Job characteristics and self-efficacy as predictors of organizational commitment

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JOB CHARACTERISTICS AND SELF-EFFICACY AS
PREDICTORS OF ORGANIZATIONAL
COMMITMENT

by

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Bachelor of Economics
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1996

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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ABSTRACT

Job Characteristics and Self-efficacy as Predictors of Organizational Commitment

by

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Employee turnover could be ameliorated by controlling the antecedents of organizational commitment. The purpose of this study is to examine how job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, self-efficacy and overall job characteristics) and self-efficacy may independently and interactively influence organizational commitment. Specifically, different combinations of job characteristics and self-efficacy are proposed to have different effects on organizational commitment. Data were collected from 177 hospitality employees at four hospitality companies. Predictive effects were found between job characteristics (overall and two of the dimensions) and organizational commitment. The hypothesized directional outcomes of the interaction of job characteristics and self-efficacy on organizational commitment were not supported. Implications for management and future research are discussed.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Employee turnover is a critical and costly problem for the hospitality industry (Bonn & Forbinger, 1992). The cost of turnover for a position is approximately 10 to 20 times the position's weekly wage rate (Vallen, 1993). Hogan (1992) estimated that each incident of turnover in the hospitality industry results in $2,500 in direct costs and $1,600 in indirect costs. Direct costs involve separation costs, recruiting and attracting costs, selection costs, and hiring costs (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000) and indirect costs result from reduced quality caused by a shortage of manpower, lower mastery of skills, and lower morale (Boles, Ross, & Johnson, 1995).

Statement of the Research Problem

Organizational Commitment and Turnover

Being a serious managerial problem, turnover has been widely studied. The focus of past research has been to identify the driving forces of turnover. Job satisfaction has been a popular explanation of turnover. However, Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) suggested that organizational commitment might be used to better predict turnover than job satisfaction. The notion of organizational commitment serving as a turnover determinant is supported by literature. Existing research suggests that organizational commitment is negatively related to both turnover (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Eby, Freeman,

**Job Characteristics, Self-Efficacy, and Organizational Commitment**

Organizational commitment is an individual’s psychological attachment to the organization (O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986). The commitment is influenced by a combination of environmental characteristics, job characteristics and personal characteristics. Environmental determinants of organizational commitment are essentially external job opportunities. It has been shown that the higher the number of alternative jobs for which an employee is qualified, the lower the level of satisfaction (Blegen & Muller, 1987). Job satisfaction has been found strongly related to organizational commitment (Glisson & Durick, 1988; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). Marsh and Mannari (1977) and Williams and Hazer (1986) reported job satisfaction as a precursor of organizational commitment. Environmental characteristics, however, can hardly be controlled by management. Therefore, the focus of the current study is on how job characteristics and an important personal characteristics, self-efficacy, may influence organizational commitment.

The job characteristics model developed by Hackman and Oldham (1980) is used to diagnose a job on five core dimensions: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. Previous research provides significant support for job
characteristics' predictive effect on organizational commitment (Buchanan, 1974; Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Flynn & Tannenbaum, 1993; Harris, Hirschfeld, Field, & Mossholder, 1993; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994). Harris et al. (1993) found that autonomy is positively related to an employee's normative organizational commitment. Van Dyne et al. (1994) also suggested that commitment is fostered by the belief that one makes a difference in the organization, i.e., by the feel of autonomy. Some other research suggests that skill variety, task identity and task significance may influence commitment (Buchanan, 1974; Flynn & Tannenbaum, 1993; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Steers, 1977). Furthermore, organizational commitment may be enhanced by high feedback of a job (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Van Dyne et al., 1994). Eby et al. (1999), however, found that skill variety was negatively related to organizational commitment. In addition, Dubinsky and Skinner (1984) found negative relationship between task identity and job satisfaction.

Self-efficacy is individuals' beliefs in their ability to perform a particular task with skill (Gist, 1987). Self-efficacy is chosen as a study variable partially because of its centrality in social cognitive theories. Self-efficacy is a primary influence on human thought, motivation, and action (Bandura, 1997).

Self-efficacy's impact on organizational commitment is also supported by literature (Lent & Hackett, 1987; Riggs & Knight, 1994; Wolfe, Nordstrom, & Williams, 1998). Lent and Hackett (1987) found that the higher the self-efficacy, the higher the organizational commitment, because people have more confidence to pursue career challenges. However, the impact of self-efficacy on organizational commitment is not always positive. Some literature shows that self-efficacy is negatively related to
organizational commitment (Adams, 1965; Lawler, 1973; Riggs & Knight, 1994). Mone (1994) found that in a downsizing organization, self-efficacy had a positive effect on intent to turn over. O’Neill and Mone (1998) also found that those with lower self-efficacy had lower intent to leave.

The mixed findings regarding job characteristics’ and self-efficacy’s impact on organizational commitment indicate that neither high self-efficacy nor jobs high in the job dimensions such as skill variety and task identity necessarily lead to high organizational commitment. The literature indicates that, people low in self-efficacy tend to avoid tasks that are challenging and difficult (Bandura, 1986). With low employee self-efficacy, organizations may experience a negative relationship between job characteristics and organizational commitment. On the other hand, self-efficacious people set higher goals (Bandura, 1986). When their expectations of jobs are not met (e.g., jobs are low in certain job characteristic dimensions), they may be less attached to the organization than their low-self-efficacy counterparts. Therefore, rather than direct determinants, job characteristics and self-efficacy may interact in driving an individual’s commitment. I propose further that the directionality of the interaction varies based on the levels of job characteristics and self-efficacy. This proposal is addressed in greater detail in the section that follows.

**Research Problem**

The current study is intended to examine how job characteristics (overall and each of the five dimensions) and self-efficacy may independently and interactively affect organizational commitment. I argue that, while job characteristics and self-efficacy independently have main effects on organizational commitment, self-efficacy also
moderates the relationship between job characteristics and organizational commitment.

The proposed model is presented in Figure 1.

![Diagram of proposed relations among study variables]

**Figure 1: Proposed Relations among Study Variables**

Also proposed is a matrix model (see Figure 2) to illustrate the exact directions of job characteristics and self-efficacy's interacting effect on organizational commitment. The contention is that different combinations of job characteristics levels and self-efficacy levels vary in their impact on commitment.

According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacious individuals set high goals, perform at high levels and receive high recognition and rewards. When these individuals are given jobs high in autonomy, task significance, task identity, skill variety and feedback, they are more likely to be satisfied and committed to the organization. Likewise, if the job fails to provide autonomy, skill variety, task identity, task significance, and feedback, individuals with high self-efficacy may be less committed and may turn to jobs that possess more challenge.
Conversely, individuals low in self-efficacy may find jobs with high autonomy and significance and high skill variety uncomfortable. Without the competence and confidence to achieve the task, they may be less committed and more likely to leave organizations with enriched jobs than their high-self-efficacy counterparts. Based on the above discussions, it is also reasonable to propose that individuals low in self-efficacy may be more accommodated to jobs that are less challenging and their organizational commitment could be negatively predicted by job characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Characteristics (overall and five dimensions)</th>
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Level of Self-Efficacy

**Figure 2**: The Directions of the Interactive Effect of Job Characteristics (overall and five dimensions) and Self-Efficacy on Organizational Commitment.

