

# Evaluation Employees' Organizational Commitment—Evidence from Iran

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**Abstract:** Today, the ultimate approach of an organization in any society is to attract as many beneficiaries as possible. Due to the nature-oriented development of their rural communities, they have to satisfy their interest groups more than other communities. When it comes to rural development in Iran, there are many credible organizations that directly and indirectly engage with the target community. The absence of organizational tasks leads to failure in achieving predetermined goals. Allen and Meyer's standard organizational commitment questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. Descriptive statistical measures such as focus and dispersion indices were used to analyze the results. Inferential statistical measures such as the mean difference comparison test and the correlation coefficient were also used. The results showed that the level of organizational commitment among employees of Jihad-e-Agriculture Organization in Isfahan Province is 55%. The results also showed that the most important factors affecting employees' organizational commitment were social responsibility, psychological factors and income satisfaction, which could explain up to 50% of employees' organizational commitment.

**Keywords:** Organizational commitment; Extension agent; Jihad-e-Agriculture Organization; Isfahan Province

## 1. Introduction

Development is achieved when all factors of production, facilities and resources are used optimally. From the point of view of the sustainability of villages in the direction of regional development, it is very important that institutions and organizations act according to their tasks and various indicators of sustainable development<sup>[1]</sup>. One of the most important and fundamental organizations responsible for agriculture and rural development in

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Iran is the provincial Jihad-e-Agriculture Organization<sup>[2]</sup>. This organization works at the village level in various and diverse fields, one of the most important parts of which is the extension and training unit for agriculture; so the fields of activity of this unit are at the personal level in ministries and organizations and in the field. Management and agricultural extension and service centers are extensive. The type and extent of organizational commitment of employees to provide effective and quality services to customers, especially farmers, is very important and fundamental<sup>[3]</sup>. In addition to measuring the mutual superiority of organizations, employees' loyalty and commitment make them perform their tasks with higher quality, which can increase the effectiveness, productivity and efficiency of the organization<sup>[4]</sup>.

Despite the theoretical and practical importance of commitment in an organization, it is difficult to measure<sup>[5]</sup>. Committed employees are considered a critical success factor in any organization<sup>[6]</sup>.

Richards, one of the first researchers of commitment, believes that the general concepts of organizational commitment can be better understood when viewed as a set of commitments. Richter views employee engagement centers as interactions with top management, supervisors, work groups, colleagues and customers of the organization, and believes that employees can be engaged in these centers as much as their goals and values align with them<sup>[7]</sup>. Organizational commitment is defined as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and participation in a particular organization<sup>[8]</sup>. Organizational commitment has changed over time, with original views of the subject showing the one-dimensionality of the concept and more recent views showing the multidimensionality of the concept<sup>[9]</sup>.

### **1.1. One-dimensional models**

Various models of organizational commitment have been introduced. For example, Porter *et al.*<sup>[10]</sup> and Modi proposed a one-dimensional concept of organizational commitment.

### **1.2. Two-dimensional model of Mayer and Shoorman**

From the perspective of Mayer and Shoorman, organizational commitment has two dimensions: continuous commitment means staying in the organization; and value commitment means double work for the organization. In fact, in this model, continuance commitment refers to the decision to stay or leave the organization, while value commitment refers to redoubled efforts to achieve organizational goals<sup>[11]</sup>.

### **1.3. Multidimensional models**

Multidimensional models, such as those of O'Reilly *et al.*<sup>[12]</sup>, Meyer and Allen<sup>[13]</sup>, Meyer *et al.*<sup>[14]</sup>, Meyer and Parfyonova<sup>[15]</sup>, and Meyer and Herscovitch<sup>[16]</sup>, address different dimensions of organizational commitment<sup>[17,18]</sup>. This concept has three (affective, continuance and normative)<sup>[17,19]</sup>.

1) Affective commitment refers to the identification of an individual with and participation in the organization<sup>[20]</sup>. It is characterized by the desire of the employee to remain a member of the organization, to accept values and goals of the organization in exchange for some psychological benefits, such as support or recognition<sup>[21]</sup>.

