

Relationships Among Employees' Job Attitudes of Perceived Supervisory Support, Job Involvement, and Organisational Commitment

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Abstract: *Organisational commitment has been shown to influence various work outcomes like job performance and turnover intention. Thus, understanding its antecedents has been an essential preoccupation of many researchers. However, research linking organisational commitment to the other job attitude variables has been scant, especially in frontier markets like Tanzania. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships among job attitudes of perceived supervisory support, job involvement and organisational commitment of employees in Tanzania. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from a sample of 190 employees. Descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression analysis were used to establish the relationships while the Hayes' Process Tool was used to test for the mediation effect. The results indicated that both job involvement and perceived supervisory support significantly positively affect organisational commitment and that perceived supervisory support was the most influential predictor. Job involvement significantly but partially mediated the relationship between perceived supervisory support and organisational commitment. The findings call for organisational managers to design and implement measures aimed at enhancing supervisors' supervising and supporting capacity in order to build the committed workforce required for the attainment of the organisation's vision and mission.*

Keywords: job involvement, organisational commitment, perceived supervisory support, mediation

Introduction

Continued success and performance of any organisation require, among other things, human resource capacity that is made up of a workforce committed to the organisation's vision, mission, and values. Employees' organisational commitment is among the top job attitude variables that have attracted research in the field of organisational behaviour. Other top job attitudes include job satisfaction, job involvement, perceived organisational support (supervisory and managerial) and work engagement (Robbins and Judge, 2018). Employees' organisational commitment is also a discretionary behaviour, and it is increasingly becoming an important factor that affects organisations' efficiency, growth, and development (Khaleh and Naji, 2016), profitability, and competitiveness (Ramay and Ramay, 2012). Its growing importance draws from the premise that employees who are highly committed towards their organisation, its vision, mission, and values, are likely to have more intention to stay, superior performance records, and involve themselves more with their work (Chughtai and Zafar, 2006). Such employees are also more likely to be more present at work, deliver better work quality and make more personal sacrifices in the interest of

the organisation (Randall, 1990). Besides, such employees are also more likely to be loyal and productive (Dey, Kumar and Kumar, 2014). All these premises put together imply that committed employees not only show a positive attitude towards the organisation's goals, mission, and values, but they also tend to develop positive work behaviour.

It is generally asserted that employees will exhibit positive or negative work attitudes and behaviours depending on how they perceive the employer is committed to their well-being (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986; Wayne *et al.*, 1997). Consistent with the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964, Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958), employees will reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviours valued by the organisation they serve, if they perceive the employer positively. Also, consistent with the person-environment fit theory (Brown, 1996), workplace factors positively or negatively affect employees. If there is a good fit between the person and the work environment, there generally will be positive work results such as job involvement and organisational commitment. Otherwise, if there is a poor fit between what employees expect and what they get from their workplace, adverse outcomes are more likely to occur (Edwards *et al.*, 2006). Consequently, it becomes imperative for managers to understand the predictors of employees' commitment. Knowledge of such predictors is, therefore, key to focusing management's efforts towards the creation of a supportive environment necessary for employees' commitment to flourish.

Previous studies have linked employees' organisational commitment to perceived supervisory support (Kang, *et al.*, 2015; Lambert and Hogan 2009; Lambert *et al.*, 2015; Latif and Gulzar, 2011; Rabban *et al.*, 2017; Tankebe, 2010) and job involvement (Abdallah *et al.*, 2017; Kuruüzüm *et al.*, 2009; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Zopiatis *et al.*, 2014). There are also studies linking job involvement to perceived supervisory support (e.g., Lambert *et al.*, 2015). All these studies are consistent in their findings by showing that both job involvement and perceived supervisory support positively affect employees' organisational commitment and that perceived supervisory support positively affect job involvement. They are, however, focused on the Western, Middle East, and East Asian economies, with very little from Africa, except for Tankebe's (2010) study from Ghana. In addition, the evidence is scantier in the frontier market segment, such as Tanzania.

Moreover, all these studies focused on the link between either perceived supervisory support or job involvement and organisational commitment, leaving the possible indirect effect. For example, while the evidence shows perceived supervisory support and job involvement, each having a significant positive impact on organisational commitment, scantier evidence is available on the possibility of job involvement mediating in the relationship between perceived supervisory support and organisational commitment. Job involvement has been shown to mediate in such other relationships as between organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Culibrk *et al.*, 2018) and employees' moral values (Dinc and Aydemir, 2013), and between job characteristics and organisational citizenship behaviour (Chen and Chiu, 2009).

