



**The relationship between organizational voice and organizational commitment: the  
mediating role of job engagement**

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**Abstract:**

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between organizational voice and organizational commitment within a mediating role of job engagement. The study method was descriptive and correlational. The participants of this research comprised all the employees of Mohaghegh University of Ardabil and 200 samples were selected using stratified random sampling. A questionnaire was used to collect the information and LISREL software was used to analyze the data. The results showed that the direct effect of organizational voice and job engagement on organizational commitment is significant. In addition, the organizational voice indirectly affects organizational commitment through job engagement.

**Keywords:** job engagement, commitment, organizational voice



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*Revista Publicando, 4 No 13. (1). 2017,718-729. ISSN 1390-9*

### **Introduction:**

In today's competitive world, the most fundamental issue facing organizations with regard to growth is the organizational commitment of employees (Gruman and Saks, 2011). In organizations, the use of opportunities for success depends on the organizational commitment of employees (Frankovsky, Istvanikova, Stefko, 2009). Organizational commitment of employees and manpower as one of the job attitudes is considered one of the factors that affects the organization's effectiveness (Warner, Hegtvedt, Roman, 2005). Allen and Meyer (1999) created the organizational commitment model as a type of attitude that demonstrates the interest and loyalty of employees in the organization and their willingness to remain in the organization (quoted from Leephaijaroen and Siripapun, 2016). Allen and Meyer (1999) (quoted from Leephaijaroen & Siripapun, 2016) divided organizational commitment into three dimensions of emotional commitment. These involve, firstly, the psychological and emotional dependence of employees to the organization, so that people will introduce themselves with the organization; secondly, the continuance commitment refers to the propensity to stay in the organization, as a result of an awareness of how the cost of leaving the organization increases; and, thirdly, normative commitment, which refers to people's beliefs and values based on desirability in the organization (Handlon, 2009). The results indicate that organizational commitment has a positive relationship with certain consequences, such as job motivation (Bahrami et al., 2016), OCB (Leephaijaroen & Siripapun, 2016) and job performance (Shiuan, Yn, Relley, 2003). Kochand Steers (1987) divide factors affecting organizational commitment to personal factors, external factors and organizational factors. Including organizational factors that affect organizational commitment is job engagement (Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014) and organizational voice (Thomaset al., 2010).

In recent years, attention to job engagement as an organizational variable has created a number of discussions and studies (Bakker & Leiter, 2010). Job engagement refers to a penetrating, stable and positive work-related mental mode that is characterized by three components of delight, devoted and absorption (Schoufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2001). Eagerness to work with high energy levels, mental flexibility when working, willingness to invest and resistance when confronting problems. Absorption is referred to the deep focus of an individual to their work,



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with hardly a break away from their work. Time passes quickly and they forget everything around them while performing their work. Devotion is described as having the perception of a meaningful sense of doing work, having a sense of enthusiasm and pride from performing work, and a challenging sense of work (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008). According to a study by Bakker & Leiter (2010), eager employees are fascinated by their jobs and how well they are performing in their job assignments. The results show that job engagement has a direct and positive relationship with positive consequences, such as organizational commitment, strengthened organizational citizenship behaviors and job motivation (Seibert, Wang, & Courtright, 2011) and is negatively associated with turnover intention (Hakanen, Hakanen, Bakker and Demerouti, 2005). According to the model of job engagement by Bakker and Demerouti (2008), regarding some job and personal resources in the workplace, creating job engagement in employees leads to positive outcomes in the workplace. Past research has shown that one of the predictors of job engagement is organizational voice (Kwon, Farndale, Park, & Gyu 2016; Cheng, Lu, Chang, & Steward, 2012).

In the present era, listening to the voices of employees within an organization is of particular importance. This is because, in order to achieve organizational goals in today's competitive environment, the relationships between managers and employees in organizations should be such that subordinates are able to express their ideas in order to improve the outcome of the organization (Hams, 2012). Hirschman (1970) was the first to propose the so-called 'voice'. Eisenberg and Goodall (2001) have defined organizational voice as the decision of employees to protest against the present status rather than remain silent, surrender or leave the organization. Dyne and Lupines (1998) consider voice as a cross-functional behavior that is expressed freely and consciously and is beyond the job expectations of individuals. The authors have defined it by using three dimensions: a) Obedient voice: This type of voice is created with impartial motivation and is to confirm the current situation's) Defensive voice: In this type of voice, the person wants to protect himself and to avoid negative consequences or comments on organizational issues') Altruistic voice: In this type of voice, the person comments with the assumption that express ideas and opinions can be to the benefit of the organization or his colleagues.