2) Normative commitment refers to the emotional attachment of an employee to his employer<sup>[22]</sup>. People with high normative commitment believe that staying with the organization is the "right" and moral thing to do<sup>[20]</sup>. Normative commitment can be strongly influenced by the actions of the employer<sup>[23]</sup>. Normative commitment is formed under the influence of family and cultural factors before the employee participates in the organization, as well as under the influence of social and other investments made by the organization<sup>[24]</sup>.

3) Continuance commitment reflects that people are aware of the costs associated with leaving the organization. Members with high continuance commitment stay with the organization because they have to<sup>[20]</sup>. The commitment of an individual to an organization is the result of small investments made over time<sup>[21]</sup>. A member can also give a commitment; this may be due to mandatory membership, because he feels that there is no other option but to remain a member of the cooperative, because leaving would entail costs and the loss of the achieved profits<sup>[5]</sup>.

## 1.4. Research background

Behravan and Saeedi<sup>[25]</sup> investigated the factors that influence employees' organizational commitment. The results of multiple regression analysis and path analysis in this study showed that organizational justice is the most important and determining factor that directly and positively affects the level of organizational commitment.

Ziaei *et al.*<sup>[26]</sup> studied the organizational commitment of the employees of the Tehran provincial library and confirmed its relationship with organizational culture.

The research result of Barraud-Didier *et al.*<sup>[20]</sup> and Hao<sup>[27]</sup> emphasized that organizational commitment, especially affective commitment, had a mediating role in the trust and involvement of employers in the organization.

Research results by Nguyen and Yves<sup>[28]</sup> as well as Rabiey and Gholam<sup>[29]</sup> showed that organizational commitment has a significant positive impact on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and organizational performance.

Salimi<sup>[30]</sup> also investigated the effect of organizational culture on employees' social responsibility and organizational commitment. In his research, he also used the Allen and Meyer questionnaire to measure the organizational commitment of employees. The results showed that organizational culture has an indirect positive and significant effect on organizational commitment and a coefficient of 0.37 on social responsibility according to the mediator variable of professional ethics with a coefficient of 0.36.

The research results of Grashus and Su<sup>[31]</sup> and Boudlaie *et al.*<sup>[32]</sup> showed that organizational commitment plays an important role in organizational performance.

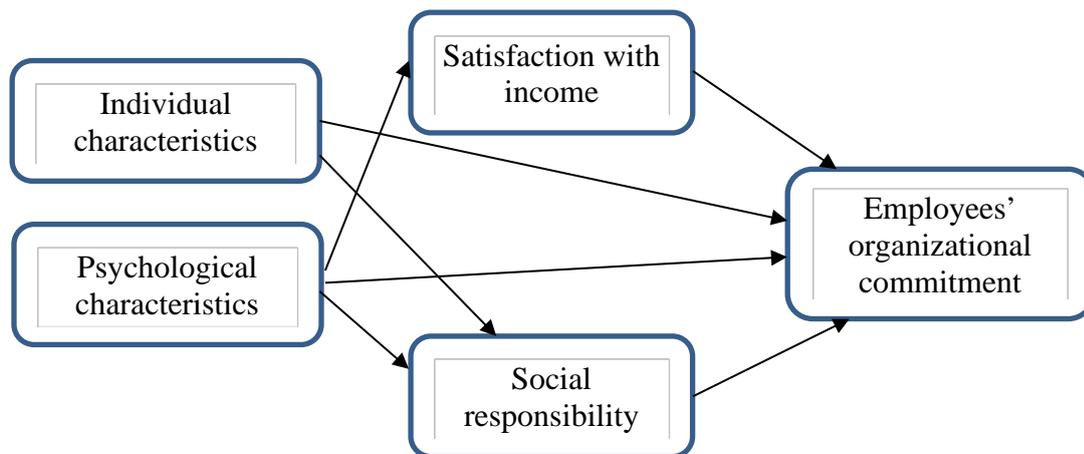
The research result of Eliyana *et al.*<sup>[33]</sup> showed that the management style of the organization has a strong influence on the commitment of employees to the organization.