A job can be high on one or more of the five characteristics and simultaneously low on others (Kulik, Oldham, & Hackman, 1987). Additionally, as mentioned, literature supports the impact of each core job dimension as well as the overall job characteristics on organizational commitment. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the standing of a job on each of the characteristics in the current study.
Significance of the Study

The study is unique in that no previous research has examined the directional interaction effect of job characteristics and self-efficacy on organizational commitment. This study could well be an exploratory start of research in this particular area.

The study may also have implications for management. If the proposed models are empirically supported, related managerial actions can be taken to partially resolve the serious turnover problem in the hospitality industry. The models could help managers control turnover through increasing employees' commitment to the company. As proposed, organizational commitment is partly determined by job characteristics and self-efficacy. This proposal suggests that hospitality companies could increase employee retention through monitoring job characteristics and employees' self-efficacy. Specifically, managers could better retain employees by finding out or creating the right "match" between the characteristics of their jobs and the employees' levels of self-efficacy.

When a company's jobs are high in skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback, managers could increase employees' commitment by enhancing their confidence and competence through training, empowerment, rewards, and so forth. Management can also select people high in self-efficacy when recruiting. If the jobs are unenriched, the company may find work redesign effective in retaining self-efficacious employees. However, jobs cannot always be redesigned. In such situations, it may be helpful to recruit people who do not expect great complexity and challenges in work. This study, therefore, may be able to provide implications for selection, training, motivation, and retention of human resources for the hospitality industry.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Employee turnover is a serious problem in the hospitality industry. Driving forces of turnover have been studied in order to control turnover through its antecedents. Research has supported that organizational commitment can negatively influence turnover (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Eby et al., 1999; Hom & Griffeth, 1995; Michaels & Spector, 1982; Mobley et al., 1979; Mowday et al., 1982; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Price & Mueller, 1981).

Organizational commitment is influenced by a combination of characteristics of the environment, the job and the employee (Agho, Mueller, & Price, 1993; Steers, 1977). The current study will focus on how job characteristics and an important personal characteristic, self-efficacy, may drive organizational commitment.

Hackman and Oldham’s job characteristics model (1980) diagnoses a job on five core dimensions: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. Past research provides significant support for job characteristics’ predictive effects on organizational commitment (Buchanan, 1974; Eisenberger et al., 1990; Flynn & Tannenbaum, 1993; Harris et al., 1993; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Van Dyne et al., 1994). Jobs high in skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback may lead to higher organizational commitment. However, Eby et al. (1999) found that skill
variety was negatively related to organizational commitment and Dubinsky and Skinner found that task identity was negatively related to organizational commitment.

Self-efficacy’s impact on organizational commitment is also supported by literature (Lent & Hackett, 1987; Riggs & Knight, 1994; Wolfe et al., 1998). It is appealing to think that the higher the self-efficacy, the higher the organizational commitment. On the contrary, some literature shows that self-efficacy is negatively related to organizational commitment or turnover (Adams, 1965; Lawler, 1973; Mone, 1994; O’Neill & Mone, 1998; Riggs & Knight, 1994).

The mixed findings regarding job characteristics' and self-efficacy’s impact on organizational commitment and the literature on job characteristics and self-efficacy lead to the hypothesis that job characteristics and self-efficacy interact to determine organizational commitment. Different combinations of job characteristics levels and self-efficacy levels may influence organizational commitment in different ways.

The literature review below follows the relationship among job characteristics, self-efficacy, and organizational commitment. Hypotheses will be derived as the review flows. Demographic factors influencing organizational commitment will also be reviewed to develop control variables in the study.

Organizational Commitment

According to O’Reilly and Chatman (1986), commitment is an individual’s psychological attachment. Organizational commitment, therefore, is the psychological attachment felt by the employee for the organization; it reflects the degree to which the individual internalizes or adopts characteristics or values of the organization.
Steers (1977) studied two employee samples in separate organizations to determine the antecedents and outcomes of organizational commitment. The first sample consisted of employees of a major midwestern hospital. The second sample consisted of research scientists and engineers employed by a major independent research laboratory. The finding indicated that commitment was significantly and inversely related to employee turnover. One of the most significant outcomes of increased commitment is a more stable work force.

The antecedents of organizational commitment, however, are quite diverse. One's commitment to an organization can result from value congruence, financial investments, effective reward and control systems, or a simple lack of opportunity to move (e.g., Becker, 1960; Mobley et al., 1979). It is important to clarify operational definitions of the basis for commitment in order to link commitment to outcomes such as turnover.

O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) found that commitment determined by identification (involvement based on a desire for affiliation) and internalization (involvement based on congruence between individual and organizational values) is related to outcomes such as turnover, whereas compliance commitment (involvement based on extrinsic rewards) is not. Harris et al. (1993) also found that compliance is not a significant contributor to turnover intention. The three kinds of organizational commitment were later collapsed into two categories: normative (internalization and identification) and instrumental (compliance) commitment (Caldwell, Chatman & O'Reilly, 1990). In accordance with the above-mentioned findings, this study will focus on only normative commitment.
Another commitment-related concept that needs to be addressed is affective organizational commitment. "Affective organizational commitment is conceptualized as an individual’s attitude towards the organization, consisting of a strong belief in, and acceptance of, an organization’s goals, willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization" (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982, p. 27). Some literature uses the term “affective organizational commitment”, which is equivalent to normative organizational commitment.

Job Characteristics

According to Hackman and Oldham (1975), workers’ perceptions of five core dimensions of a job (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) determine intrinsic motivation through their effects on three critical psychological states. Workers in jobs that are higher on the five dimensions are expected to experience meaningfulness in their work, responsibility for its outcome, and knowledge of the results. According to the theory, these psychological states then lead to positive organizational and personal outcomes, including lower levels of turnover.

The five core dimensions are specifically defined as follows (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, p. 161-162):

*Skill variety.* The degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, which involve the use of a number of different skills and talents of the employee.
Task identity. The degree to which the job requires completion of a "whole" and identifiable piece of work – that is, doing a job from beginning to end with a visible outcome.

Task significance. The degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives or work of other people – whether in the immediate organization or in the external environment.

Autonomy. The degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to employees in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out.

Feedback from the job itself. The degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job results in employees obtaining direct and clear information about the effectiveness of their performance.