There have been studies on organisational commitment in Tanzania. Such studies include Jonathan, Darroux and Thibeli (2013), Jonathan, Thibeli and Darroux (2013), and Nguni (2006). However, all three studies are limited to the education sector. The first two studies focus on organisational commitment of public secondary school teachers, covering three schools in

Dodoma. Nguni (2006), on the other hand, focused on primary school teachers in 70 schools in Tanzania. Therefore, their results may not be generalizable to other sectors in Tanzania.

Furthermore, the three studies differ in terms of the constructs to which organisational commitment is linked. Jonathan, Darroux and Thibeli (2013) and Nguni (2006) link organisational commitment to the antecedents of job satisfaction (and demographics) and leadership style respectively. Jonathan Thibeli and Darroux (2013), on the other hand, links organisational commitment to one of the documented consequences – turnover intention. Thus, the studies that examined the antecedents of organisational commitment left out the other important job attitude variables of job involvement, perceived organisational support, and work engagement in the Tanzanian context. This analysis, therefore, shows a fertile avenue for extending our knowledge on the relationships among job attitude variables in Tanzania because of the cultural differences (Robbins and Judge, 2018), as well as industrialisation differences, relative to the Western World (Bae and Chung, 1997). Robbins and Judge, for example, argues that the level of expectations by employees in countries with high power distance (e.g., Tanzania) are likely to be very different from those of employees in countries with low power distance (e.g., the developed world). These differences imply, therefore, that the conclusions about the relationships among job attitudes may not be generalizable over the developing countries, warranting further research in the latter. Also, Kiggundu (1989) argues that employees in the emerging economies may hold values utterly different from those of employees in the developed economies.

This paper argued that employees would be more involved with their jobs and subsequently commit more to their respective organisations if they perceive that they receive quality supervisory support and encouragement. In addition, the existing evidence of a positive and significant relationship between organisational commitment (as an outcome variable) and perceived supervisory support and job involvement (as predictors) and between perceived supervisory support and job involvement, presents the necessary conditions for possible mediation (Field, 2018). The objective of the present study was therefore to examine the relationships among the job attitudes of perceived supervisory support, job involvement and organisational commitment of employees in selected organisations from a frontier market – Tanzania. In addition, the study investigated whether or not job involvement mediates in the relationship between perceived supervisory support and organisational commitment. Hence, the study extends the knowledge of job attitudes by: (i) including more job attitudes excluded in previous studies, i.e. job involvement and perceived supervisory support as antecedents to organisational commitment; (ii) extending the context from education to include other fields and more regions than just Dodoma; and by (iii) testing for the mediation role of job involvement in the relationship between perceived supervisory support and organisational commitment.

Review of literature

Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment is arguably a vast construct to have a single definition or an effective analysis of (Benkhoff, 1997). For example, Porter *et al.* (1974) define organisational commitment as “the strength of an individual’s identification with, and involvement in, a particular organisation” (p. 604). Porter *et al.* further identifies three components of organisational commitment as (i) the firm belief in organisation values and goals; (ii) the willingness to expend

considerable effort for it; and (iii) the strong intent or desire to remain employed by the organisation. Later on, Meyer and Allen (1991) came up with three components; namely (i) the affective commitment - the state in which an employee wants to stay with an organisation as a result of the “emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organisation”; (ii) continuance commitment - the feeling of being “stuck” leading to a decision to stay with an organisation because it is too costly to leave; and (iii) normative commitment - the feeling of a moral obligation to remain with the organisation. However, it is the latter set of components which have dominated, and still, are dominating, the assessment of organisational commitment to date. Researchers and practitioners alike have grown interest in organisational commitment and its antecedents because of its linkage to vital organisational outcomes such as absenteeism (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990), employee turnover intention (Chughtai and Zafar, 2006; Jonathan *et al.*, 2013; Stallworth, 2004), job performance (Chughtai and Zafar, 2006; Karrasch, 2003; Meyer, *et al.*, 1989), organisational citizen behaviour (Devece, *et al.*, 2016), and productivity and service quality (Shagholi *et al.*, 2011). Many studies have been carried out on the antecedents of organisational commitment and established three categories - namely, personal factors, job-related factors, and job involvement factors. While research on personal factors have been many, similar types of research on job-related factors (job variety, job autonomy, and job training), and job attitudes (job involvement, perceived supervisory support) have been scarce. Job attitudes were the pre-occupation of the present study.