The research results of Alrowwad *et al.*<sup>[34]</sup> showed that consistency and normative commitment have a significant positive effect on organizational performance, while affective commitment does not have a significant effect on organizational performance.

Meixner<sup>[22]</sup> investigated how the widely discussed concept of organizational commitment can be grouped. Based on the employee engagement literature, a four-dimensional model of engagement was proposed. The layers proposed included the rational, behavioral, normative, and emotional layers, each ranging from the lowest level of commitment—adherence—to the highest level described as internalization.

## 2. Methods

This research is purposefully applied research and descriptive research in terms of data collection<sup>[35]</sup>. This research is also a type of field research where the researcher is there to collect data as desired. The main tool of this research was questionnaire. The method of data collection is based on the model of Allen-Meyer standard Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). According to the statistics of the organization, the number of employees was 435. According to the Cochran formula, 164 statistical samples were obtained with a probable



**Figure 1.** Conceptual model of employees' organizational commitment.

accuracy of 0.6, of which 158 applicable questionnaires were analyzed.

Data validity was confirmed by Bartlett's test and KMO coefficient, and reliability by Cronbach's alpha. The statistical population of this study was agricultural extension workers of Jihad-e-Agriculture Organization in Isfahan Province.

According to the more recent organizational commitment literature<sup>[18,36]</sup>, member commitment is defined as the attitudinal commitment of members to an organization (cooperative). Our metric is based on that established by Allen and Meyer<sup>[12]</sup> and Meyer *et al.*<sup>[17]</sup> for the three-component model. To measure this specific dimension of organizational commitment, we relied on a scale recently developed by Allen-Meyer. We used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree) to measure organizational commitment (OC). The resulting instrument yielded 18 different commitment constructs, which were measured in three dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The following three items are examples of changes: (1) "I feel emotionally committed to my organization" (affective commitment); (2) "I feel that I have too few opportunities to leave my organization" (continuance commitment); and (3) "I find it unethical to jump from one organization to another" (normative commitment). All coefficient alphas are above 0.70. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for OC was 0.858 (**Table 1**). These alphas are acceptable in the early stages of research on these constructs. Confirmatory factor analysis supports these measures and is discussed in the results section.

**Table 1.** The alpha coefficient for questionnaire elements

Component	Number of variables	ACA
Risk-taking	6	0.813
Need of achievement	6	0.789
Problem solving in practice	6	0.742
Challenging	6	0.762
Total (psychological factor)	24	0.882
Affective commitment	8	0.796
Normative commitment	8	0.836
Continuance commitment	8	0.903
Total (organizational commitment)	24	0.898

## 2.1. Research hypothesis

The hypotheses of the current research can be presented as follows:

- It seems that the level of satisfaction with people's income affects the organizational commitment of employees.
- It seems that there is a relationship between individual characteristics and organizational commitment of employees.
- It seems that there is a relationship between the psychological characteristics of people and the organizational commitment of employees.

## 2.2. Research limitations

Among the limitations of the present research was the lack of employees' sense of trust in each other and organization, as a result, their lack of effective participation in answering the research questionnaires. Thus, it is important to conduct the experiment with the active presence of the researcher and the research team, and to interview people in the necessary fields to gain trust.

## 3. Results

Based on the information obtained, most of the employees are men (62%) and their average age is 39 (the oldest is 57 and the youngest is 22). The family dimension of these workers looks like three people. They have one child. Most people have a bachelor's degree. According to them, satisfaction with income is also very low.

**Table 2.** Individual characteristics of agricultural extension staff in the organization

Variable	Statistical index
Gender	Mod = male (62%)
Age	Average = 39 Mod = 36 Min = 22 Max = 57
Level of education	Mod = Bachelor
Family size	Mod = 2 Min = 1 Max = 6

Regarding psychological characteristics, it can be said that the average psychological characteristics of employees is 76.34%, which is within the desired range. Characteristics such as risk-taking with an average of 63.57, pragmatism with an average of 79.07, striving for success with an average of 75.45 and seeking a challenge with an average of 87.28 are important. The risk safety index of persons is moderate and the remaining indicators are optimal.