Overall Job Characteristics and Organizational Commitment

The job characteristics model suggests that job characteristics influence personal and work outcomes including motivation, performance, job satisfaction, absenteeism and turnover (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). While the model does not address commitment directly, there is sufficient empirical support to suggest that the characteristics of one's job also affect one's commitment. Support for the relationship between overall job characteristics and commitment has been provided (Glisson & Durick, 1988; Mowday et al., 1982). Mowday et al. (1982) stated, "Such task characteristics as autonomy, challenge, and significance may increase the behavioral involvement of employees in their job and thus increase their felt responsibility (pp. 58-59)." In addition, challenging jobs with high clarity should be more motivating and satisfying than mundane or
ambiguous jobs, which in turn should lead to greater commitment (Flynn & Tannenbaum, 1993). Michael and Spector (1982) found that age, perceived task (job) characteristics and perceived leadership consideration led to satisfaction and organizational commitment. Flynn and Tannenbaum (1993) also found that job characteristics demonstrated a stronger impact on commitment among private sector managers versus public sector managers. Their explanation is that the common concepts of public sector bureaucracies make public sector managers more tolerant of low autonomy and challenge.

**Five Job Characteristics Dimensions and Organizational Commitment**

Job characteristics influence organizational commitment behavior outcomes through the psychological states of meaningfulness, responsibility and knowledge of results (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). In terms of perceptions of meaningfulness, jobs that provide the opportunity to use a variety of skills (skill variety), have impact on others’ lives (task significance), and require the completion of a whole product (task identity) should lead to perceptions that work is meaningful (Fried & Ferris, 1987; Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Existing research suggests that skill variety, task identity and task significance may facilitate affective commitment (e.g., Buchanan, 1974; Flynn & Tannenbaum, 1993; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Steers, 1977). Glisson and Durick (1988) also reported that the more variety in the skills applied by workers, the greater the organizational commitment in human service organizations.

The second psychological state, perceived responsibility, should increase with increased autonomy on the job and, in turn, increase intrinsic motivation and general job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Van Dyne et al. (1994) suggest that the belief
that one makes a difference in the organization fosters a sense of obligation to the organization; in other words, commitment should increase.

The third psychological state, knowledge of results, should result from direct and unambiguous job-related feedback (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). This feedback can include that from the job itself and from others. Meta-analytic studies of Hackman and Oldham’s job characteristics model support the relationship between feedback and job satisfaction (Fried & Ferris, 1987). Since job satisfaction influences organizational commitment, this commitment may also be enhanced under conditions of high feedback. As individuals are provided with praise and feedback, stronger feelings of loyalty to the organization may develop (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Van Dyne et al., 1994).

Eby et al. (1999) found that feedback and autonomy were significantly and positively related to commitment; however, they also found that skill variety was negatively related to commitment. The explanation was that skill variety is likely operating as the suppressor variable, rather than representing a substantive relationship among study variables.

Another finding on negative relationship between job characteristics and organizational commitment was reported by Dubinsky and Skinner (1984). They studied the impact of job characteristics on retail salespeople’s reaction to their jobs with a sample of 116 salespeople from a department store chain. The researchers found that task identity was negatively related to job satisfaction, which positively influenced retail salespersons’ organizational commitment. Dubinsky and Skinner (1984) claimed, “retail salespeople in the present investigation prefer (in terms of job satisfaction) to perform
only part of a job rather than to execute a job or task from beginning to end (to do an entire piece of work)" (p.49).

The expected relationship between job characteristics and organizational commitment is formally stated in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Job characteristics – specifically, task significance, autonomy and feedback – are positive predictors of organizational commitment, and skill variety and task identity are related to organizational commitment.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is task-specific self-confidence (O’Neill & Mone, 1998). Self-efficacy does not represent a generalized feeling of control, but rather individuals’ comprehensive judgment of their capability to perform a particular job (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). In other words, self-efficacy is persons’ beliefs in their ability to perform a particular task.

Self-efficacy and Organizational Commitment

“Human accomplishments and positive well being require an optimistic and resilient sense of personal efficacy” (Bandura, 1988, p. 49). Self-efficacy is a critical component of social cognitive theory because it is a primary influence on human thought, motivation, and action (Bandura, 1997, p. 34). Yet only limited empirical work has examined self-efficacy in relation to organizational commitment and turnover. Lent and Hackett (1987) argue that the higher the self-efficacy, the higher the organizational commitment, because people have more confidence to pursue career challenges. Wolfe et al. (1999), after studying 90 individuals seeking jobs at a telemarketing facility, found
that participants who underwent self-efficacy enhancing training stayed on the job over 40% longer than individuals who did not receive such training. Although there is appeal for a positive, causal link from self-efficacy to commitment, there is also reason to believe that efficacy may not always be positively related to organizational commitment and negatively related to turnover.

**Findings on Negative Relations between Self-Efficacy and Commitment**

Results from research on equity models such as Lawler's (1973) facet satisfaction model and Adams's (1965) equity theory support a negative relationship between perceived ability (personal self-efficacy) and subsequent commitment. For example, high levels of self-perceived ability may increase workers' perceptions of the value of their “inputs” to the organization, making it more likely that they will perceive an imbalance in their input-output ratio relative to others in the organization. This perception would lead to a state of dissatisfaction. Workers who perceive themselves as capable of performing at higher levels “are likely to be dissatisfied, complain, look for internal transfers, and mistrust the organization” (Lawler & Jenkins, 1992, p. 1013).

Mone (1994) found that in a downsizing organization, self-efficacy was positively related to intent to leave, suggesting that in such situations, those who are more competent and confident may seek work elsewhere. The sample consisted of 200 full-time, unionized, production employees in a heavy industrial manufacturing setting in the Midwest. Individuals with lower task self-efficacy, on the other hand, may be more inclined to remain. Generally, people with higher self-efficacy set higher goals, persist at tasks longer, and perform better than those low in self-efficacy. High-self-efficacy people should be more likely to stay. However, in a downsizing organization,
low-self-efficacy individuals may have lower performance, less confidence for seeking employment elsewhere, and greater insecurity, and may consequently become more committed to their current employer and less likely to leave voluntarily. At the other end of the self-efficacy continuum, high-self-efficacy employees who set higher goals and attain greater performance levels may find themselves with fewer rewards and opportunities in the downsizing organization and may consequently become less committed and more inclined to leave (Mone, 1994, p. 286).

O'Neill and Mone (1998) studied 242 employees in a mid-sized healthcare service organization located in the Midwest. These researchers also found that employees at low and moderate levels of self-efficacy had higher amounts of job satisfaction and lower intent to leave than those with high self-efficacy. O'Neill and Mone (1998) argued that increasing self-efficacy alone may not reduce turnover. It may be necessary to provide additional career opportunities, redesign work, or alter organizational recognition and reward systems.

