

## Job Characteristics as Predictors of Organizational Commitment

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated job characteristics as predictors of organizational commitment. Total of 83 Military Personnel (Participants) between the age range of 22 and 47 with the mean age of 33.8 drawn from the 82 Division, Nigerian Army, Abakpa-Nike Enugu, participated in this study. They were drawn using available sampling technique. The instruments used in this study were Job Characteristics Scale. The design for this study was a Cross Sectional Survey, while Multiple Regression Analysis was used to analyze the data generated for the study. The results showed that job characteristics predicted organizational commitment among Nigerian Military Personnel,  $R^2 = 43$ ,  $[F(9, 52) = 7.32, p < .001]$  level of significance. This means that there was a significant relationship between the predictor variables and the criterion variables,  $R = .72$ . Again, job characteristics jointly accounted for 45% variations in organizational commitment, Adjusted  $R^2 = 45$ . The standard coefficient also showed that feedback from agents and task significant independently predicted organizational commitment ( $t = 3.58, p < .01$  and  $t = 3.01, p < .05$ ) while others did not. Based on the outcome of this study therefore, the researcher recommends that employers of labour should give job characteristics priority attention to ensure that their employees are adequately committed to their organization in actualizing the set goals and values of the organization.

Keywords: Job Characteristics, Organizational Commitment and Nigeria Military Personnel

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### INTRODUCTION

In many organizations, it has been established that the contents of the job an employee performs determine whether the employee would be committed to his or her job or not [1,2,3,4]. In other words, it is the job demands that dictate the pace of worker's commitment to his or her job [5,6]. Again, because of lack of empirical evidence of research on the similar topic in the military organizations, the researcher deemed it necessary to take this study to the military domains. Furthermore, the choice of 82 Division of the Nigerian Army, Enugu for this study was necessitated by the researcher's observations during his Industrial Training (IT) in the Military base. During this time, the researcher observed that some Military personnel seemed not committed to their jobs due to that they were playing truancy, coming to work late

and leaving at any time without any reason [7,8,9]. Therefore, at the end of this study, the researcher will be able to identify those job characteristics that make the military personnel in the Army base uncomfortable and not to be committed to their jobs and make recommendations on how to harmonize and make them better for them to always be committed to their jobs, especially in protecting the sovereignty of Nigeria [10,11].

The importance of organizations in lives of many people has shown growing or increasing awareness and interest in understanding the concept [12]. Organization refers to an institution or association involving many people that have common goals and values collectively to achieve such goals and values in an external environment [13].

On the other hand, organizational commitment refers to the degree at which an employee identifies with the organization and the employee's readiness or willingness to maintain membership with the organization [14]. Organizational commitment is a state in which an individual identifies with a particular organization, strongly works to actualize its set goals and strives to retain membership in the organization. Organizational commitment has been implicated or noted as one of the most popular variables of interest of study in the field of organizational behaviour [15]. [16], explained commitment to be an attachment and loyalty the employees hold in identifying with the goals and values of the organization and the display effort on behalf of the organization and the desire to belong to the organization and willingness to display effort on behalf of the organization he/she works with. [17], identified three domains of commitment where they pointed out that commitment has three psychosocial states. According to them, there are three mind-sets which characterized an employee commitment to his/her organization. They are affective commitment, which refers to the employee positive psychological/emotional attachment to the organization. Furthermore, an employee who is affectively committed is said to be strongly identified with the goals and values of the organization and is willing to remain and maintain his/her membership with the organization [18]. Normative commitment, which is the input an employee makes as his/her feeling of obligation in order to remain a member of the organization. For instance, an organization may have embarked on a programme of training her employee who may have the feeling of moral obligation to put his/her maximum effort on the Job and remain with the organization as a pay-back to the organization for its services. Employee's normative commitment is expected to be high when employees perceive outstanding instances of the employer being committed to make employees' feel satisfied and with the

work they do; continuance commitment refers to the "need domain" which is the gain versus losses of working in an organization. Furthermore, "side-bets" or "investments" are the gains and losses that may occur if an employee stays or leaves his/her organization. An employee may be strongly committed to the organization because he/she perceives the expensive nature of leaving and losing his/her membership of the organization. According to [19], economic costs such as salaries, pension, etc and social cost, such as relationship ties he/she keeps with co-workers, would amount to be the costs of leaving the organization or losing his/her organizational membership.

