

The Mediating Effect of Employee Engagement on the Relationship of Job Satisfaction and Affective Commitment

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Abstract

The study investigates the relationship of job satisfaction and affective commitment as mediated by employee engagement. The participants of the study were regular full-time employees of a hotel in Angeles City, Philippines. The respondents were randomly selected, and quantitative research design was employed. Using partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), the results revealed that job satisfaction affects employee engagement. This indicates that the higher the level of job satisfaction, the greater the engagement of employees. Same is true with job satisfaction and affective commitment as well as employee engagement and affective commitment. Thus, as the level of job satisfaction increases, affective commitment also rises and as employee engagement rises, affective commitment likewise increases. The indirect effect of employee engagement on the relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment was found to be statistically significant. This signifies that employee engagement significantly mediates job satisfaction-affective commitment link with a medium extent of mediation effect. Implications of the study in the workplace and the directions for future research were also provided.

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Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Affective Commitment, Employee Engagement, Mediation model, Partial Least Squares, SEM.

1. Introduction

PEOPLE are viewed as the lifeblood of any organization. As the most important asset, human resources are vital in the success of any company. They are essential factor in attaining firm's growth. Through the efforts of the people, organizational strategic goals are being attained. The knowledge, abilities, and skills of the employees are determinants of future organizational success [1]. However, organizations must also realize that employees need to be satisfied with their job. An individual with high job satisfaction level usually exhibits positive feelings about his or her job [2].

Aside from job satisfaction, affective commitment plays a huge

role in making employees happier and more productive [1]. Affective commitment is strongly related to organizational performance [3]. Moreover, employee engagement is another concept in organizational behavior (OB) that catches the interest of many researchers. It is relatively a new concept referring to a person's involvement, satisfaction, and enthusiasm for the work he or she does. Employees who are highly engaged show passion for their work and display a strong connection to their organization [2]. When the workers are highly engaged, the level of customer satisfaction also increases. Additionally, with more productive attitude of workers, the company would experience the higher profit, lower turnover, and lower accident rate [4].

Regardless of the size, classification, or location, all organizations need people. The strategic direction of the firm depends on its people. The success or failure of the business lies on how people behave in the enterprise [5] and this is a huge challenge for firms. The core factors of present study including the levels

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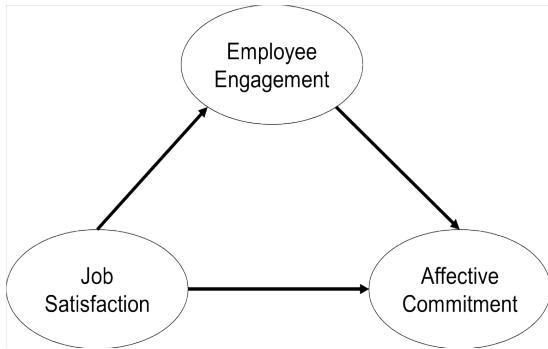


Fig. 1. Research framework.

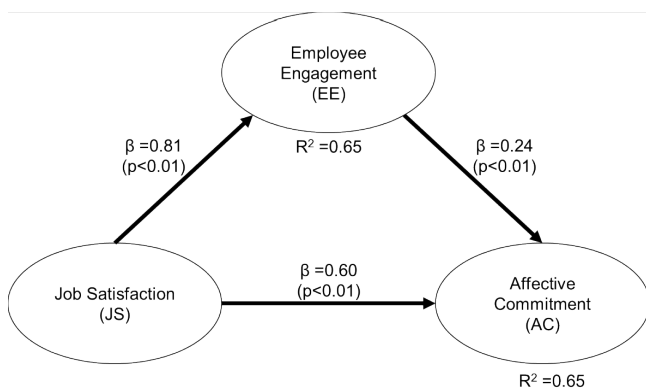


Fig. 2. The mediation model with parameter estimates.

of job satisfaction, employee engagement, affective commitment, and psychological effects of these constructs relative to one another are also taken into consideration. Particularly, the undertaking explores the relationship between job satisfaction, affective commitment, and employee engagement.