According to organizational commitment, the characteristics of extension workers can be 55.49% with a total index of organizational commitment that is emotional, continuation and normative in three areas being 65.31, 51.38 and 49.78; so, it can be said that the total organizational commitment is average and the organizational commitment level of employees in the normative dimension is below average.

**Table 3.** Psychological characteristics of agricultural extension staff in the organization

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Statistical index</b>
Risk-taking	Average = 63.57 Mod = 60 Sd = 13.70
Need of achievement	Average = 75.45 Mod = 78 Sd = 10.32
Problem solving in practice	Average = 79.08 Mod = 78 Sd = 10.90
Challenging	Average = 87.28 Mod = 90 Sd = 12.65
Total (psychological factor)	Average = 76.34 Mod = 78 Sd = 7.39

**Table 4.** Organizational commitment of employees in three dimensions

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Statistical index</b>
Affective commitment	Average = 65.31 Mod = 690 Sd = 12.26
Normative commitment	Average = 51.38 Mod = 54 Sd = 15.24
Continuance commitment	Average = 49.78 Mod = 44 Sd = 16.21
Total (organizational commitment)	Average = 55.49 Mod = 41 Sd = 10.4039

Examining personal and psychological variables of employees with their organizational commitment variable also shows that the following relationships can be identified and expressed between said variables.

The organizational commitment variable is influenced by two variables of people's promotion history and also by an index of psychological factors. In other words, promotion history of individuals can improve organizational commitment by 95% and also their positive psychological characteristics by 99% of organizational commitment. Organizational commitment was also found to be unrelated to educational attainment, but to have a significant and positive relationship with income satisfaction. However, at a very close level, the importance and negative effect of the educational level variable on organizational commitment can be expressed.

The results showed that the study of psychological characteristics of individuals is also related to HR organizational commitment. The age and history variable had a positive and significant effect on individuals' pragmatism at the 95% level. There was also a positive and significant effect on trainings with challenging

employees at the level of 95%.

**Table 5.** Correlation of individual and psychological variables with organizational commitment of employees

Dependent variable	Independent variables	Type of correlation	r	sig
Organizational commitment	Age	Pearson	0.088	<b>0.296</b>
	Family size	Pearson	0.108	<b>0.177</b>
	Work experience	Pearson	0.103	<b>0.196</b>
	Extension work experience	Pearson	0.190*	<b>0.017</b>
	Risk-taking	Pearson	0.013	<b>0.874</b>
	Need of achievement	Pearson	0.006	<b>0.942</b>
	Problem solving in practice	Pearson	0.374**	<b>0.000</b>
	Challenging	Pearson	0.167*	<b>0.036</b>
	Total (psychological factor)	Pearson	0.207**	<b>0.009</b>
	Level of education	Spearman	-0.155	<b>0.051</b>
Income satisfaction level	Spearman	0.458**	<b>0.000</b>	

**Table 6.** Correlation of individual with psychological variables

Dependent variable	Independent variables	Type of correlation	r	sig
Psychological factor	Age	Pearson	0.037	<b>0.641</b>
	Family size	Pearson	0.003	<b>0.970</b>
	Work experience	Pearson	0.084	<b>0.297</b>
	Extension work experience	Pearson	0.072	<b>0.367</b>
	Risk-taking	Pearson	0.013	<b>0.874</b>
	Level of education	Spearman	0.146*	<b>0.047</b>
	Income satisfaction level	Spearman	0.190*	<b>0.017</b>

Due to the normality of the organizational commitment variable, parametric tests such as t-test and analysis of variance can be performed on the data, and the results show that the effects of gender and marital status on organizational commitment and the psychological characteristics of employees has not been significant.

