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### Influence of Job Characteristics on Organizational Commitment: The study of Construction Firms in Hanoi

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#### Abstract

This research was conducted to investigate the impact of work characteristics on organizational commitment of employees in construction firms in Hanoi based on job characteristics' theory of Hackman and Oldham (1980) <sup>[13]</sup>. Data were collected through a survey with 150 employees in construction firms in Hanoi. With this data, we have used descriptive statistics, Cronbach's Alpha, EFA and correlation analysis to determine the level of impact of the

independent variable on the dependent variable, i.e., organizational commitment of employees. The results showed that the determinant is the work characteristics which have positive relationships with organizational commitment of employees. Based on this finding, this paper gives several recommendations for improvement organizational commitment of employees.

**Keywords:** Job Characteristics (JC), Organizational Commitment (OC), Affective Commitment (AC), Employees, Construction Firms

**JEL codes:** M10, M51, M52, M41, F65

#### 1. Introduction

Theory of Hackman and Oldham (1980) <sup>[13]</sup> has been applied in a variety of job characteristics, organizational commitment, work motivation studies and the findings suggest that work characteristics have a strong influence on organizational commitment and employee motivation. In this study, we aimed to determine the influence of the "job characteristics" factor on organizational commitment of employees in construction firms in Hanoi.

Job characteristics have always played an important role in improving behavioral and psychological outcomes of employees, including organizational commitment.

Lack of organizational commitment is one of the most common problems in most organizations and it leads to other serious problems like absenteeism, delay, low performance of human resources, decrease in customer trust in the organization and ultimately negatively affect the business results of the business (Meyer *et al.*, 2006) <sup>[25]</sup>. On the contrary, employees who are committed to the organization will work more disciplined at work, use their time effectively, pay attention to detail, and put more effort into achieving organizational goals Gautam *et al.*, (2004) <sup>[10]</sup>.

The sluggishness of the real estate market and the reduction of public investment have also made many construction firms face difficulties. In order to overcome difficulties and achieve good business performance, the construction firms must have sustainable solutions so that when the market is in a difficult situation, they will not have much effect on business performance. High quality human resources can help firms control the implementation of the strategy and adjust timely, ensure the compliance with laws and regulation, ensure reasonable costs, reduce the loss of assets and reduce the cost.

Hanoi city has the advantage of being the capital, the speed of urbanization is very fast and there are many favorable conditions for the business development. As a result, construction firms in this area have their distinctive characteristics that affect organizational commitment of employees and special attention must be paid to job characteristics.

#### 2. Theoretical background and literature review

##### *The job characteristics' theory of Hackman and Oldham (1980)*

Hackman and Oldham (1980) <sup>[13]</sup> constructed a job characteristics model with five core aspects. The two authors said that if managers design works with the help of this model, employees will be satisfied with the job and as a result getting the high levels of performance.

According to Hackman and Oldham (1980)<sup>[13]</sup>, internal motivation is something a desire that causes a person to strive and capture some accomplishment just because their work is worth doing and brings them a sense of satisfaction. The two authors described this motivation as the work itself. The five aspects of the work proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1980)<sup>[13]</sup> are:

1. Skill variety: The job enables people to sharpen and develop their skills and talents which they have a high demand for. If it assists them to enhance their professional competencies and promote their strengths, then they will realize the meaning of the work they are doing, thereby being satisfied and intrinsically motivated at work. Skills variety is described as "The degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, which involves the use of a number of different skills and talents of the employee" (Hackman & Oldham, 1975)<sup>[12]</sup>. Empirical research has shown that skills variety is one of the best predictors of job satisfaction (Becherer *et al.*, 1982; Glission & Durick, 1988)<sup>[5, 11]</sup> and people with diverse occupational skills are frequently more committed to the organization (Glission & Durick, 1988; Hunt *et al.*, 1985)<sup>[11, 17]</sup>.
2. Task identity: The job clearly shows employees the completion degree of each part as well as the whole work. The requirement of work designing is to clarify the job specifications and the extent to which they have to complete. This is also a fundamental factor in motivating workers. Task Identity is "The degree to which the job requires completion of a "whole" and identifiable piece of work—that is, doing a job from beginning to end with a visible outcome." (Hackman & Oldham, 1975)<sup>[12]</sup>. Previous studies have shown that task identity is rarely perceived as a strong predictor of job performance (Dodd & Ganster, 1996; Snyder *et al.*, 1982)<sup>[8, 32]</sup>.
3. Task significance: What they are doing is valuable to others. Workers feel more motivated to attain greater productivity if they treasure the value of their contributions to others and the community. Task significance is "the degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives or work of other people—whether in the immediate organization or in the external environment." (Hackman & Oldham, 1975)<sup>[12]</sup>. Empirical research has found that work significance is positively correlated with job satisfaction (Becherer *et al.*, 1982; Glission & Durick, 1988; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Kulik *et al.*, 1988)<sup>[5, 11, 19, 21]</sup> and commitment to the organization (Glission & Durick, 1988)<sup>[11]</sup>.
4. Autonomy: The job allows people to be free, independent and have the right to decide or take part in the planning and controlling their performance. Autonomy at work can flourish virtual human capacities and responsibilities which leads to constant progress in coordination and work procedures. Work autonomy is defined as "The degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the employee in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out" (Hackman & Oldham, 1975)<sup>[12]</sup>. Several empirical studies have found that work autonomy is highly correlated with organizational commitment (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1993; Hunt *et al.*, 1985; Losocco, 1989)<sup>[3,</sup>

17, 24]; work performance efficiency (Hackman & Oldham, 1975)<sup>[12]</sup>; and job satisfaction (Becherer *et al.*, 1982; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Kulik *et al.*, 1988)<sup>[5, 19, 21]</sup>.

5. Feedback: The job allows workers to receive direct and clear information about their work performance. Hackman and Oldham (1980)<sup>[13]</sup> suggested that in step with the other job characteristics, if the organization gives feedback on employees' work performance, people will be more satisfied and their motivation will increase. Therefore, employees will be less absent and less likely to quit the job.

Supervisor feedback is defined as "the extent to which workers receive clear information regarding their performance" (Hackman & Oldham, 1975)<sup>[12]</sup>. Bassett (1994)<sup>[4]</sup> assumes that feedback is the most effective tool to improve performance. Empirical research has shown that supervisor feedback is a significant predictor of an employee's job satisfaction (Churchill *et al.*, 1976; Becherer *et al.*, 1982)<sup>[7, 5]</sup>, with a positive correlation with organizational commitment (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1993; Hunt *et al.*, 1985; *et al.*, 1979; Porter & Steers, 1973)<sup>[3, 17, 31]</sup>.

According to Hackman and Oldham (1980)<sup>[13]</sup>, the first three aspects play a significant role in developing a wide range of skills, clear tasks and meaningful work that increases the value of work for an individual. Workers feel that what they contribute is important, valuable and helpful to everyone. The fourth aspect of work, "autonomy", suggests that if employees are empowered at work, they will execute their finest novelties and thoughts with the sense of responsibility. And if the job provides feedback on their performance (the fifth aspect), workers will know how to do it effectively. These incentives will lead to psychological expression of the individual (through attitude, behavior) and organizational effectiveness.

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### Literature review

There are many studies that have linked the way employees perceive their job characteristics with the quality and effectiveness of job performance, as well as commitment to the organization (Bhuiyan & Menguc, 2002; Evans *et al.*, 2002)<sup>[6, 9]</sup>. Oliver *et al.* (2005)<sup>[29]</sup> argue that job characteristics will affect employee motivation and commitment. Research results are similar to the study of Mottaz (1988)<sup>[27]</sup>, job characteristics such as diversity and autonomy are clear determinants of organizational commitment.

Job characteristics include factors such as task clarity, task conflict, task overload, job significance, degree of job autonomy, skill diversity, and scope of work (Suman & Srivastava, 2012)<sup>[34]</sup> is correlated with organizational commitment (Park & Rainey, 2007)<sup>[30]</sup>. In addition, Allen & Meyer (1990)<sup>[2]</sup> also concluded that there is a strong correlation between the level of job challenge and employee commitment to the organization. Several studies have also shown a negative correlation between task ambiguity and task conflict with employee commitment (Kline & Peters, 1991)<sup>[20]</sup>. Lambert (2004)<sup>[22]</sup> also asserts that job characteristics play a more important role than personal

characteristics in forming employees' emotional commitment to the organization. Steers (1977) [33] found the factors that help employees feel intrinsically motivated and asserted that these factors are also the foundation for creating emotional commitment in employees.