Perceived Supervisory support

According to Bourke *et al.* (1992), perceived supervisory support is “the level to which employees recognise that their supervisor is affording them support and encouragement for work performance and concerns for their well-being.” Perceived supervisory support has been shown as vital in organisational effectiveness across many industries (Lu *et al.*, 2013) and ensures employees’ retention (Rabban *et al.*, 2017). It is vital because (i) it alleviates the difficulties employees encounter in acquiring information that is useful for their personal growth and performance improvement (Zhou, 2003); (ii) it represents the frontier of the organisation, i.e. it is its human face (Rabban *et al.*, 2017); (iii) it inculcates in employees the need for self-fulfilment and satisfaction (Qgaard *et al.*, 2008); and (iv) it influences employees’ perceptions of their work climate in the organisation (Wandhwa, 2012). Supervisors are viewed as two-faced individuals (Kang *et al.*, 2015) - as a source of emotional, informational and social support as well as an averter of job stressors in workplaces (Himle *et al.*, 1989), on the one face, but on the other face as organisational mediators in their actions towards subordinates (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2002). Thus, when employees perceive a supportive environment from their supervisors, they are more likely to support these supervisors by contributing more to the attainment of organisational goals (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2002). Moreover, supervisors who care about their subordinates, look out for them, and are considerate, can create a positive work experience (Lambert *et al.*, 2015). Conversely, supervisors who lack quality supervision can result in strained and frustrated employees (Cooper *et al.*, 2014).

Job involvement

Job involvement is a concept that defines an employee in terms of how he perceives his job in relation to the job itself, and the working environment, as well as how his work and life fit together (Hirschfeld and Field, 2000). One of the earlier scholars to define job involvement is Lodahl and Kejner (1965), who defined it as “the level to which an employee is identified psychologically

with his job or the importance of that job in his total self-image.” Sahel and Hosek (1976) defined it as “the degree to which a person identifies with his/her job, actively participates in it, and considers his/her performance important to his or her self-worth.” Kanungo (1982) adds that job involvement reflects the level of importance that the job plays in a person’s life. Furthermore, the literature has a lot to say about an involved employee. For example, an employee with a high level of job involvement would place his job at the centre of his overall interests (De Carufeland Schaan, 1990); is more independent and self-confident (Chen and Chiu, 2009); and tend to see his job as central to his personal character and focus most of his attention on it (Hackett *et al.*, 2001). Conversely, an employee with low levels of job involvement, is said to concentrate on his interests rather than on his job and will be less creative and innovative (Abdallah *et al.*, 2016). A critical observation in the literature that is also relevant to the present study is the distinction of job involvement from organisational commitment. For example, Brown and Leigh (1996) point out that while job involvement is more associated with an employees’ identification with his immediate job activities, organisational commitment is more associated with the employee’s attachment to the organisation.

Theories and development of Hypotheses

Supervisory support and organisational commitment

From the social exchange theory (SET) literature (Homan, 1958, Blau, 1964, Emerson, 1976) it is suggested that quality supervisory support creates a positive effect on employees/subordinates’ attitudinal and behavioural outcomes such as job involvement and organisational commitment. The theory postulates that a set of reciprocity relationships exists between employees and their employers. For example, employees feeling supported by their immediate supervisors (representing the employer) would involve themselves more with their job and commit more to the organisation as a reciprocal reaction. Some of the early studies to investigate such supervisor-subordinate exchanges are Wayne and Green (1993) for organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and Liden and Green (1980) for performance and job satisfaction in health care and university settings, respectively. Recent studies on the link between perceived supervisory support and organisational commitment have consistently found a significant and positive relationship between them in different contexts. Examples of such studies include, Rabban *et al.* (2017) on a sample of 340 employees of the Pakistani’s manufacturing sector, Kang *et al.* (2015) on a sample of 356 hospitality frontline employees in South-Western USA, and Lambert *et al.* (2015) on a sample of Indian police officers. These results were consistent with those that were reported earlier, such as Joiner and Baikalis (2006), on a sample of casual academics in Australia’s tertiary education sector. Both Tenkebe (2010) on a sample of 220 police officers in Greater Accra Ghana and Lambert and Hogan (2009) on a sample of 160 employees of a correctional facility in Midwest USA reported a significant positive effect of supervisory support on organisational commitment. Lambert and Hogan went further by isolating the two segments of organisational support, i.e. the degree of feelings of being supported by the organisation (Griffin, 2002), into – managerial support (support from high ups) and supervisory support (support directly from supervisors), and studied the effect of each on organisational commitment. They found the impact of supervisory support on organisational commitment to be higher than that of managerial support. From the preceding discussion, the present study hypothesises that:

H₁ There is a positive relationship between employees' perceived supervisory support and organisational commitment

Supervisory support and job involvement

The person-environment fit theory holds that there is an interaction between employees and their working environment. The theory suggests that workplace factors can lead to positive or negative employees' work outcomes, such as job involvement (Brown, 1996). Generally, employees want positive and rewarding work experiences. Such experiences include, among other things, quality supervision. It follows, therefore, that if there is a good (poor) fit between what employees want from the workplace, e.g., quality supervision, and the actual workplace environment, positive (negative) work outcomes are more likely to occur (Edwards *et al.*, 2006). One example of such a positive work outcome is job involvement. Quality supervisors, i.e. supervisors who care about their subordinates, look out for them, and are considerate of their situation, are likely to create positive work experiences; but lack of such supervisors leads to strain and frustration among the employees (Cooper *et al.*, 2014). Mathieu and Zajac (1990) had it that a supervisor who provides more accurate and timely communication enhances the work environment and thereby likely to increase work-related outcomes such as job involvement. The Mathieu and Zajac's view is supported by the study by Lambert *et al.* (2015), in which increases in supervision was shown to have a significant positive effect on the job involvement of a sample of Indian police officers. The present study, therefore, hypothesises that:

H₂: There is a positive relationship between employee's perceived supervisory support and job involvement

Job involvement and organisational commitment

The literature advances several arguments on the possible relationship between job involvement and organisational commitment. For example, it is argued in Ineson *et al.* (2013), and in Rotenberg and Moberg (2007), that highly job involved employees would be more committed to their organisation and invest substantial effort in order to achieve its objectives. The link between job involvement and organisational commitment has attracted many empirical types of research. For example, Toga and Mjoli (2013) examined the relationship in a sample of motor-car manufacturing employees in South Africa. Other studies include Abdallah *et al.* (2017); Kuruüzüm *et al.* (2009); Mathieu and Zajac (1990); Uygur and Kilic (2009); and Zopiatis *et al.* (2014). Moreover, Mathieu and Zajac (1990) (in a meta-analytic study) and Moynihan and Pandey (2007) found a significant moderate relationship between the two variables. The critical differences in these studies are their contextual differences and analytical techniques. While most of these studies used OLS estimation techniques, others like Abdallah *et al.* (2017) and Kuruüzüm *et al.* (2009) for bank employees used structural equation modelling (SEM) estimation techniques. Biases in industry and geographical locations are widely observed, with Toga and Mjoli (2013) the only study in Africa. However, all these empirical studies agree in their results that job involvement is significantly and positively related to organisational commitment. What is lacking most is evidence from a frontier market. From the above discussion, the present study hypothesises that:

H₃: There is a positive relationship between employees' job involvement and organisational commitment.

The indirect effect of Job involvement

From the two theories discussed in this paper – social exchange theory and person-environment fit - it is established that perceived supervisory support would have a positive effect on both organisational commitment and job involvement. Moreover, the empirical evidence also discussed in this paper shows that job involvement positively affects organisational commitment. This position in the literature creates a fertile ground for suspecting an indirect effect (mediation). According to Field (2018), mediation is said to have occurred if the strength of the relationship between the predictor and outcome is reduced by including a mediator, where a full mediation occurs when the relationship between the predictor variable and outcome variable is wiped off; short of which it is a partial mediation. From the social exchange theory, employees feeling supported by their immediate supervisors (representing the employer) would involve themselves more with their job and commit more to the organisation as a reciprocal reaction. Also, highly job-involved employees would be more committed to their organisation and invest substantial effort in order to achieve organisation objectives. Job involvement has been shown to mediate similar situations. Examples of such situations include the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Ćulibrk *et al.*, 2018); between employees' moral values and organisational commitment in Bosnia (Dinc and Aydemir, 2013); and between job characteristics and organisational citizenship behaviour (Chen and Chiu, 2009). It is from this background that the present study hypothesises that:

H4 Job involvement mediates in the relationship between employee's perceived supervisory support and organisational commitment

Conceptual model

Figure 1 presents the study's conceptual model as developed from the preceding literature review.