2. Research Framework and Hypotheses

2.1. Job Satisfaction

When people find the contentment or fulfillment in their work, then job satisfaction exists [5]. Job satisfaction is a pleasurable/positive emotion caused by an individual's work experience [6]. It is a set of favorable or unfavorable feelings and emotions about workers' viewpoint toward their job [7]. Several studies reveal that a job satisfaction is relative to the factors of individual needs/aspirations, relationship with colleagues, working conditions, policies, and compensation [8]. An individual who exhibits job satisfaction has the tendency to have less absences, to contribute positively to the firm, and to stay in the organization [9]. There is also a negative relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism [6, 10, 11]. Contrary, dissatisfied workers have high rate of absences when numerous alternative jobs are available [12].

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of The Respondents.

	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	80	68.97
Female	36	31.03
Age		
50-59	11	9.48
40-49	12	10.34
30-39	41	35.34
20-29	52	44.83
Highest Educational Qualification		
High School Undergraduate	3	2.59
High School Graduate	15	12.93
College Undergraduate	27	23.28
College Graduate	70	60.34
Master's Degree Undergraduate	0	0.00
Master's Degree Graduate	1	0.86
Years of Service		
1-5	51	43.97
6-10	25	21.55
11-15	21	18.10
16-20	12	10.34
21-25	3	2.59
26-30	3	2.59
31-35	1	0.86

Table 2. Model Fit and Quality Indices of SEM.

APC	0.551, $p < 0.001$
ARS	0.650, $p < 0.001$
AARS	0.645, $p < 0.001$
AVIF	2.513
AFVIF	3.086
Tenenhaus GoF	0.670

When workers are happy, they are more likely to be productive [2]. A review of 300 studies magnified that the relationship between employee job satisfaction and productivity is strong [13]. Furthermore, there is also a strong relationship between job satisfaction and turnover. As job satisfaction increases, turnover decreases [14]. When employees are dissatisfied, turnover would likely to occur particularly when employment opportunities are plenty [2]. Job satisfaction and antagonistic relationships with co-employees may predict deviant behaviors such as unionization attempt, substance abuse, robbery at work, tardiness, and others [2, 15, 16].

2.2. Affective Commitment

On one hand, affective commitment is as important as job satisfaction. It is one of the three components of organizational commitment. Affective commitment is the person's emotional attachment to the organization and his or her belief towards company's values [17]. It is the workers' psychological attachment to their organization and their identification in the objectives and values of the said firm [18–20]. It is a type of bond that a worker has

Table 3. Item Loading AVE and Reliability of The Variables.

Constructs	Item loading	AVE	CR	CA
EE (9 items)	0.679 – 0.884	0.708	0.956	0.948
AC (8 items)	0.710 – 0.883	0.695	0.948	0.937
JS (9 items)	0.776 – 0.855	0.672	0.949	0.939

All item loadings are significant at 0.001 ($p < 0.001$); EE = employee engagement; AC = affective commitment; JS = job satisfaction; AVE = average variance extracted; CR = composite reliability; CA = Cronbach's alpha

Table 4. Square Roots of AVE Coefficients and Correlation Coefficients.

	EE	AC	JS
EE	0.841		
AC	0.709	0.834	
JS	0.795	0.781	0.820

Diagonal elements are the square root of AVE of constructs while the off-diagonal elements are the correlation between constructs author and affiliation lines.

toward his or her organization [21]. Workers with high degree of affective commitment are those who identify themselves with the objectives and values of the firm, have feeling of pride in their organization, and have ardent desire to remain as a member of the firm [22]. They exert more effort to improve the distinct functions of the organization even when such improvements are hard to execute and work against the status quo [23]. If there will be transformational changes in the organization, it is possible that employees with high affective commitment will continue to show positive discretionary behaviors and less intention to react toward a proposed change [24]. A study also resulted an inverse impact of affective commitment on resistance to change [25].

2.3. Employee Engagement

One of the new concepts in OB particularly in the field of job attitudes is employee engagement [2]. Employee engagement has become one of the widely used organizational behavior concepts [26]. Several studies define it as the commitment to the organization in terms of emotion and intellect [27–29]. Others define it as a discretionary effort exerted by workers in their jobs [30]. It refers to psychological presence when one is performing or executing a role in an organization [31, 32]. It has two vital components: attention and absorption. Attention is the mental ability and amount of time an individual spends in thinking about a work role while absorption refers to embracing the work role and having focus on the said role [33]. It is a work-related positive thinking of an employee that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption [34, 35]. It is the opposite of burnout - exhaustion, cynicism, inefficiency. An engaged employee displays three characteristics: energy, involvement, and efficacy [36].