**3. Methodology**

Inheriting the results of previous studies by Hackman and Oldham (1980) [13] and by using a qualitative research approach namely interviews with selected experts to perform a quantitative research, we have identified the following the factor that determining organizational commitment of employees in construction firms in Hanoi is job characteristics (JC).

Then, we made a questionnaire consisting of 9 observation variables with a 5-point Likert scale. Independent variables are measured from 1 "without effect" to 5 "strongly" (see Table 2); dependent variables are measured from 1 "without commitment" to 5 "entire". The collection of data was done through a survey of 175 employees who working for construction firms in Hanoi, for the period 2022-2023, close to this study period. Therefore, their feedback on the organizational commitment of employees is considered very appropriate.

From 175 questionnaires we sent, we received the feedback of 160 respondents. After checking the information on the returned questionnaires, we have only 150 questionnaires with full information for data entry and analysis, the size of this sample is consistent with study of Hair *et al* (1998) [14], namely  $n = 5 \times m = 5 \times 9 = 45$ . Therefore, the rest of observations for model 1 are 150 surveys (table 1). As can be seen, all participants are at high quality knowledge, and this makes surveys' answer are reliable.

**Table 1:** Respondents by gender, work position, seniority

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	118	78.7	78.7
Female	32	21.3	100.0
<b>Work position</b>			
Technical personnels	63	42.0	42.0
Office workers	87	58.0	100.0
<b>Seniority</b>			
Less 5 years	59	39.3	39.3
5 years or more than	91	60.7	100.0
Total	150	100.0	

Information of data collected is shown in Table 2. It shows that among the 150 respondents, about 78.7% were male while the remaining 32 (21.3%) were female. Of these, among the respondents, technical personnels accounted for 42.0%, office workers accounted for 58.0%. Among the respondents, 39.3% of the participants have work experiences for less than 5 years, and 5 years or more than accounted for 60.7%.

We then used descriptive statistics, Cronbach's Alpha, the EFA analysis and correlation analysis to determine the influence of the job characteristics determinant on the organizational commitment of employees.

Dependent variable: Organizational commitment of employees - affective commitment (AC). There are 4 attributes in the dependent variable (Le & Le, 2021) [23].

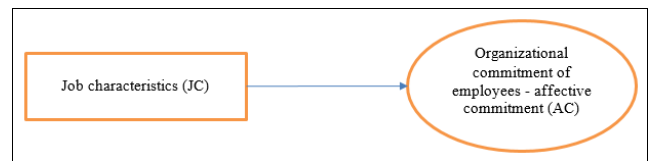
Independent variable: The independent variable are described in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Determinants and Its Coding

Code	Scale	Sources
<b>Job characteristics (JC)</b>		
JC1	I find my work amusing	Hackman & Oldham (1975);
JC2	I have all the concordant authority and responsibilities for my job	Hackman and Oldham (1980); Becherer <i>et al.</i> (1982); Glission & Durick (1988); Hunt <i>et al.</i> (1985);
JC3	My job allows me to exercise my full capacity	Dodd & Ganster (1996); Snyder <i>et al.</i> (1982); Katz & Kahn (1978); Kulik <i>et al.</i> (1988),
JC4	I am entitled to handling professional tasks proactively	Agarwal & Ramaswami (1993); Losocco (1989), Bassett (1994),
JC5	I get feedback on my performance	Churchill <i>et al.</i> (1976), Agarwal & Ramaswami (1993)

**Research Model**

From the above analysis, we have designed a research model as shown in Figure 1.



**Fig 1:** Research model

**4. Research results**

**4.1 Descriptive Statistics**

**Table 3:** Descriptive Analysis of Attributes of job characteristics (Independent variable)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
JC1	150	3.00	5.00	4.02	0.607
JC2	150	3.00	5.00	3.97	0.612
JC3	150	2.00	5.00	4.03	0.709
JC4	150	3.00	5.00	3.83	0.599
JC5	150	3.00	5.00	3.85	0.595
Valid N (listwise)	150			<b>3.94</b>	

Data in Table 3 illustrate that the respondents agree with the independent variable of "Job characteristics" where five attributes were quite high with an average of 3.94 compared with the highest of the Likert 5-point scale. All 5 attributes were rated at an average of 3.83 or higher.