**Table 7.** T-test to investigate the effect of independent variables on organizational commitment of employees

Variable	Grouping variable	T-test	sig
Organizational commitment	Gender	0.041	0.523
	Psychological factor	0.562	0.454
	Marital status	1.061	0.304

The result of the regression analysis on the factors that affect the employee's organizational commitment to the promotion of Jihad-e-Agriculture Organization shows that the relevant variables can be up to 50% effective in explaining the dependent variable of the organizational commitment of employees.

ANOVA results of the significance analysis of the full model<sup>[37]</sup>. Since the significance level is less than 0.05, the model is significant. The significance of the analysis of variance (F value) shows that the predictor variables were able to significantly predict changes in the dependent variable (**Table 9**).

**Table 8.** Summary of the regression model

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	SEE
Enter	0.768	0.594	0.498	8.80726

**Table 9.** Summary of the regression model

Model	TS	df	MS	F	sig
<b>Regression</b>	2.946	6	0.1190	6.040	0.000
<b>Residual</b>	6.683	151	0.027		
<b>Total</b>	9.629	157			

The research result showed that important and influential variables in employees' organizational commitment are: satisfaction with income, level of social responsibility and psychological characteristics. Based on the values of the beta coefficient, it can be concluded that the most important variables affecting organizational commitment of employees are satisfaction with income (0.386), social responsibility of employees (0.197) and psychological characteristics of employees (0.173).

According to the regression coefficient, the regression line equation could be written as:

$$Y = 6.988 + 0.386 x_1 + 0.197 x_2 + 0.173 x_3$$

x1: Income satisfaction

x2: Level of social responsibility

x3: Psychological characteristics

**Table 10.** Influential factors on employees' organizational commitment

Variable	B	Std. error	Beta	t	sig
Constant	6.988	9.893	-	0.640	0.524
Income satisfaction	0.386	0.047	0.619	0.815	0.000
Level of social responsibility	0.197	0.074	0.205	2.610	0.010
Psychological characteristics	0.173	0.083	0.190	2.197	0.030

## 4. Discussion

The importance of employee's organizational commitment that interacts at a very high level with the public is very important for the employees and the organization. Based on the survey and the results obtained from the survey, it can be said that based on the comments of the employees, their satisfaction with their income is very low. Since one of the most important variables affecting employee engagement is job satisfaction with income, it can be said that this variable has a great impact on the lack of organizational commitment of these employees.

Also, one of the most important factors that affect organizational commitment of employees is the nature of the psychological factor of employees. The results of this study showed that the average psychological characteristics of employees are 76%, which is within the desired range. In this factor, individual characteristics such as willingness to take risks and success are below the general average, and solving problems in practice and employee challenges are above average. Employees do not have a high level of risk, so they do not have the desired psychological characteristics for high organizational commitment.

Also, the research result showed that the general index of organizational commitment of individuals is close to 55%, which is not very desirable; so, this amount is below average on the normative dimension of

organizational commitment. Also, the result of the regression analysis of the factors affecting organizational commitment of employees shows that the most important influential, positive and significant variables are the level of social responsibility, psychological factors and satisfaction with income. These results are consistent with Lee<sup>[38]</sup>, Nejati and Ghasemi<sup>[39]</sup>, Kim *et al.*<sup>[40]</sup>, Rafael<sup>[41]</sup>, Manshan *et al.*<sup>[42]</sup>, and Ziaei *et al.*<sup>[26]</sup>.

Finally, it is proposed to conduct a similar and relevant study at the rest of the Jihad-e-Agriculture Organization level to compare and evaluate the validity and reliability of the results obtained.

Based on the results of the present research, it can be stated that employees have different levels of organizational commitment based on their individual and psychological characteristics. This means that these characteristics should be considered in the selection of employees.

Also, the level of support of organizations, especially financial and income incentives can be effective in their motivation and commitment in the organization. Therefore, it is suggested that organizations should be sensitive in meeting the basic needs of their employees and have proper planning while continuously monitoring these needs.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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