An employee with greater commitment to his/her organization will likely have a greater chance of contributing to the growth and success of the organization [20]. [21], noted that employee's commitment to an organization in the achievement of its goals and values is dependent on the job characteristics of the employees. Job characteristics are those aspects of the job such as Job skills, job mental and physical demands, the job working conditions and knowledge of the job. Furthermore, job characteristics refer to the design of job that generates into three psychological conditions such as meaningfulness of the work done, knowledge of the outcomes of the work and responsibility for the positive work outputs. In psychology literature, job characteristics have been linked with organizational commitment. The role of job characteristics have been extensively implicated in predicting the attitude and behaviour of employees in organization or industrial setting [22]. Switzer further noted that the core job characteristics such as skill variety is the extent to which a job required various activities that are requiring the employer to develop some variety of skills and talents; task identity which is the degree to which the job requires the employee to identify and complete a work schedule with a clear result. An employee experiences more positive result in a job when he/she is involved in the whole process instead of just being partially responsible for some

parts of the job; task significance, which is the level to which the job affects the lives of other people outside or inside the organization. The effect of the job on the people can either be in the immediate organization or in the external environment; autonomy refers to the extent to which the job gives the worker enough freedom and discretion to set out plan for the job to determine the appropriate procedures in the job; feedback from job is also the extent to which the employee has knowledge of job outcomes that are uniquely detailed about

his/her job performance; feedback from agent-is where the worker receives clear information about his/her performance from the manager, Director or Supervisor and dealing with others, which involves employee working closely with other people inside/outside the organization. In view of this, therefore, the researcher deemed it necessary to join other researchers on the similar topic in the world to find out whether jobcharacteristic will predict organizational commitment among Nigerian Military Personnel.

#### Statement of the Problem

In the past, it was observed that job characteristics predicted organizational commitment among employees. However, in recent times, it seems that job characteristics no longer determine or predict organizational commitment among employees and this has drastically reduced organizational outputs. As a result of this development, the researcher is poised to determine

Therefore, the main objectives of this study are:

1. If job characteristics will jointly predict organizational commitment
2. If job characteristics will independently predict organizational commitment

1. To examine whether job characteristics will jointly predict organizational commitment and
2. To determine whether job characteristics will independently predict organizational commitment.

In this study, some theories that have links with the study variables were reviewed for better understanding of the variables, such as.

#### Job characteristics theory

This theory advanced by [8] emphasized the relationship between job characteristics and individual responses to work. The theory noted that the task conditions in which employees are predicted to prosper in their job centers on personal benefits and job outcomes. This theory further includes individual differences variable as a moderator of the relationship between the characteristics and the outcomes. [8], listed and explained the seven core job characteristics such as; skill variety, which talks about the extent to which a job demands such activities that require employees to develop a variety of skills, habits and talents. Task identity which refers to the extent or degree to which the job requires the workers to identify and complete a work piece with a clear outcome; Task significance -is the degree to which the work influences the lives of

other people within or outside the organization; Autonomy is the extent or degree to which the work gives the worker the enough freedom and self dependent to plan out the job and determine the design and procedures in the work; Feedback from job- refers to the extent or degree to which the employees come to have knowledge of results of their work performance through clear information; Feedback from agent-refers to a situation a worker receives clear information about his/her work performance from Supervisor, Director or Manger, and Dealing with others-is the degree to which job performance brings about worker working closely with others within or outside the organization. According to this theory, if any of the psychological states fails to emerge, many other important outcome variables such as motivation and satisfaction will be

weakened. In other words, to ensure for the desirable outcomes in an organization, all the psychological states must be present or experienced by an employee. The theory noted that internal

motivation is one of the most important outcome variables which bring self reward, while poor performance attracts unhappy feeling.

#### Herzberg Hygiene Theory

This theory also known as two factor theories, has influence on job characteristics by seeking to increase motivation and satisfaction through enriching jobs. This theory noted that changes predicted in motivators which are intrinsic to the work, such as recognition, achievement and advancement, will lead to higher levels of employee motivation and satisfaction, while hygiene factors which are extrinsic to work itself such as company policies and salary, can lead to lower levels of dissatisfaction, but won't actually impact satisfaction or motivation. These theories can be criticized because these intrinsic variables are covert in nature and cannot easily be measured by any yard stick to determine the level of employee's motivation and satisfaction in clear terms. Therefore it is not in agreement with the submission of the behaviourists who said that only observable behaviours can be studied. [5], investigated the correlation between skills variety and organizational commitment among workers of Sun Vegetable Oil Company Ltd, Nsukka in Enugu State. A total of 82 workers participated in the study. The result revealed that skills variety and organizational commitment had a significant correlation, while skill identity, autonomy, skill feedback and skill interdependence did not significantly correlate with organizational commitment. The study further revealed a significant correlation between organizational commitment and skill satisfaction particularly intrinsic satisfaction as a factor mediating between skill varieties and organizational commitment.

