dependent variable does not change into an independent one.

**Table 8: Analysis results of variance**

Model		Mean-Squares	Df	Sum of Squares	F	Sig
1	Regression	1.831	1	1.841	17.717	.000
	Remnant	11.435	120	.104		
	Total	13.266	121			
2	Regression	2.743	2	1.377	14.277	.000
	Remnant	10.512	120	.096		
	Total	13.255	121			

According to table 8, the level of significance of variance analysis in the above model is less than 0.05 which shows the significant effect of job importance and feedback on regression model.

**Table 9: Analysis results of regression model**

Model		Coefficient	Standard Error	Correlation Coefficient	t	Sig
1	constant	2.825	.160		17.637	.000
	Job Importance	.168	.040	.372	4.209	
	Constant	2.289	.233		9.832	.000
2	Job Importance	.166	.038	.369	4.332	.000
	Feedback	.156	.051	.262	3.078	.000

According to table 9, the statistical model in model 2 is:

$$Y = 2.289 + 0.166 x_1 + 0.156 x_2$$



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### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### ***The Leading Hypothesis***

According to table 1 and results obtained from Pearson correlation test, there is a significant correlation between organizational commitment as the dependent variable and job characteristics as the independent variable.  $H_0$  is, thus, rejected and  $H_1$  is verified. Given the correlation coefficient, the intensity is average for the relation and the direction is straight. This means that organizational commitment is affected by job characteristics.

#### ***First Hypothesis***

According to table 2 and results obtained from Pearson correlation test, there is not any significant correlation between the job variation and organizational commitment as the independent variable.  $H_0$  is, thus, verified and  $H_1$  is rejected. This means that organizational commitment is not affected by job characteristics.

#### ***Second Hypothesis***

According to table 3, there is not any significant correlation between the job identity and organizational commitment.  $H_0$  is, thus, verified and  $H_1$  is rejected. This means that organizational commitment is not affected by job identity.

#### ***Third Hypothesis***

According to table 4, there is a significant correlation between the job importance and organizational commitment.  $H_0$  is, thus, rejected and  $H_1$  is verified. Given the correlation coefficient, the intensity is average for the relation and the direction is straight. This means that organizational commitment is affected by job identity.

#### ***Fourth Hypothesis***

According to table 5, there is a significant correlation between the job independence and organizational commitment.  $H_0$  is, thus, rejected and  $H_1$  is verified. Given the correlation coefficient, the intensity is poor for the relation and the direction is straight. This means that organizational commitment is affected by job independence.

#### ***Fifth Hypothesis***

According to table 6 and results obtained from Pearson correlation test, there is a significant correlation between the job feedback and organizational commitment.  $H_0$  is, thus, rejected and  $H_1$  is verified. Given the correlation coefficient, the intensity is poor for the relation and the direction is straight. This means that organizational commitment is affected by job feedback.

#### ***Other Results***

Regression results revealed that if we enter separately the variables of job dimensions into regression model, the significant correlation is just observed between job importance and feedback and organizational commitment.

#### ***Suggestions***

1. It is recommended to ask employees presenting a report of their daily performance to the supervisor and receive feedback.
2. As tasks are divided among employees and anyone is responsible to carry out a part, the identity of job is somewhat vanished. It is recommended to designate works to groups.
3. Since employees are not free to independently do their jobs, it is recommended to intensify the organizational commitment by giving them the chance of invention.
4. It is recommended to hold educational courses at the start of or during working to express the importance of job and define their particular mission.

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