The expected relationship between self-efficacy and organizational commitment is formally stated as follows:

Hypothesis 2: Self-efficacy is a predictor of organizational commitment.

Interaction of Job Characteristics and Self-efficacy on Organizational Commitment

Although much research shows that jobs with higher skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback may lead to a higher level of organizational commitment, as can high self-efficacy, there is also reason to believe that neither job
characteristics nor self-efficacy exhibit such simple, direct effects on organizational commitment. As mentioned, some job characteristics can be negatively related to organizational commitment. Eby et al. (1999) found that the higher the skill variety, the lower the organizational commitment, and Dubinsky and Skinner (1984) found that task identity was negatively related to job satisfaction. These findings are partially consistent with the model proposed in the current study. Jobs high in certain characteristics may not necessarily lead to high organizational commitment.

Oldham and Hackman (1975, 1976) argued that jobs high on the job characteristic dimensions have higher motivational potential.

For jobs high in motivating potential, employees with sufficient knowledge and skill to perform well will experience positive feelings as a result of their work activities... However, when individuals with inadequate knowledge and skill work on a highly motivating job they are likely to experience a good deal of frustration and unhappiness at work... Rather than continually accept the pain of failing at something that is experienced as important, such individuals may opt to withdraw from the job (Kulik et al., 1987, p. 282).

People tend to avoid tasks they believe exceed their capabilities, but undertake assuredly activities they judge themselves capable of handling (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, organizations with jobs low in certain job characteristics may better retain employees who do not think highly of their capabilities. Conversely, jobs high in such job characteristics as skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback present greater challenges to employees. When faced with challenges and difficulties,
people who have doubts about their capabilities slacken their efforts or give up altogether, whereas those who have a strong sense of efficacy exert greater effort to master the challenge (Bandura & Cervone, 1983, 1986). People high in self-efficacy may feel more attached to an organization that provides jobs with high responsibility (autonomy), skill variety and significance than their low-self-efficacy counterparts.

Literature also reveals negative relations between self-efficacy and organizational commitment (Adams, 1965; Lawler, 1973; Riggs & Knight, 1994). Some research suggests that self-efficacy could lead to greater intent to turnover. After Mone (1994) found that self-efficacy was positively related to intent to leave in a downsizing organization, O’Neill and Mone (1998) also found that employees with lower self-efficacy had lower intent to leave a health service organization. Self-efficacy influences individuals’ initial choices of activities and tasks and their coping efforts while engaged in these tasks (Lent et al., 1987). Self-efficacious people set higher goals (Bandura, 1986) and when the characteristics of the jobs in an organization are not as high as they expected, they may be less committed to the organization than low efficacious employees. Likewise, organizations with unenriched jobs may experience negative relationship between individuals’ self-efficacy and organizational commitment. Enhancing self-efficacy alone may not always increase organizational commitment and reduce intent to leave.

Organizational commitment should be predicted by both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of one’s work context (Angle & Perry, 1983; Eby et al., 1999). Based on the above discussions, I expect that job characteristics, an extrinsic aspect and self-efficacy, an intrinsic aspect, may interact to influence their outcomes. Specifically, I contend that
different combinations of job characteristics and self-efficacy have different effects on organizational commitment. The existence of jobs high in autonomy, task significance, task identity, skill variety and feedback in an organization combined with high employee self-efficacy is likely to produce high organizational commitment. Low-self-efficacy employees in such organizations are inclined to be less committed and leave the organization. Organizations with jobs low in the five dimensions are less likely to retain self-efficacious people who seek greater career challenges. Finally, jobs low in job characteristics with employee low in self-efficacy are likely to bring high organizational commitment.

Self-efficacy is expected to have a moderating effect on the relationship between job characteristics and organizational commitment. Past research has examined a number of possible moderators on the relationship between job characteristics and organizational commitment: need for achievement, independence, personal growth, participation, and self-actualization need strength (Lee & Graham, 1986). Self-efficacy, however, has received little attention as a potential moderator.

The expected interacting effect of job characteristics and self-efficacy on organizational commitment is formally stated in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Self-efficacy moderates the relationship between job characteristics (overall and five dimensions) and organizational commitment. Specifically, organizational commitment level of the employees who rate both low in job characteristics (overall and five dimensions) scores and self-efficacy scores and those who rate both high in job characteristics (overall and five dimensions) scores and self-efficacy scores will be higher than that of the employees who rate low in job
characteristics (overall and five dimensions) scores but high in self-efficacy scores and those who rate high in job characteristics (overall and five dimensions) scores but low in self-efficacy scores.

Demographics

Agho et al. (1993) found that the degree to which employees like their jobs was influenced by a combination of characteristics of the environment, the job and the individual. As part of individual characteristics, the impact of demographic features on organizational commitment has been well documented. Age, position tenure and organizational tenure have been shown to strongly correlate to organizational commitment (Angle & Perry, 1981; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mobley, Horner, & Hollingsworth, 1987). Organizational tenure is the length of time an employee has been working with the organization. Tenure may also refer to position tenure or career tenure. These two types will not be measured in this study, for the research objective of the study is to examine a person’s intent to stay with an organization. Since the research is focused on organizational commitment rather than position commitment, only organizational tenure will be studied here. Other demographics such as education level and gender may also be related to organizational commitment (Flynn & Tannenbaum, 1993). Therefore, the current study will control for demographic differences before examining the relationship among job characteristic, self-efficacy, and organizational commitment. The variables of age, gender, organizational tenure and education will be controlled. The relationships stated in Hypotheses 1-3 were completed after controlling for the
demographics. The methods of testing the hypotheses are discussed in detail in Chapter III.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview of Research Design

To test the hypotheses, surveys were conducted in four hospitality companies. Survey questionnaires were either handed out to employees directly by me, or administered by the managers and returned at a later time. The construct measures used in the survey were adapted from existing research, with supported reliability. The hypotheses were tested by linear regression, univariate analysis, and one-way ANOVA with Tukey post hoc multiple-comparison.

Sample and Data Collection Procedures

Data were gathered from 179 hospitality employees through pen-and-paper surveys from four hospitality companies in the United States. The participants were given a research packet either by their managers or by me. Each packet contains a cover letter (see Appendix A) explaining the purpose of the study (to learn hospitality employees' perception on their workplace and job) and stating that the survey is voluntary and confidential, and a numbered questionnaire (see Appendix B) measuring the focal variables (job characteristics, self-efficacy and organizational commitment).