The primary antecedents of employee engagement include job and personal resources. Job resources may include autonomy,

performance feedback, social support, and supervisory coaching while personal resources are those related to optimism, self-efficacy, resilience, and self-esteem [35]. Others identified that job characteristics, perceived organizational support, perceived supervisor support, rewards and recognition, and procedural and distributive justice are the predictors of employee engagement [37]. Employee engagement can also be viewed in three perspectives: trait engagement (optimistic view of life and work), state engagement (feelings of energy and absorption), and behavioral engagement (extra-role behavior e.g. organizational citizenship behavior). These elements are the conceptual space of employee engagement [38].

Employee engagement has been the center of attention in both the academe and the industry for the past years. It has been identified as the primary tool in the achievement of organizational success and competitiveness [39]. Organizations can attain competitive advantage through employee engagement [38]. Several researchers identified that the attitudes, behavior, and performance of individuals depend on their level of engagement. Moreover, it also enforces organizational performance, productivity, retention, financial performance, and shareholders return [4, 27, 29, 39, 40].

2.4. Hypothesis Development

Several studies proved that job satisfaction and employee engagement are positively and highly related variables [1, 4, 41, 42]. Job satisfaction has been identified as one of the consequences of employee engagement [37]. Employees exhibiting high job satisfaction are much committed to the mission of the organization and are generally engaged with their work [43, 44]. To stimulate the employee engagement, the managers should be able to communicate effectively, to provide the clear job expectations, to be the inspirational leaders, to create an environment of optimism,

Table 5. Parameter Estimates of The Mediation Model.

	β	SE	P-value	f^2
H1: JS→EE	0.807	0.076	<0.001	0.652
H2: JS→AC	0.602	0.080	<0.001	0.476
H3: EE→AC	0.242	0.087	0.003	0.172
H4:				
Total Effect (c):	0.797	0.076	<0.001	0.631
Direct Effect (c'): JS→AC	0.602	0.080	<0.001	0.476
Path a : JS→EE	0.807	0.076	<0.001	0.652
Path b : EE→AC	0.242	0.087	0.003	0.172
Indirect Effect ($a*b$): JS→EE→AC	0.195	0.062	0.001	0.154

f^2 is the Cohen's (1988) effect size: 0.02=small, 0.15=medium, 0.35=large; SE = standard error, β =standardized path coefficient. Total effect c is equal to the sum of direct effect c' and indirect effects; i.e. $c = c' + (a*b)$

and to have a mechanism for regular feedback and recognition [7]. There are also several drivers of employee engagement. This include identifying the right employees for the right job, exhibiting the exceptional leadership in the workplace, and providing the intact organizational systems and strategies [45].

2.4.1. Hypothesis 1: Job satisfaction is positively related to employee engagement

Moreover, myriad studies revealed that job satisfaction has positive relationship with affective commitment [1, 46–49]. For instance, a study investigated the relationship of job satisfaction and affective commitment among IT employees in India. The results indicated that there is a positive relationship between the two constructs. It further showed that salary, benefits, fair treatment, opportunity for advancement and supervision as components of job satisfaction are highly correlated with affective commitment [47]. Among the three types of organizational commitment - normative, affective, and continuance - affective commitment showed the highest impact when correlated with job satisfaction [50]. It is also recognized that job satisfaction predicts affective commitment [51].

2.4.2. Hypothesis 2: Job satisfaction is positively related to affective commitment

Other researchers identified that employee engagement and affective commitment are positively related [1, 36, 37, 52–56]. For instance, a study investigated the relationship between employee engagement and organizational commitment. The results indicated that employees with prominent level of engagement exhibits elevated the level of affective commitment [57]. Moreover, other studies also revealed that employee engagement is positively associated with affective commitment [58–60].

2.4.3. Hypothesis 3: Employee engagement is positively related to affective commitment

Few studies identified that an employee engagement mediates the relationship of job satisfaction and affective commitment [1]. From most undertakings, an employee engagement is an antecedent of organizational commitment [36] and job performance [61], effecting to the job satisfaction. However, an affective commitment has been conducted under the research [1]. A comparable study revealed that age, a mediating variable, does not moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment [62]. With this, there might be another factor that will mediate the relationship of job satisfaction and affective commitment and that would possibly be employee engagement.

2.4.4. Hypothesis 4: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment

From the hypotheses presented, Fig. 1 presents the research framework showing the three possible positive relationships job satisfaction and employee engagement, job satisfaction and affective commitment, and employee engagement and affective commitment. Moreover, the mediating effect of employee engagement on the relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment was likewise investigated.