Zhao (2014) believed that the voice of employees helps managers to identify issues and work-related problems and facilitate organizational innovation. Voice behavior should be considered



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by all organizations to obtain comments of their employees in order to make fundamental and successful changes (Nikolaou et al., 2008). Past research has shown that the willingness of employees to offer suggestions and solutions leads to an enhanced quality of management decisions (Zhanget al., 2014).

In recent years, research has been carried out in relation to variables.

Cheng, Lu, Chang, and Johnstone (2012), in their study entitled “Organizational voice and job engagement mediated by perceived motivation from the supervisor”, concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational voice and job engagement, where motivation has a mediator role. Albdourand Altarawneh(2014), in their study entitled “Employees' enthusiasm and organizational commitment”, concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between job engagement and the organizational commitment of employees. Fieldand Buitendach(2010), in their study entitled “Hope, job engagement and organizational commitment of employees “concluded that hope and job engagement is a predictor of organizational commitment. Agyemang Ofei and Batchison (2013) in their research entitled “Job engagement and organizational commitment of employees” concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between job engagement and organizational commitment. Khalid, Khalid, WaseemFarooqi, Nazish (2015), in their study entitled “The relationship between organizational commitment and passion and job satisfaction”, concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between job engagement and job satisfaction with organizational commitment. Martinez (2015), in his study entitled “The role of job engagement in knowledge sharing”, concluded that more enthusiasm causes the sharing of knowledge. Arnold, Bakker, Demerouti, Likay and Brummelhuis (2012) in their study entitled “Eager to work, performance and active learning” showed that the desire for a job has a positive and meaningful relationship with the active learning of employees in work. Rees, Alfes, Gatenby (2013) in their study entitled “Organizational Voice: antecedents and consequences” concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between organizational voice and job engagement, with mediating trust and staff-manager relations. Frandle, Ruiten, Opp, Elliher and Veronica (2011) in their study entitled “The impact of organizational voice on organizational commitment” concluded that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between opportunities of organizational voice and organizational commitment with mediating trust to managers. Deniz, Noyan, Ertosun (2013), in “The relationship between organizational



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silence and organizational commitment”, concluded that there is a significant negative relationship between affective commitment and dimensions of organizational silence.

Given the importance and consequences of organizational commitment to the organization and realization of corporate goals, evaluating the predictors of this variable in organizations is of the utmost importance. Research to date has explored the predictors of organizational commitment and has investigated the role of organizational voice. However, the subject of job engagement, as a result of organizational voice and a predictor of organizational commitment, has not been studied. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the relationship between organizational voice and organizational commitment with mediating job engagement.

### **Research methodology:**

The research method is descriptive and correlational. The study population included all the employees of Mohaghegh University of Ardabil. According to the Morgan table and using stratified random sampling, 200 samples were selected. A questionnaire was used to collect the data. Lisrel software was used for the data analysis.

### **Tools:**

Job engagement questionnaire: to collect data on job engagement, the job engagement questionnaire of Salvonava and Shofly (2001) is used. The questionnaire has 17 questions and in three dimensions of professional energy: (ability) (Questions 6-1), devoted (Questions 11-7) and absorption (Questions 17-12). The scoring scale of this questionnaire is graded on a five-point Likert scale range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The reliability of the questionnaire in this study used Cronbach's alpha and 0.87 was obtained.

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire: In order to collect data of organizational commitment, Allen and Meyer's Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1999) was used. The questionnaire has 24 questions and has three dimensions of emotional commitment: (Questions 1-8), rational commitment (Questions 9-16), normative commitment (Questions 17-24). The scoring of this questionnaire is graded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly



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disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The reliability of the questionnaire in this study used Cronbach's alpha and 0.76 was obtained.

Organizational voice questionnaire: In order to collect data on organizational voice, the questionnaire of employees' voice by Zehir and Erdogan (2011) was used. The questionnaire has 15 questions and 3 subscales of obedient voice (1-5), defensive voice (10-6) and altruistic voice (15-11). The scoring of this questionnaire is graded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The reliability of the questionnaire in this study used Cronbach's alpha and 0.91 was obtained.