The first company (Property A) is a 242-room AAA four-diamond hotel, located in northeastern United States. The property has approximately 170 employees.
Participants from Property A included housekeepers, food servers, front desk clerks, maintenance people, accounting staff, human resources staff, office staff and different levels of managers. The research packets were mailed to the general manager of the hotel and distributed to the employees during staff meetings. Forty-three employees responded, and the completed questionnaires were returned to me through the general manager. The response rate in Property A is 25.3%. Of the respondents, 64% are female and 36% are male; 19% of them held a bachelor’s or higher degree. Average organizational tenure is 4.5 years, and average age is 38.

The second company that participated (Property B) is a 624-room hotel/casino located in the southwestern United States. The property has approximately 500 employees. The survey packets were delivered to one of the vice presidents of the property, who selected 35 employees, gave questionnaires to the selected employees, and returned the completed questionnaire to me. Of these employees, 27 responded, including dealers, change people, floor persons, supervisors, managers, directors, and a vice president. The response rate for Property B is 77.1%. Of the respondents, 39% are female and 61% are male; 18% held a bachelor’s degree or higher. Average organizational tenure is 10.5 years and average age is 50. Both property A and property B participated in exchange for feedback regarding the research implications.

The third company in the sample (Property C) is a fast-food restaurant chain that has over 250 stores across the United States. The survey was conducted in its 23 stores located in a southwestern United States city. The 23 stores have 257 employees. With permission of store managers, research packets were given to store employees, including the managers, during the stores’ slow times. In 12 of the participating stores,
questionnaires were collected immediately after they were finished. In the other 11 stores, however, the survey was left under store managers’ administration and the completed questionnaires were collected at a later time. Altogether, 92 employees from Property C participated in the survey, 52% of whom are female and 48% are male. Of the respondents, 22% held a bachelor’s degree, have some graduate education or held a graduate degree. The average length working with Property C is 1.3 years, and the average age is 26. The response rate is 35.8%.

The last component of the sample included employees from a department of a 3000-room hotel/casino (Property D) located in the southwestern United States. The department has approximately 30 employees and features Asian marketing. With the department manager’s consent, research packets were distributed to all employees by a research assistant. The survey was conducted during company time, and the questionnaires, once finished, were collected and returned to me. Seventeen employees responded. The response rate is approximately 56.7%. Of the respondents, 59% are female and 41% are male; 80% of the respondents held a bachelor’s degree, have some graduate education, or held a graduate degree. Average organizational tenure is 2.7 years, and average age is 30.

Altogether, 179 employees of the four surveyed properties responded. The overall response rate is 36.4%. After two cases with incomplete responses were taken out, respondents from all four properties constituted a final usable sample of 177 cases. The demographic distribution of participants of each property and an overall description is presented in Table 1. Among the 177 respondents, 53.3% are female and 46.7% are male; 16.3% have some high school, 30.8% held a high school diploma, 20.9% have
some college, 5.8% held an associate degree, 16.9% a bachelor's degree, 3.5% have
some graduate education, and 5.8% held a graduate degree. Organizational tenure
averages 3.6 years, and average age is 32.7.

Table 1: Sample Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Property A</th>
<th>Property B</th>
<th>Property C</th>
<th>Property D</th>
<th>Full Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N =</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Graduate</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Tenure</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Measurement of Variables

Job Characteristics

Job characteristics were measured by the revised Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) items. The JDS originally introduced three items to measure each one of the five job characteristics dimensions (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). One item out of every group is reverse-scored. However, Harvey, Billings and Nilan (1985) suggested that the reverse-scored items were a major source of inconsistencies. Idazak and Drasgow (1987) revised the JDS with new items that do not have to be reverse-scored.

In the current study, the first 15 items on the questionnaire were JDS items (see Appendix B, items 1-15). Items 1, 6, and 11 measured autonomy, items 2, 7, and 12 task identity, items 3, 8, and 13 skill variety, items 4, 9, and 14 task significance, and items 5, 10, and 15 measured feedback. Respondents were asked to describe the perceptions of their jobs by rating on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “1 – very little” to “7 – very much”, “1 – very inaccurate” to “7 – very accurate” or “1 – strongly disagree” to “7 – strongly agree,” depending on the wording of each item. The Cronbach’s alphas for the five dimension subscales in a previous study ranged between 0.77 and 0.83 (Corsun, 1999). Although the JDS measures employees’ perceptions of their jobs rather than gauging the objective job characteristics, it is reasonable to argue that it is the employees’ perception that causes their reaction (Hackman & Lawler, 1971).

After collecting the data, the three items for measuring each job characteristic dimension were summed to form a dimension score. The five dimension scores (skill variety, task identity, skill variety, task significance, autonomy and feedback) were again summed into an overall job characteristics score.
**Self-efficacy**

Spreitzer's (1995) three-item scale was used to measure self-efficacy. Cronbach alpha reliabilities of .81 were found for the measurement (Spreitzer, 1995). Respondents were asked to rate items 16, 17 and 18 in the questionnaire from “1 – strongly disagree” to “7 – strongly agree”. The three items are: “I am confident about my ability to do my job,” “I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities” and “I have mastered the skills necessary for my job.” The scores of the three items were summed to form an overall self-efficacy score.

**Organizational Commitment**

For the reasons noted in the literature review, the current study ignored instrumental commitment and measured only normative commitment. Eight out of the twelve commitment measurement items developed by O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) tap the normative commitment construct. Therefore, these eight items were used to measure organizational commitment in the current study (see Appendix B, items 19-26). The scale was a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “1 – strongly disagree” to “7 – strongly agree.” The eight items had an alpha reliability of 0.91 in another research study (Corsun, 1999). The scores of the eight items were summed to form an overall commitment score.

**Demographics**

**Age**

Age was measured by asking the respondents to tell their actual age (see Appendix B, item 28).
Gender

Gender was coded as “1 - female” and “2 - male”. Respondents were asked to indicate their gender (see Appendix, item 29).

Organizational Tenure

Organization tenure was measured by the number of years employees had worked with the organization. Respondents were asked to describe how long they had been working at the company in years and months (see Appendix B, item 27). Organizational tenure results were transformed into number of years with decimal points where necessary.

Level of Education

Level of education was divided into seven categories, ranging from “1 - some high school” to “8 - graduate degree” (see Appendix B, item 30). Respondents were asked to indicate their education level by choosing from one of the seven categories.

Property

The data were collected from four different hospitality properties. Property A is a mid-sized hotel in northeastern United States; Property B operates in both lodging and gaming areas; Property C represents multiple fast food stores of a fast food chain; and Property D is the Asian marketing department of a 3000-room hotel/casino. The nature of work among employees from the four organizations is expected to be different. For instance, the work performed by restaurant employees would be much different from that performed by casino sales people. Since organizational commitment is expected to be influenced by job characteristics, I expect property, in this study, will have an effect on organizational commitment. Therefore, property was created as another control variable.
after data were collected. Property was coded as “1 – Property A,” “2 – Property B,” “3 – Property C,” and “4 – Property D.”

Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

All data analysis was performed using SPSS, release 10.0. In order to examine the normality plots of the data, Normality P-P plots were produced for the job characteristics dimensions, overall job characteristics, self-efficacy and organizational commitment. The plots showed that data for all the study variables are approximately normally distributed, permitting the data analysis to continue.

Two linear regressions were performed to test Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 and to control the demographic variables. H1 states that job characteristics (overall and five dimensions) are predictors of organizational commitment. H2 states that self-efficacy is an predictor of organizational commitment. The first regression model had organizational commitment as the dependent variable. Skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback, and self-efficacy were the independent variables.

Demographic variables (organization tenure, education level, age, gender, and property) were also entered into the model to be controlled. With organizational commitment as the dependent variable, the second regression model had overall job characteristics and self-efficacy as the independent variables. Demographic variables were again controlled.

One-way ANOVA was used to test Hypothesis 3. ANOVA is used to compare the mean of an independent variable with three or more levels (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 1998). Hypothesis 3 is supported, if the organizational commitment scores of the employees rated both low in job characteristics and self-efficacy and those rated both
high in job characteristics and self-efficacy are not significantly different; if the
organizational commitment scores of the employees rated low in job characteristics but
high in self-efficacy and those rated high in job characteristics but low in self-efficacy are
not significantly different; and if the organizational commitment scores of the employees
rated both low or both high in job characteristics and self-efficacy are significantly higher
than those of the employees had either high-low or low-high job characteristics versus
self-efficacy ratings.

To perform the ANOVA analysis, a median split among cases was first conducted
on skill variety score, task identity score, task significance score, autonomy score,
feedback score, overall job characteristics score and self-efficacy scores. The median
scores for the seven variables are presented in Table 2. For each of the seven variables,
scores equal to or lower than the median score were categorized as low scores and coded
as "1." Scores greater than the median were considered high scores and coded as "2."

Table 2: Median Scores for Five Job Dimensions, Overall Job Characteristics, and Self-
efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill variety</th>
<th>Task identity</th>
<th>Task significance</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Job characteristics</th>
<th>Self-efficacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, six new variables were created to represent the interaction of skill variety
and self-efficacy (SVSE), task identity and self-efficacy (TISE), task significance and
self-efficacy (TSSE), autonomy and self-efficacy (ASE), feedback and self-efficacy
(FSE), and overall job characteristics and self-efficacy (JCSE). Each of the new variables has four levels (values). The level is coded as “1” when both job characteristics score (five dimensions and overall) and self-efficacy score are 1, “2” when job characteristics score is 1 and self-efficacy score is 2, “3” when job characteristics score is 2 and self-efficacy score is 1, and “4” when both job characteristics score and self-efficacy score are 2. Take SVSE for example. Level 1 stands for cases with both low skill variety and self-efficacy scores, 2 for cases with low skill variety scores but high self-efficacy scores, 3 for cases with high skill variety scores but low self-efficacy scores, and level 4 stands for cases with both high skill variety and self-efficacy scores. The new variables and interpretations of their levels (values) appear in Table 3.

Univariate analyses were then devised to control demographics variables and test whether organizational commitment scores were different among the four kinds of combinations of job characteristics (overall and five dimensions) and self-efficacy. Finally, ANOVA (with post hoc Tukey multiple-comparison) tests were performed for the variables that had significantly different organizational commitment scores. Tukey post hoc multiple-comparisons enable the exploration of which pairs or combinations of means are not equal (Hinkle et al., 1998). Tukey tests were the final step in testing Hypothesis 3. Results of the hypothesis testing are presented in Chapter IV.
Table 3: Variables for Interaction of Job Characteristics (Five Dimensions and Overall) and Self-efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SVSE</td>
<td>Skill Variety</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TISE</td>
<td>Task Identity</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSSE</td>
<td>Task Significance</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASE</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSE</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCSE</td>
<td>Job Characteristics</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics and scale reliabilities are presented in Table 4 and a correlation matrix of all the focal variables appears in Table 5. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of the measuring scales for task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback are .70, .72, .77, and .70, respectively, and meet the conventional cut-off of .70. The alpha for skill variety (.63) does not meet the .70 threshold. The reliability of the three items in measuring skill variety is marginal. However, because the reliability is significant evidence of the reliability of the five subscales of the Job Diagnostics Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), data analysis was continued. The Cronbach's alpha for the variables of overall job characteristics, self-efficacy, and organizational commitment are .88, .82, and .93, respectively, and are comfortably above the conventional cut-off.

The bivariate correlation matrix results reveal a highly significant relationship between overall job characteristics and organizational commitment (r = .57, p < .01). A strong significant association also appears between skill variety, one of the five job dimensions, and organizational commitment (r = .51, p < .01). Significant relationships exist between autonomy and organizational commitment (r = .42, p < .01), task significance and organizational commitment (r = .49, p < .01), and feedback and
### Table 4: Descriptive Statistics and Scale Reliabilities for Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skill Variety (3 items)</td>
<td>13.38</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Identity (3 items)</td>
<td>15.83</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Significance (3 items)</td>
<td>16.10</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy (3 items)</td>
<td>15.09</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback (3 items)</td>
<td>16.28</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Job Characteristics (15 items)</td>
<td>76.69</td>
<td>14.10</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy (3 items)</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Commitment (8 items)</td>
<td>39.75</td>
<td>10.58</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5: Correlations for Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skill Variety (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Identity (2)</td>
<td>.35*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Significance (3)</td>
<td>.64*</td>
<td>.42*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy (4)</td>
<td>.55*</td>
<td>.44*</td>
<td>.51*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback (5)</td>
<td>.54*</td>
<td>.53*</td>
<td>.63*</td>
<td>.43*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Job Characteristics (6)</td>
<td>.80*</td>
<td>.70*</td>
<td>.83*</td>
<td>.76*</td>
<td>.79*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy (7)</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.27*</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.33*</td>
<td>.25*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Commitment (8)</td>
<td>.51*</td>
<td>.32*</td>
<td>.49*</td>
<td>.42*</td>
<td>.46*</td>
<td>.57*</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significant at p < .01

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organizational commitment ($r = .46, p < .01$). A moderately strong relationship exists between task identity and organizational commitment ($r = .32, p < .01$). Self-efficacy is also associated with organizational commitment. This correlation, though significant, is not large ($r = .21, p < .01$).

Skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback are highly significantly correlated to overall job characteristics ($r = .76, .70, .80, .82, .79$ respectively, $p < .01$). These high correlations are expected, because the overall job characteristics score is the sum of the five dimension scores. Multi-collinearity is not a concern, as the overall job characteristics variable and five dimension variables were not measured in the same analyses, neither in the regression analysis, nor the ANOVA analysis. The five job characteristics dimensions are significantly correlated with each other (see Table 5), which is normal, for the five dimensions are aspects of the same job. The Pearson $r$s of these correlations, though significant, are not alarmingly large.