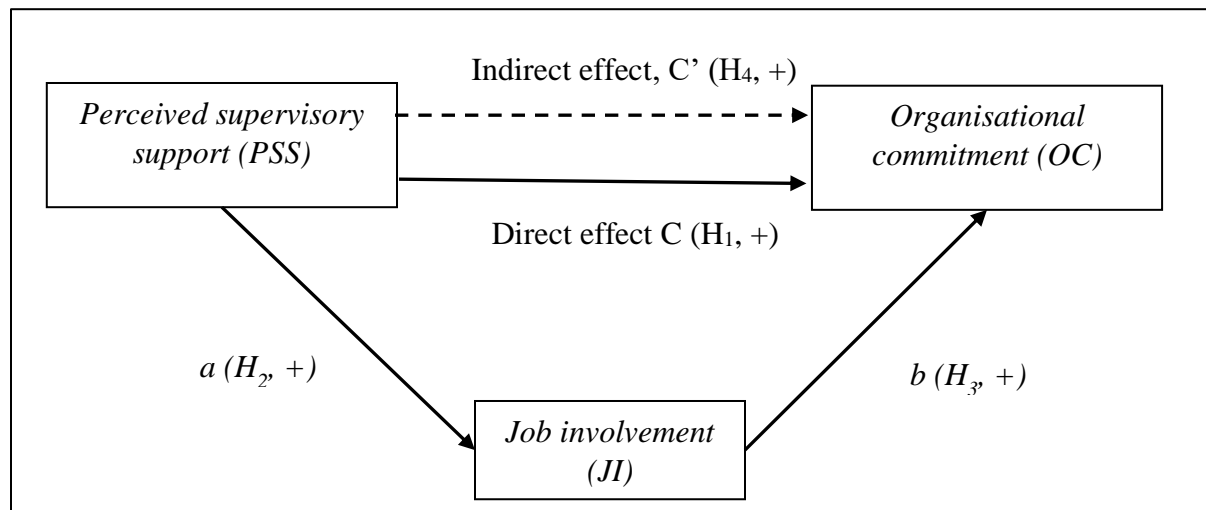


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Methodology

A cross-sectional descriptive design was adopted with survey as a research strategy. A questionnaire was administered to employees from various organisations in the Lake zone covering public, private, and non-governmental organisations. A snow bowling strategy was used to peddle the questionnaires starting with 19 employees who were attending a soft research skills course at the Open University of Tanzania's Shinyanga Regional Centre. These employees were registered students with the university, pursuing different postgraduate programmes. Each employee was given ten structured questionnaires to fill one and administer the rest to fellow employees in their organisations and beyond. The filled questionnaires were then scanned into pdf and either "WhatsApped" or emailed to the researcher. The employees were asked to ensure that participation was voluntary. In addition, they were asked to fully inform the recruited participants that all of their responses would be confidential and that the results of the analysis would be reported in aggregate terms. A total of 123 questionnaires were returned out of the 190 distributed, a response rate of 64.7 per cent. Data screening lost three cases for being uninvolved (2) in filling the questionnaires and outlier (1), leaving 120 usable questionnaires

Variables and their measurement

Dependent variable: Organisational commitment was measured by a four item-scale adapted from Mowday *et al.* (1982). A sample item was "*I am proud to tell people that I work for this organisation*". Responses were based on a five-point Likert-type rating scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The four items returned a Cronbach's of .795, which was higher than the $\alpha = .68$ reported in Lambert *et al.* (2015), on the same scale, but on a sample of police officers in India. Scores in these four items were summed up into a total score for each respondent to serve as the dependent variable scores.

Independent variables: Perceived supervisory support was measured by six items from Tears (1981). A sample item was "*my supervisor is friendly and approachable*". Cronbach α improved from .67 to .73 after deleting one item "*my supervisor does little to make it pleasant to work here*". Job involvement was measured by a four-item scale adopted from Kanungo (1982) with a Cronbach's α of .73. A sample item was "*the most important things that happen to me in my life usually occur at my job*". Responses to individual questions under each of the three scales followed a five-point Likert-type rating scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Both scales were also used in Lambert *et al.* (2015) with Cronbach's α of .70 (based on all six items) and .63, respectively. Total scores were computed for each respondent by summing the items in the respective scales and were used in the regression model as independent variables.