**4.2 Cronbach's Alpha**

By using scale analysis, it can eliminate inconsonant variables and reduce errors in the research model. Therefore, only variables which have total correlation coefficients (Corrected Item – Total Correlation) greater than 0.3 and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients equal or greater than 0.6 are accepted (Hoang & Nguyen, 2008, Hair *et al.*, 2010) [16, 15]. By analyzing Cronbach's Alpha analysis of job characteristics have an influence on organizational commitment of employees in construction firms in Hanoi (1 determinants with 5 observed variables), the result is presented in Table 4. The result shows that, 4 observed variables Cronbach's Alpha coefficients are above 0.6; Corrected Item – Total Correlation of observed variables are above 0.3. Thus, 4 variables of research model are suitable for next analyses, JC5 is removed (Hair *et al.*, 2010) [15].

**Table 4:** Results of analysis of Determinants Confidence of Scales in the Model

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Affective commitment (AC): 0.857, N = 4				
AC1	11.61	1.984	0.637	0.855
AC2	11.75	2.241	0.708	0.818
AC3	11.61	2.225	0.710	0.817
AC4	11.66	1.984	0.782	0.783
Job characteristics (JC): 0.743, N = 5				
JC1	15.69	3.035	0.672	0.635
JC2	15.73	3.043	0.659	0.639
JC3	15.67	2.745	0.672	0.626
JC4	15.88	3.596	0.383	0.740
JC5	15.85	4.019	0.190	0.801

**Exploratory Factor Analysis**

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted through Component Analysis and Varimax and the results has yield 5 attributes of independent variable.

The results of factor analysis in Table 5 show that  $0.5 < KMO = 0.769 < 1$ . Bartlett's testimony shows sig. =  $0.000 < 0.05$ , which means variables in the whole are interrelated (Hair *et al.*, 2010) [15].

After implementing the rotation matrix, 1 determinant with factor load factor are greater than 0.5; Eigenvalues are greater than 1 and the variance explained is 63.406% (see table 6). These statistics demonstrate that research data analysis for factor discovery is appropriate. Through the quality assurance of the scale and the test of the EFA model, we have identified 1 determinant influencing on organizational commitment of employees in construction firms in Hanoi is job characteristics (Hair *et al.*, 2010) [15].

**Table 5:** KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.769
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	214.719
	Df	6
	Sig.	0.000

**Table 6:** Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.536	63.406	63.406	2.536	63.406	63.406
2	0.773	19.326	82.732			
3	0.379	9.463	92.195			
4	0.312	7.805	100.000			

**Correlation Analysis**

The results of the correlation matrix are indicated in Table 7. The correlation coefficients of job characteristics with one dependent variable is greater than 0 reflecting a positive relationship. In addition, values of sig. are less than 0.05 which means that all variables are interrelated (Hair *et al.*, 2010) [15].

**Table 7:** Correlations

		AC	JC
AC	Pearson Correlation	1	.193*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.018
	N	150	150
JC	Pearson Correlation	.193*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.018	
	N	150	150

**5. Discussion and recommendations**

Research results show that, there is a strong and positive influence of job characteristics on organization commitment of employees. Thus, office workers and technical staff of construction firms are less likely to leave the enterprises if their work is challenging, stimulating and interesting. This result is consistent with previous studies of Abbott (2000) [1] and Karsh *et al.* (2005) [18]. This may be, because of work becomes more challenging and enriching, employees feel more job satisfaction and more enthusiastic in their work and in the organization. Therefore, by combining the characteristics mentioned above in office work, engineering, managers of construction firms can enrich the work of employees, in order to improve commitment to the organization higher.

All five of those job features help employees obtain a strong desire to improve themselves, have more intrinsic job satisfaction, feel happier, and become more motivated while performing tasks and duties, as well as be less likely to intend to quit (Oldham, 1996) [28].

Performance evaluation: Construction firms have step-by-step analyzed jobs for each position, each section at the enterprise, but the results have only been able to build a job description. Evaluation of work performance at construction firms is still inaccurate. Therefore, the fairness in evaluating the performance at construction firms still limited. So that, improve job evaluation activities at construction firms, use new job evaluation activities to limit sentiment, improve accuracy.

The job of an employee in construction firms requires quite high awareness. To perform the job, employees must use different skills including technical and soft skills. Construction, design, construction work, etc. are built by construction enterprises with specific and clear processes and allow for social interaction with colleagues and stakeholders.

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