Self-efficacy has significant relationship with overall job characteristics ($r = .25, p < .01$), task identity ($r = .27, p < .01$), task significance ($r = .20, p < .01$), and feedback ($r = .33, p < .01$). The correlations are not large.

Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis test results are reported in two sectors. First, tests on the relationship of job characteristics (overall and five dimensions) and organizational commitment, and the relationship between self-efficacy and organizational commitment are reported. Second, tests on the directions of the interaction of job characteristics (overall and five dimensions) and self-efficacy on organizational commitment are presented.
Test of Relationships of Job Characteristics and Organizational Commitment

Hypotheses 1 and 2 state that overall job characteristics, each of the five job characteristics dimensions and self-efficacy are related to and can predict organizational commitment, when age, organizational tenure, gender, educational level and property are controlled. The correlations of the study variables reveal that five job dimensions, overall job characteristics and self-efficacy are significantly correlated with organizational commitment. The magnitudes of the associations of five job dimensions and organizational commitment ranged from .32 to .51 (see Table 5), and the direction of the associations is positive. Job characteristics on the whole are even more strongly and positively related to organizational commitment ($r = .57$, $p < .01$). Self-efficacy also has significant relationship with organizational commitment, but the correlation is not large ($r = .21$, $p < .01$).

Regression models were further devised to control the demographic variables and explore whether direct effects exist between the five job dimensions and organizational commitment, overall job characteristics and organizational commitment, and self-efficacy and organizational commitment. Two regression analyses were performed. With organizational commitment as the dependent variable, skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback and self-efficacy were entered into the first regression model as the predictors. Organizational tenure, age, gender, educational level, and property were also entered as independent variables to be controlled. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 6.
Table 6: Five Job Dimensions, Self-efficacy and Demographic Variables Regressed on Organizational Commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Variables</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficient (β)</th>
<th>Significance (p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Tenure</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>.008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>Education Level</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skill Variety</td>
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<td>.010</td>
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<td>Task Identity</td>
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<td>.149</td>
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<td>Task Significance</td>
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<td>Autonomy</td>
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<td>Feedback</td>
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<td>.689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.065</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Adjusted R² = .41

The regression model was significant (p < .001). The adjusted R square is .41, indicating that 41% of the variation of organizational commitment can be attributed to the variation of the demographics, the job dimensions and self-efficacy combined. Specifically, skill variety (β = .23, p < .05) and task significance (β = .28, p < .01) have significant predicting effect on organizational commitment. However, task identity (β = .11, p = .15), autonomy (β = .13, p = .10), and feedback (β = .04, p = .69) do not significantly predict organizational commitment. Self-efficacy was not found to have direct effect on organizational commitment (β = .13, p = .07). As for demographic
variables, age ($\beta = .21, p < .01$) and property ($\beta = .16, p < .05$) significantly influence organizational commitment level. Therefore, age and property were controlled in the univariate analysis when testing the interactive relationship between each of the five job characteristics dimensions and self-efficacy on organizational commitment.

Table 7: Overall Job Characteristics, Self-efficacy, and Demographic Variables Regressed on Organizational Commitment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Variables</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficient ($\beta$)</th>
<th>Significance ($p$)</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Tenure</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<td>Education Level</td>
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<td>.747</td>
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<td>Property</td>
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<td>.010</td>
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<td>Job Characteristics</td>
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<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Adjusted $R^2 = .41$

The second regression model was devised with organizational commitment as the dependent variable, overall job characteristics, self-efficacy and the demographics variables as the predictors. Table 7 presents the regression results. The regression model was significant ($p < .001$) and the adjusted $R$ square is also $.41$. Of the variation of the organizational commitment, $41\%$ is accounted for by the variation of demographics, overall job characteristics and self-efficacy combined. Job characteristics, as hypothesized, have highly significant predicting effect on organizational commitment ($\beta$
Self-efficacy, again, is not shown to be predicting organizational commitment ($\beta = .10, p = .13$). Age ($\beta = .23, p < .01$) and property ($\beta = .19, p < .05$) are the demographic variables that significantly affect organizational commitment in this regression model. These variables were controlled in the univariate analysis to examine the interaction of overall job characteristics and self-efficacy when influencing organizational commitment.

The results of the two regression analyses reveal that Hypothesis 1 received partial support. Two of the job characteristics dimensions, skill variety and task significance, are positive predictors of organizational commitment. Overall job characteristics also positively predict organizational commitment. Most notable is the relationship between overall job characteristics and organizational commitment. The standardized coefficient for job characteristics in the regression model is .64, indicating that increasing job characteristics on the whole can greatly increase organizational commitment level. However, no predictive effects were found between task identity and organizational commitment, autonomy and organizational commitment, and feedback and organizational commitment. Self-efficacy was not a significant predictor of organizational commitment. Hypothesis 2 is not supported.

**Test of Interaction Directions of Job Characteristics and Self-efficacy on Organizational Commitment**

Although self-efficacy was not found to predict organizational commitment in this study, it could still have a moderating effect on the relationship between job characteristics (overall and five dimensions) and organizational commitment. Univariate analysis and post hoc multiple-comparison tests were performed to test Hypothesis 3, i.e.,
the organizational commitment level of the employees who rate both low in job characteristics (overall and five dimensions) scores and self-efficacy scores and those who rate both high in job characteristics (overall and five dimensions) scores and self-efficacy scores will be higher than that of the employees who rate low in job characteristics (overall and five dimensions) scores but high in self-efficacy scores and those who rate high in job characteristics (overall and five dimensions) scores but low in self-efficacy scores.

Six independent univariate models were devised to examine whether the organizational scores are different among the four levels (low-low, low-high, high-low, and high-high) of the variables representing interactions between skill variety and self-efficacy (SVSE), task identity and self-efficacy (TISE), task significance and self-efficacy (TSSE), autonomy and self-efficacy (ASE), feedback and self-efficacy (FSE), and overall job characteristics and self-efficacy (JCSE), after controlling age and property. Univariate analysis was performed for each of the interaction variables, with organizational commitment as the dependent variable, age as the covariate, and the two categorical variables, an interaction variable and property, as the fixed factors. The results of the six univariate models appear in Table 8.

The results reveal that, after controlling age and property, significant organizational commitment mean difference exists among the four levels of SVSE (F = 3.89, p < .05), TSSE (F = 5.98, p < .01), ASE (F = 4.95, p < .01), FSE (F = 6.46, p < .001), and JCSE (F = 5.18, p < .01). However, no significant organizational commitment difference caused by the TISE variable was found (p value significant at .05), indicating that organizational commitment is not significantly different among the four kinds of task...
identity and self-efficacy combinations (low vs. low, low vs. high, high vs. low, and high vs. high).