Finally, several demographic characteristics – age and tenure, (both continuously measured), education, gender, marital status and job rank (categorically measured) – were added for understanding the study sample (Table 1). Male respondents were twice the number of female counterparts, while those who were married were three times the sum of those who were divorced (1) and single. More than 62 per cent had a bachelor's qualification, while about 20 per cent held a postgraduate qualification. The rest had a below bachelor qualification. Top and middle management levels constituted about 43 and 54 per cent of the sample, respectively. The rest were in the operational cadre. Average age and tenure were 36.7 (SD = 8.69) and 8.16 (SD = 7.48) years, respectively.

Table 1. Sample Description

Variable	Freq.	%age	Mean	S.D.
Gender (<i>n</i> = 116)				
Male	79	68.1		
Female	37	31.9		
Education (<i>n</i> = 113)				
Below Bachelor	20	17.7		
Bachelor	71	62.8		
Above Bachelor	22	19.5		
Marital Status (<i>n</i> = 118)				
Married	88	74.6		
Others	29	25.4		
Job Rank (<i>n</i> = 110)				
Operational	4	3.6		
Middle Management	59	53.6		
Top Management	47	42.7		
Age			36.7	8.69
Tenure			8.16	7.48

Data preparation

The collected data was screened for accuracy and missing values (scale items only), as well as and lack of participants' engagement when filling the questionnaire, leading to the loss of two cases. This process also supported the decision to drop item SP6. Multivariate Outliers were checked by Mahalanobis distance using $\chi^2_{(13)}$ at $\rho = .001$, losing one case. Missing values were not replaced for failing the 5 per cent missing value criterion for both cases and variables. The final sample reduced to 120 respondents. Normal distribution assumption was tested by the histogram of organisational commitment vs. the regression standardised residuals with mean = -.002 and a standard deviation of 1.002 (*n* = 92). Linearity assumption was tested through normal p-p plot followed by correlation between organisational commitment and perceived supervisory support ($r = .456$, $p < .01$) and job involvement ($r = .42$, $p < .01$) against the recommended minimum of $r = .3$ (Pallant, 2016), representing moderate correlation (Cohen, 1988). Thus, the linearity assumption was not violated. The data passed the multicollinearity test with $r = .3$ between the independent variables which was well below the recommended maximum of .7 (Pallant, 2016). Collinearity diagnostics confirmed this result with a $VIF = 1.106$, which was below the recommended maximum of 10.0 (Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013). However, the data failed the homoscedasticity assumption test using both Breusch Pagan ($\chi^2 = 16.52$, $\rho < .001$) and Koenker ($\chi^2 = 9.30$, $\rho = .01$). Consequently, the study reported the regression results after controlling for this heteroscedasticity problem.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to generate frequencies and descriptive statistics for the categorical and continuous variables, respectively while the correlation was used to assess the relationship between the variables. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The heteroscedasticity problem reported above was controlled for by generating heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors using Ahmad Daryanto's plug-in for IBM SPSS. The direct and indirect effects were tested using the mediation model (No. 4) from the Process tool plug-in in SPSS (Hayes, 2012). The effect size and the significance of the indirect effect were assessed using Preacher and Kelley's (2011) K^2 and Sobel test respectively, where K^2 has cut-offs of .01, .09, and .25 for small, medium and large effect respectively.

Results

Descriptive, reliability and correlation statistics

Descriptive and correlation analyses were performed to describe the data and test from both linearity and multicollinearity assumptions, respectively. Scale test for reliability analysis was also performed to determine the internal consistency of the latent variable scales. In the results (Table 2), perceived supervisory support had the highest mean and standard deviation. Both perceived supervisory support and job involvement had $r = .46, p < .01$ and $r = .42, p < .01$ respectively which are within the range of .3 to .49 (Cohen, 1988) indicating their significant moderate correlation with organisational commitment.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics, Correlation and Reliability Test Results

Variable	N	Mean	S. D.	1	2	3	4	5
1 PSS	107	17.59	3.67	0.73				
2 JI	107	13.21	3.24	.310**	0.73			
3 OC	113	14.52	3.51	.456**	.420**	0.80		

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (2-tailed)

PSS = Perceived supervisory support, JI = Job involvement, OC = Organisational commitment.