[9], study on the factors that determine organizational commitment among company workers in Kingston town in Jamaican city, revealed that organizational commitment was positively related to skill varieties and

satisfaction when compared with individual level than at the group level. [7], study on the relationship between job characteristics and organizational commitment used 108 employees randomly drawn from banks in Accra town of Ghana and their result showed that organizational commitment and job characteristics were positively related. In other words, every worker showed positive relationship between job characteristics and organizational commitment. [6], research study on relationship between job characteristics and organizational commitment used 102 German employees of the government hospitals in Frankfurt, Germany. Their participants comprised of nurses, doctors and administrative staff who were randomly drawn from five hospitals in the State. The result of this study revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between organizational commitment and educational level, age, as well as job classification variables. Also a significant relationship was found between motivation, educational level scores and job feedback on one side and organizational commitment on the other side. [10], conducted research on the skill variety and organizational commitment among rail way workers in Zambian capital, Lusaka where they examined correlation between various factors of organizational commitment and skill variety. Their result showed that organizational commitment was positively correlated with skill variety and autonomy. [13], study on the relationship between job characteristics and organizational commitment where 96 security personnel participated in the study and their result indicated that skill variety and skill significance were strong predictors of organizational commitment. In all the theories reviewed in this study, the job characteristics theory was adopted as the theoretical framework of

this study considering its specifications on the task conditions in which individuals are predicted to prosper in their work and its link with all variables of study in this work.

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested such as

1. Job characteristics do not independently predict employee organizational commitment.
2. Job characteristics do not jointly predict employee organizational commitment

## METHODS

### Participants

A total of 83 participants comprising 48 male soldiers and 35 female soldiers between the age range of 22 and 47 years, with a mean age of 33.6 and standard deviation of 3.12, were randomly drawn from the 82 Division, Nigerian Army, Abakpa-Nike in Enugu State of Nigeria, using available sampling technique, where only those who were on ground at the time of the study and agreed to participate in the study were given the

chance to participate. The participants are some Christians and some Muslims, from the Southern and Northern parts of Nigeria. The researcher did not intentionally design or plan the drawing of participants to be this way; rather, it happened as a coincidence. The least academic qualification found among the participants is Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) while the highest is Master's Degree.

### Instrument

Two sets of instruments were used. They are. Job Characteristics Scale developed by [6] but validated for use in Nigeria by Ezeugo (2012), who reported Alpha reliability coefficient of skill variety as .74, Task identity =.70, Task Significance =.62, Autonomy =.59, Feedback from job =.68, Feedback from agents =.72 and Dealing with other =.62, to confirm the reliability and validity of this Scale, and Organizational Commitment Scale developed by [2], but also validated for use in Nigeria by [6], who reported coefficients Alpha of .82 and .88 to confirm the reliability and validity of the scale. The Job Characteristics Instrument has 21 item questions and was designed in liker t-type response format ranging from very inaccurate = 1 to very accurate = 5 and was designed to access the individual orientation towards job

characteristics. The job characteristics scale has 14 items with direct scoring and 7 items with reverse scoring patterns. Items 1-3 were skill variety, 4-6 task identity, 7-9 task significance, 10-12 Autonomy, 13-15 feedback from job, 16-18 feedback from agents, 19-21 dealing with others. Higher scores reveal that the employees have commitment to their job. Any score less than 41 is regarded as low, while scores from 41 and above are regarded as high scores. Organizational commitment scale was developed by [2] but validated for use in Nigeria by [6]. The 23 items scale was designed to measure the extent to which an employee's characteristics determine his/her organizational commitment. Higher scores on employee's job characteristics is an indication of higher organizational commitment of the employees.

### Procedure

A total of 92 copies of the questionnaires were randomly administered to the participants who agreed to participate in the study, by the researcher and his two research assistants for a period of two days. The questionnaires were administered to the participants in their various offices and within the premises of 82 divisions, Nigerian Army, Abakpa-Nike, Enugu State, using available sampling technique. On the first and second days,

the researcher and his research assistants gave the questionnaires to the participants and collected them back on the second day. Out of the 92 copies administered, 89 copies were collected back and out of the 89 copies recovered, 83 copies were properly filled and used for data analysis, while 6 copies were discarded due to improper filling of the copies.

Design and Statistics

Survey is the design of this study. This design does not encourage manipulation of variables, but allows collection of data from people in the field with the use of

questionnaires, while Multiple Regressions Analysis was used for data analysis.