3. Methods

3.1. Participants of The Study

Out of 165 employees of a hotel in Angeles City, Philippines, a total of 116 comprised as respondents of the study. The number of participants was computed using an online sample size calculator (Raosoft.com) depicting 5% margin of error, 95% confidence level, and 50% response distribution. They were randomly selected and form part as samples of the study. Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents were females (68.97%). Moreover, in

terms of age, 80.17% belonged to 20 to 39 age bracket and majority of them finished a bachelor's degree and almost 60% of the participants had 1 to 10 years of service in the company.

3.2. Research Instrument

The research instrument used in the study was a questionnaire. It consisted of two parts - demographic factors and the constructs on job satisfaction, affective commitment, and employee engagement. In the demographic aspect, it includes the respondent's sex, age, highest educational qualification, and the number of years of service in the company. On the other hand, job satisfaction was measured using Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire [63]. This construct has originally 20 items but was reduced to nine after the panel of faculty-experts assessed the instrument.

Affective commitment was measured using organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ) - affective commitment part [19, 64]. It has eight items reflecting the level of affective commitment of the respondents.

Employee engagement was assessed using Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (shortened version-UWES9) comprised of nine items [65].

All items in the three constructs were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree. The validity and reliability of the constructs were also measured as shown in Tables 3 and 4.

3.3. Data Analysis

A quantitative research design was used in the present study to assess the mediating effect of employee engagement in job satisfaction-affective commitment link. The partial least square - structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) using WarpPLS 5.0 software was utilized in estimating the parameters of the mediation model. The PLS-SEM is a variance-based estimation method [66] which assesses the reliability and validity of the constructs and estimates the relationships between these measures [67].

4. Results

The study employed PLS-SEM to assess the relationship of three variables such as: job satisfaction, affective commitment, and employee engagement. In evaluating the undertaking using PLS-SEM, the two-stage approach was utilized [68]. In the first stage, the measurement model is being assessed. In this phase, reliability and validity of the variables are being investigated. In the second stage, structural models are being evaluated, where the hypothesized relationships among variables are scrutinized [68, 69].

4.1. Model Fit and Quality Indices

Table 2 shows the goodness of fit and quality indices of the structural equation model. The general results revealed that the SEM estimates are within the acceptable range.

The p-values of average path coefficient (APC), average R-squared (ARS), and average adjusted R-squared (AARS) must be equal to or lower than 0.05 for the model to be acceptable [70]. Regarding average block VIF (AVIF) and average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF) indices, it is recommended that both values be equal to or lower than 3.3 [70]. In terms of Tenenhaus GoF, an index showing the explanatory power of the model [70], the following thresholds are being followed: small if equal to or more than 0.1, medium if equal to or greater than 0.25, and large if equal to or more than 0.36 [70, 71]. With the results shown in Table 2, the model fit and quality indices of the model are acceptable.

4.2. Reliability and Validity Measurements

To assess the measurement model, reliability and validity (convergent and discriminant) results were analyzed. The assessment of construct reliability permits the evaluation of consistency of reflective item or set of items in terms of what it intends to measure [72, 73]. Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha are typically used in assessing construct reliability [70, 73]. The values of the composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (CA) must be equal to or greater than 0.7 to reflect good reliability [74–76]. In Table 3, the results revealed that the variables employee engagement (EE), affective commitment (AC), and job satisfaction (JS) satisfied the criterion for reliability of the research constructs.

On the other hand, convergent validity gauges the quality of the set of items or question statements in a research instrument. This means that the items or question-statements in each construct is understood by the participants in the same manner as they were intended by the designers of the items or question statements [70]. To achieve acceptable level of convergent validity, the p-values for each item should be equal to or lower than 0.05 and loadings be equal to or higher than 0.5 [70, 77, 78]. The item loading is the correlation between item and construct [70, 79]. In Table 3, the item loadings of all variables are statistically significant and higher than the 0.5 requirement.

Moreover, the average variance extracted (AVE) measures the amount of variance of each construct from its items relative to the amount due to measurement error [79, 80]. The average variance extracted (AVE) for each latent variable is greater than 0.5, the threshold recommended for acceptable validity [74]. The coefficients of AVE satisfied the acceptable validity.