Bold figures in the diagonal are scale Cronbach's alpha coefficients

Thus, these results also indicate that the assumption of linearity between the independent variables and the dependent variable was fulfilled. In addition, the correlation between perceived supervisory support and job involvement was much below .7 ($r = .3$) which indicate that multicollinearity is not suspected between these two independent variables.

Multiple regression analysis results

Multiple regression analysis techniques were used to test the ability of the two independent variables of perceived supervisory support and job involvement to predict levels of organisational commitment. Consequent to the heteroscedasticity problems observed in the preliminary analysis, the study reported results based on heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors. Results (Table 3) show that the total variance in organisational commitment explained by the model was 34.8%, $F(2, 89) = 23.76, p < .001$. Both job involvement ($b = .4, t = 3.17, p = .002$) and perceived supervisory support ($b = .38, t = 3.39, p = .001$) significantly positively predicted organisational

commitment. In addition, perceived supervisory support with a higher beta value ($\beta = .36$) had more impact on organisational commitment.

Table 3. Multiple Regression Results

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE (b)</i> [§]	β	<i>t</i>	ρ	95%LB	95%UB
Constant	2.47	2.29		1.08	.283	-1.02	5.96
JI	0.40	0.13	0.31	3.17	.002	0.20	0.60
PSS	0.38	0.11	0.36	3.39	.001	0.21	0.55

$R^2 = 34.8\%$, $F(2, 89) = 23.76$, $p < .001$. [§]heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors
PSS = Perceived supervisory support, JI = Job involvement, OC = Organisational commitment

Indirect effect analysis results

The indirect effect of job involvement in the relationship between perceived supervisory support was estimated using the process tool (Hayes, 2012), application details of which are well demonstrated in Field (2018). In the results (Figure 2), there was a significant indirect effect of perceived supervisory support on organisational commitment through job involvement, $b = .09$, BCa CI [.158, .606]. This represents a relatively medium and significant effect, $K^2 = .105$, 95% BCa CI [.029, .215], $z = 1.99$, $p = .046$. These results indicate that job involvement partially and significantly mediated the relationship between the two job attitudes of perceived supervisory support and organisational commitment. There could, therefore, be other potential mediators to include in the model in addition to job involvement.

Discussion and conclusions

The present study assessed the relationships among the job attitude variables of perceived supervisory support, job involvement, and organisational commitment. Based on the reviewed theoretical and empirical literature, an initial conceptual model and four hypotheses were developed about the connections between the three variables. The study argued that both perceived supervisory support and job involvement would positively affect organisational commitment and that job involvement would mediate the relationship between perceived supervisory support and organisational commitment. All four hypotheses were confirmed.