### Findings:

Demographic information of the samples showed that, in terms of gender, 150 people (77.5%) were men and 45 people (22.5%) were female. In Table 1, the descriptive indicators of variables including mean, standard deviation and correlation matrix between the variables are presented.

**Table 1: Correlation matrix, mean, standard deviation of variables**

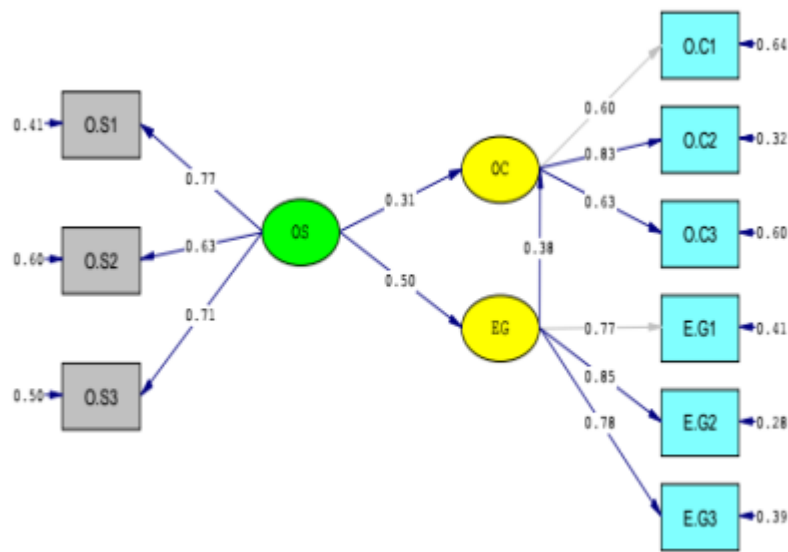
Variable	Mean	standard deviation	3	2	1
1-Organizational voice	43.85	7.79	0/41**	0/37**	1
2-Job engagement	52.34	9.99	0/45**	1	
3-Organizational commitment	71.35	12.47	1		

As can be seen in Table 1 above, the mean and standard deviation of organizational voice is ( $7.79 \pm 43.85$ ), the mean and standard deviation of job engagement is ( $9.99 \pm 52.34$ ) and the mean of organizational commitment of employees is ( $12.47 \pm 71.35$ ). According to the results of Table 1, there is a significant positive relationship between organizational voice and job engagement ( $r=0.45$ ,  $p \leq 0.01$ ), between organizational voice and organizational commitment ( $r=0.39$ ,  $p \leq 0.01$ ) and between job engagement and organizational commitment ( $r=0.39$ ,  $p \leq 0.01$ ).

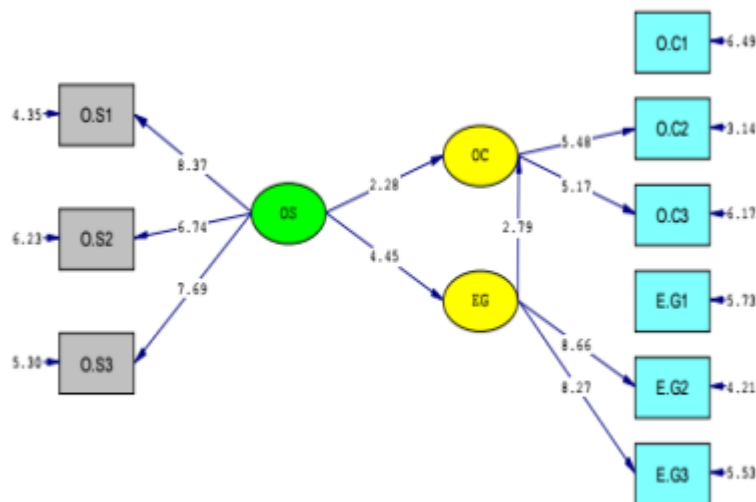


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Chi-Square=35.14, df=24, P-value=0.06638, RMSEA=0.062



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**Figure 1:** Coefficients of standard estimation and significant numbers of structural model of research

**Table 4:** Direct and indirect effects of predictor variables on criterion variables

Variables	direct effect	t	indirect effect	Result
OS to OC	0/31	2.28	$0.31 \times 0.38 = 0.11$	significant
OS to EG	0/50	2.79	-	significant



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EG to OC	0/38	4.45	-	significant
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According to Table 4 above, the direct effect of organizational voice on organizational commitment (0.31) with statistic ( $t=2.28$ ) and the direct effect of job engagement on organizational commitment (0.38) with statistic ( $t=2.79$ ), direct effect of organizational voice on job engagement (0.50) with statistic ( $t=4.45$ ) at the significant level  $p \leq 0.05$  was positive and significant. In addition, the indirect effect of organizational voice on organizational commitment through job engagement (0.11) is significant.