RESULTS

Table of Multiple Regression Analysis showing the Summary of Job Characteristics as Predictors of Organizational Commitment.

Criterion variable	Predictor variable	B	Beta	T	P	Confidence Interval		R	T <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	P
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound					
Organizational commitment								.65	.52	.45	7.25	<.001
	Skill variety	1.17	.15	1.38	>.15	-.38	2.66					
	Task identity	-1.48	-.22	-1.66	>.07	-3.24	.22					
	Autonomy	-1.18	-.03	-1.75	>.78	-2.47	.21					
	Feedback from job	.06	.05	.44	>.65	-.17	.27					
	Feedback from agents	3.50	.52	3.58	<.01	1.48	4.48					
	Task significance	1.52	.26	3.01	<.05	.02	3.02					
	Dealing with others	.05	.02	.05	>.79	-.26	.37					

The above summary table shows that job characteristics such as, skill variety, task identity, autonomy, feedback from agents, task significance and dealing with others, jointly predicted organizational commitment among Nigerian Military Personnel of T2=. 52, (F (8, 63) = 7.25 p<.001 level of significance. This result showed that there was a significant relation between the predictor variables and criterion variables R=.65. Job characteristics jointly accounted for 45% of the variations observed in organizational commitment, adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.45 Shown in the table also is the regression coefficients for job

characteristics; skill variety B=. 15, task identity β= -.22, task significance β=.26, and dealing with orders β=.02 respectively. Feedback from agents was observed to have had the highest Beta coefficients value of .52, p<.01 and seconded by task significance that had .26, p<.05, and as a result of this development, formed a very strong peculiar and significant contribution to the best way of explaining the dependent variable. In exception of task identify and autonomy t= -1.75 and -1.66, ns, that were inversely correlated, it can be concluded that the regression for the job characteristics are positively correlated

with the criterion variable. Following these outcomes, the standardized coefficients showed that feedback from agent and task significance independently predicted organizational commitment  $t = 4.55, p < .01$  and  $t = 3.05, p < .05$ , while others did not. In summary therefore, job

characteristics jointly predicted employee's organizational commitment. Furthermore, only two variables: feedback from agents and task significance, independently predicted employees organizational commitment.

#### DISCUSSION

The result of this research showed that the first hypothesis tested in this study which stated that job characteristics will not independently predict employee's organizational commitment was rejected because feedback from agents and task significance independently predicted employee's organizational commitment. Also second hypothesis which stated that job characteristics will not jointly predict employee's organizational commitment was rejected because job characteristics jointly predicted employee's organizational commitment. The result of the current study is in agreement with the result of [13] on the relationship between job characteristics and organizational commitment where their result indicated that a significant relationship was found between organizational commitment and variable of level of education. Also in agreement with the result of the current study is a study by [16] on the correlation between skill variety and organizational

commitment in a non-governmental security organization at the Gambian capital, Lusaka where their result indicated that organizational commitment positively correlated with skill variety and autonomy. [20] result of their study showed that skill variety and skill significance were strong predictors of organizational commitment. However, the result of [12] study did not agree with the results of the current study. They reported in their study on the relationship between job characteristics and workers organizational commitment, where 204 workers drawn from seven banks in the city of Jordan, participated in the study that job characteristics did not either jointly or independently predict organizational commitment. The difference between this study and the current study may be as a result of differences in age, population, culture, environment and educational levels of the participants in both studies.

#### Implications of the study

In view of the outcomes of this study, it can now be concluded that job characteristics jointly predicted employee organizational commitment and also, that feedback from agents and task significance independently predicted employee organizational commitment. Psychology literature is said to have been enriched following the new knowledge that emerged from the current study. Future studies on job characteristics as predictors of organizational commitment, should reach out other categories of human beings

rather than the Nigerian Military Personnel to ascertain if their job characteristics will jointly or independently predict their organizational commitments. The researcher therefore, recommends that both governmental and non-governmental organizations should make or design its job characteristics to be friendly or favourable to its employees so that they (the employees) should be and remain committed to the organization in actualizing the organizations set goals and values.

#### Summary and Conclusion

The results of this study showed that job characteristics jointly and independently predicted organizational commitment of the Nigerian Army Personnel. In conclusion, therefore, it is evident that employee's commitment to their

organization in actualizing its set goals and values is depends on the characteristics of the job they are doing. Therefore, all the employers of labour should pay more attention to the characteristics of the job they assign to

their employees if they really want their employees to function well and be

committed to the organization.

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