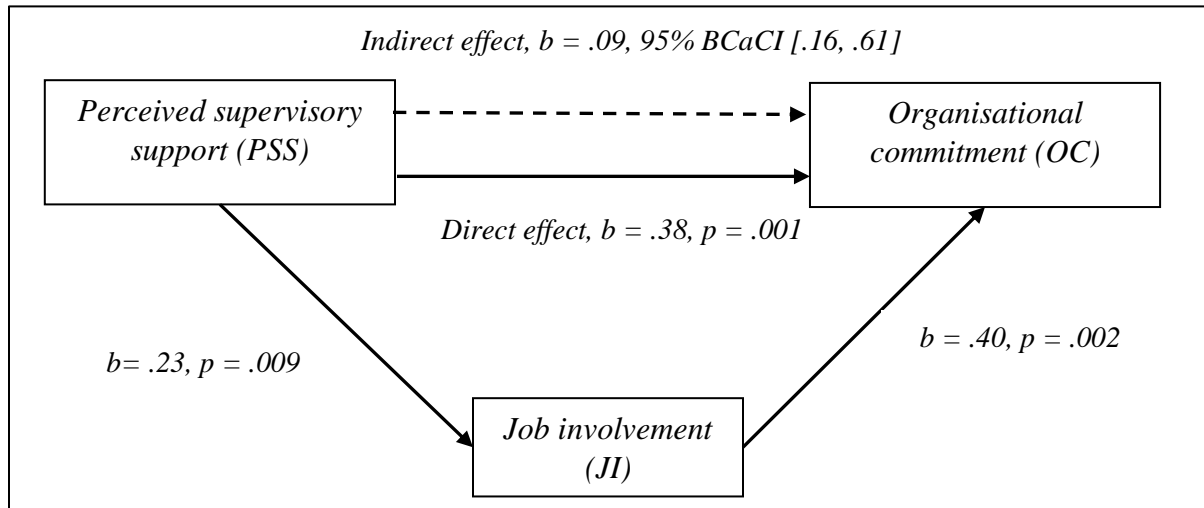


Figure 2. Parameter estimates

Firstly, perceived supervisory support had a significant positive effect on organisational commitment (H1). The result confirms the claim in the social exchange theory that employees who receive advance notice of changes, full credit for the ideas they contribute, friendly treatment and atmosphere, and attention for their welfare, from their supervisors and are asked for their opinions before a decision expected to affect them is made, reciprocate with a stronger commitment to the organisation. The results are also consistent with those reported in earlier studies, examples of which include, Rabban *et al.* (2017), Kang *et al.* (2015), Lambert *et al.* (2015), Joiner and Baikalis (2006) Tenkebe (2010) and Lambert and Hogan (2009). An important contribution of this line of research is empirical evidence on the relationship between a job attitude variable and organisational commitment from a frontier market which was lacking to the best of the researcher's knowledge. The finding suggests that organisations should train, orientate and support new and current supervisors so that they can support their subordinates better. All employees seeking guidance on career development should be supported no matter how much development is needed. Performance appraisal should also insist on the provision of constructive feedback. Furthermore, consistent with Wayne *et al.* (1997), organisations should develop supervisors' performance management skills, create an environment where task delegation is used as an opportunity for learning because "meaningful task delegation can both increase support perception and strengthen job performance."

The second hypothesis was on the relationship between perceived supervisory support and job involvement. Perceived supervisory support was found to have a significant positive effect on job involvement. Consistent with the prediction of the person-environment fit, which posited that quality supervision creates a positive work experience, leading employees to portray positive work outcomes such as job involvement. Job variables with motivating potential such as perceived supervisory support could increase employees' display of positive work outcome such as job involvement. The results are also in line with those reported in Lambert *et al.* (2015) on a sample of Indian police officers.

The third hypothesis was on the relationship between job involvement and organisational commitment. The findings show that job involvement positively and significantly affected organisational commitment. The results support the notion that the more employees identify with their job and consider the job important to their lives, the more they commit to the organisation. These findings are consistent with those reported in earlier studies, e.g. Abdallah, *et al.* (2017), Cohen, (2000), Toga and Mjoli (2013), and Zopiatis *et al.* (2014) as well as in the earlier meta-analytic study of Mathieu and Zajac (1990). A comparison of the effects of the two job attitudes, i.e. job involvement and perceived supervisory support shows that the latter was the most important predictor of organisational commitment.

Finally, in hypothesis four, the findings confirmed the notion that job involvement mediates significantly the relationship between perceived supervisory support and organisational commitment, albeit partially. The fact that it is partial mediation signals two possibilities. One is the possibility that a major part of the effect of perceived supervisory support on the organisational commitment is achieved directly. The other possibility is that there could be more mediators to be included in the mediation model. This finding is new linking a job variable (perceived supervisory support) to a work outcome (organisational commitment) with a mediator (job involvement), not only in the general literature but only in the empirical evidence from a frontier market – Tanzania. The direct effect of perceived supervisory support on organisational commitment is not eliminated even after accounting for the impact of job involvement.

Overall the study suggests that both perceived supervisory support and job involvement are vital in making employees committed to the organisation. Dinc and Aydemir (2013) suggest that managers who understand this and try to enhance these two concepts with seminars and training programmes will be able to increase employee's commitment to their organisations.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

Possible limitations lie on the sample and the number of job attitude variables involved. Data was limited to the sample snowballed from the student employees who participated in the course. Coverage was dictated by where these employee students came from and their employing organisations. This sample threatens generalizability of the results, not only on Tanzania as a country but even within its lake zone. The study recommends that future research should obtain a more representative sample to confirm whether the conclusions from this study stand out.

Another limitation is on the job attitude variables involved. More of them such as job variety, job autonomy, training, job satisfaction, work engagement, etc. which have been shown to affect organisational commitment (Lambert *et al.*, 2015) should be considered. Furthermore, the results of this study indicate that the size of indirect effects was significant but partial, suggesting that mediators other than job involvement could be at play. Finally, a full range of organisational commitment dimensions could also be explored as each of these dimensions might lead to different behaviour.

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