**Table 5: Fitness indicators of the research model**

$X^2$	df	$X^2/df$	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	NFI	IFI
35.14	24	1.46	0/06	0/98	0/94	0/94	0/98

To check the fitness of model, indicators introduced by Klein (2011) were used. The indicators include  $X^2/df$  that amounts to less than three is acceptable. Indicators GFI, CFI, NFI, with values greater than 0.9 indicate the proper fit of the research model, and adjusted goodness indicators AGFI with values greater than 0.8 are acceptable. RMSEA index with values less than 0.08 indicates a proper fit of research model. All indices mentioned in this model are optimal and the model has perfect and desirable fitness.

**Discussion and conclusion:**

This study was conducted to investigate the effect of organizational voice on organizational commitment with a mediating role of job engagement. The results of the analysis of data to test first hypothesis indicated that the effect of organizational voice on organizational commitment is significant. This result is consistent with the research of Frandle, Ruiten, Kelliher, and Hiely (2011). Today, organizational commitment is one of the most important job attitudes in a organization, as well as such factors that affect motivation and efficiency of the organization, because the achievement of the objectives and organizational efficiency depends largely on the loyalty and commitment of employees of an organization. In fact, organizations, in their attempt to achieve the objectives, seek to increase the organizational commitment of employees





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as a competitive strategy. Allen and Mayer (1999) consider organizational commitment as a type of attitude that shows interest, attachment and loyalty of employees to the organization and their willingness to stay in the organization. Organizational commitment has many positive consequences; on the other hand, it is also affected by multiple factors. According to the results of this research, organizational voice directly affects the organizational commitment of employees. This means that, by expressing the views of employees and listening to their voice, this can increase their organizational commitment. In fact, providing the field of expressing comments and getting suggestions and critics of the employees means that employees tend to stay in organization and increase their organizational commitment.

The results of the second hypothesis showed that the direct effect of organizational voice on job engagement is significant. This result is consistent with results of Agyemang, Ofei and Batchison (2013), and Khalid, Khalid, Waseem, Farooqi, and Nazish (2015). Job engagement includes organizational variables that have a direct relationship with positive outcomes, such as organizational commitment, strengthened organizational citizenship behaviors and job motivation (Seibert, Wang, and Courtright, 2011) and are negatively associated with turnover intention (Hakanen, Hakanen, Bakker and Demerouti, 2005). Therefore, job engagement can be a good source of a positive cycle of resources and, thus, lead to positive effects (Hobfolland Shirom, 2001).

Therefore, a desirable source can lead to a positive cycle of sources and, consequently, a positive effect. Organization voice that means providing comments and suggestions of employees about the organization depends on the circumstances of the organization. In fact, employees that are able to express comments, suggestions and objections to the organization will have a more positive attitude toward the organization and their duties and will have a greater desire to be present in the organization. That means that, providing comment and suggestions of the employees about issues of organization, this can provide the field of their job engagement.

The results of the analysis of data for the third hypothesis showed that the direct effect of job engagement on organizational commitment is significant. This result is consistent with previous results of Frandle, Ruiten, Kelliher, and Hiely (2011), Agyemang, Ofei and Batchison (2013), and Khalid, Khalid, Waseem, Farooqi, and Nazish (2015). When explaining the



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confirmation of this relationship, it can be said that eager employees will be absorbed by their job and perform their job diligently. The employees show creativity and initiative (Salanova, Agut, and Peiro, 2005), react to instructions and increase their self-efficacy, thus helping the organization to achieve its goals. According to the results of this research, job engagement can increase employees' organizational commitment. The enthusiastic employees show more commitment to the organization and stay in their job long-term, resulting in a positive outcome for the organization.

The results of the analysis of the fourth hypothesis also showed that the indirect effect of organizational voice on organizational commitment through the job engagement is significant. The organizational voice can increase their organizational commitment by increasing the job engagement of employees. Hence, it is recommended that managers of organizations increase their organizational commitment towards employees by providing conditions of comment for employees on issues of organization, as well as providing their job engagement.

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