Table 4 presents the correlations among variables with square roots of AVE coefficients to measure the discriminant validity of the instrument. Discriminant validity gauges if the statements associated with each latent variable are not confusing when respondents answer the questionnaire given to them. Moreover, it tests whether the statements related with one variable, for instance, are

not confusing with the statements connected with other variables [70]. For each variable, the square root of the AVEs should be greater than any of the correlations involving the said variable [74]. Thus, the results indicate that the measures used in the study have discriminant validity.

4.3. Mediation Model Results

Figure 2 presents the model created for a mediating effect significant test. The path between job satisfaction and employee engagement is significant ($\beta = 0.81, p < 0.01$) and the path between employee engagement and affective commitment is also significant ($\beta = 0.24, p < 0.01$). Moreover, the path between job satisfaction and affective commitment is likewise significant ($\beta = 0.60, p < 0.01$).

Table 5 illustrates the parameter estimates of the mediation model. Analysis of the data revealed that job satisfaction significantly affects employee engagement ($\beta = 0.807, p < 0.001$). The positive path coefficient indicates that the higher the level of job satisfaction, the greater the level employee engagement of the respondents. The effect of job satisfaction to employee engagement is large ($f^2 = 0.652$) [81]. The finding suggests that *H1* is supported. Same is true with job satisfaction and affective commitment ($\beta = 0.602, p < 0.001$) and employee engagement and affective commitment ($\beta = 0.242, p = 0.003$). The positive path coefficients show that as the level of job satisfaction increases, affective commitment also rises. Moreover, as employee engagement level rises, affective commitment likewise increases. Thus, *H2* and *H3* are both supported by the results.

The indirect effect of employee engagement on the relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment is statistically significant ($\beta = 0.195, p = 0.001, f^2 = 0.154$). This signifies that employee engagement significantly mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and effective commitment with a medium extent of mediation effect ($f^2 = 0.154, \text{medium effect}$) [81]. That is, job satisfaction is positively related to employee engagement ($\beta = 0.807, p < 0.001, f^2 = 0.652$) which in turn affects affective commitment ($\beta = 0.242, p = 0.003, f^2 = 0.172$); therefore, *H4* is supported.

5. Discussions

The study confirmed that job satisfaction significant affects employee engagement. This indicates that, when an employee is satisfied in his or her job, his or her engagement in the workplace increases. This is also true with previous studies [1, 4, 41, 42]. Moreover, the positive path coefficient between job satisfaction and affective commitment reflects that as the employee job satisfaction rises, his or her affective commitment also increases. This finding is supported by previous undertakings [1, 46, 49, 51] and affective commitment is highly correlated with job satisfaction [50]. Employee engagement is likewise positively related to affective commitment. This is also the case in preceding studies

[1, 36, 37, 52–57, 59, 60]. This reflects that, as the level of engagement of employee grows, his or her affective commitment likewise rises.

The findings revealed the interrelationships of the three constructs where job satisfaction predicts employee engagement and affective commitment, and employee engagement predicts affective commitment. Additionally, it is also significantly evident that employee engagement plays an intervening role in the job satisfaction-affective commitment relationship. The mediation model validated that employee engagement significantly mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment. This result is supported by an earlier study confirming employee engagement mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment [1].

6. Management Implications and Future Research Directions

The present study on the mediating effect of employee engagement on the relationship of job satisfaction and affective commitment is an additional literature in the fields of OB and human resource management (HRM). It offers a new perspective since majority of the previous literatures indicated solitarily how job satisfaction predicts employee engagement and affective commitment and how employee engagement predicts affective commitment. The current study revealed that, when an employee has a sense of contentment and fulfillment in his or her work (job satisfaction), then his or her emotional attachment to the organization increases (affective commitment) but this level of affective commitment can further grow if the employee exhibits energy, involvement, and efficacy (employee engagement). Thus, it is vital that firms must recognize the importance of employee engagement in the workplace. This construct has been identified as the source of organizational success and competitiveness [39] and competitive advantage [38]. Creating an atmosphere where workers are happy and where employees are emotionally attached with the organization is as important as forming a workplace where employees exhibit work engagement. This may trigger organizational performance, productivity, retention, financial performance, and shareholders return [4, 27, 29, 39, 40]. In an environment where competition is stiff, firms must strive to establish relevant and responsive work environment where energy, involvement, and efficacy is emphasized [36]. Once employee engagement is accentuated in the organization, affective commitment of satisfied workers takes place.

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Biography



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