Table 8: Univariate Comparison of Organizational Commitment Difference within Job Characteristics – Self-efficacy Interaction Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction Variables</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance (p)</th>
<th>Adjusted R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>SVSE</td>
<td>3.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>TISE</td>
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<td>.057</td>
<td>.11</td>
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<td>TSSE</td>
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<td>.001</td>
<td>.19</td>
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<td>ASE</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
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<td>FSE</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCSE</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Dependent variable: organizational commitment

Tukey post hoc multiple-comparison tests were then performed for the interaction variables to explore which pairs of job characteristics and self-efficacy combinations are not equal in organizational commitment and to detect the direction of the difference. TISE was excluded from the post hoc analysis. The results of the Tukey post hoc tests are presented in Table 9.

As shown in Table 9, for the interaction of skill variety and self-efficacy, a significant organizational commitment difference was found between level 1 and level 4 (mean difference = -9.6, p < .001), indicating that organizational commitment of the employees who rated high in both skill variety and self-efficacy and those rated low in
both skill variety and self-efficacy is significantly different. Organizational commitment of the employees who rated low in skill variety but high in self-efficacy is also significantly different from that of those rated high in skill variety but low in self-efficacy (mean difference = -6.66, p < .01). No significant difference, however, was detected between level 1 and level 2, nor between level 3 and level 4. Although the organizational commitment of level 4 is significantly higher than that of level 2 (mean difference = -8.42, p < .001), level 1 organizational commitment is significantly lower, rather than higher, than that of level 3.

The results indicate that organizational commitment of the cases with both low skill variety scores and self-efficacy scores (level 1) and those with both high skill variety scores and self-efficacy scores (level 4) is not significantly higher than that of the cases with low skill variety scores but high self-efficacy scores (level 2) and the cases with high skill variety scores but low self-efficacy scores (level 3). The same results of post hoc tests were found with the interaction of task significance and self-efficacy, autonomy and self-efficacy, feedback and self-efficacy, and overall job characteristics and self-efficacy in influencing organizational commitment (see Table 9). Therefore, the hypothesized directional outcomes of the interactions of job characteristics (overall and five dimensions) and self-efficacy on organizational commitment are not supported.

Notable is the direction of the organizational commitment mean difference detected among the four levels. The organizational commitment of level 4 (high job characteristics scores and high self-efficacy scores) is significantly higher than that of level 1 (low job characteristics scores and low self-efficacy scores) and level 2 (low job characteristics scores and high self-efficacy scores). Organizational commitment of level
Table 9: Post Hoc Tukey Analysis of Organizational Commitment Difference within Job Characteristics – Self-efficacy Interaction Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Interaction</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<td>Low</td>
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<td>Low (2)</td>
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<td>High</td>
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</table>

+ Dependent variable: organizational commitment. Mean difference of organizational commitment scores are presented in the table.

* p < .05
** p < .01
*** p < .001

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3 (high job characteristics scores and low self-efficacy scores) is significantly higher than level 1 and level 2 organizational commitment, even though self-efficacy in level 3 is lower than that in level 2. To further explore this finding, a t-test was run to determine whether organizational commitment is different among employees who rated low in self-efficacy and those rated high in self-efficacy. The test revealed no significant difference in organizational commitment between low and high self-efficacy (mean difference = -1.76, p = .27), indicating that variation in self-efficacy did not result in changes in organizational commitment. These findings further support the regression results: Job characteristics predict and positively influence organizational commitment. Self-efficacy, however, has no predictive effect on organizational commitment. Discussion on the hypothesis testing results appears in Chapter V.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussion of Results

The study was designed to obtain knowledge concerning whether job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback, and overall job characteristics) and self-efficacy independently and interactively influence organizational commitment. No previous published research has examined self-efficacy's moderating role in the relationship between job characteristics and organizational commitment. I proposed that different combinations of job characteristics levels and self-efficacy levels would have different effects on organizational commitment. My core findings are that skill variety, task significance, and overall job characteristics have a significant predictive effect on organizational commitment and the impact is positive. Self-efficacy is not a significant predictor of organizational commitment. The hypothesized directional outcomes of the interaction of job characteristics and self-efficacy on organizational commitment were not found. However, since the hospitality companies and employees in my sample are chosen by convenience, and a large proportion of the survey was not administered by me, the findings can only offer cautious inference to the general hospitality industry.

The study results provide strong support for the predicting effect of job characteristics on organizational commitment, indicating that enriching jobs through
changing the five core job dimensions can increase employees' organizational commitment. This finding may expand the knowledge of the relationship of job characteristics and organizational commitment in the hospitality industry and may support the importance of job enrichment in enhancing hospitality workers' organizational commitment. Jobs that are perceived as more meaningful, with more responsibility and with more knowledge of working results, are most likely to generate commitment about work (Hackman, Oldham, Janson, & Purdy, 1975). These three psychological states are achieved through increasing skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback of jobs (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Many hospitality jobs (e.g., housekeeping and food serving) are relatively low in the five job dimensions. Work redesign in the hospitality industry would help enhance employees' organizational commitment and lower turnover rate.

The findings in this study could also add specificity to the understanding of the relationship between job characteristics and organizational commitment in the hospitality industry. The findings identify that skill variety and task significance have significant predictive effects on organizational commitment, while feedback, autonomy and task identity do not. The findings, to some extent, reflect the nature of work in the hospitality industry. Hospitality work, especially front-of-the-house work, heavily involves interaction with customers. Feedback of the jobs could be relatively high because of additional opportunities for individuals to directly receive praise for, or criticism of, their work. Autonomy and task identity are also higher for hospitality workers because employees are often assigned personal responsibility in serving individual guests. It is, therefore, not surprising that the organizational commitment level of hospitality workers
is not significantly influenced by task identity, autonomy and feedback. Enhancing skill variety and task significance should be given priority in hospitality work redesign.

The results reported in Chapter 4 also reveal that, although self-efficacy is positively correlated with organizational commitment, no predictive relationship was found between the two variables. The finding seems to suggest that changes in employees' self-efficacy will not influence organizational commitment. This is somewhat at odds with previous literature findings. The explanation could be as follows: Hospitality jobs are often monotonous, require few complex skills and are not terribly challenging. As a result, self-efficacy could be consistently high among hospitality workers, so that no significant variance in self-efficacy can predict the change in organizational commitment. In this current study, employees' self-efficacy ratings could range from 3 to 21. However, Chapter 4 reported that self-efficacy scores have a mean of 18.75 and a standard deviation of 2.45 (see Table 4), indicating high self-efficacy ratings and low variance. T-test results in Chapter 4 also reveal that organizational commitment of employees rated high in self-efficacy and that of the employees rated low in self-efficacy is not significantly different. These findings lend support to my explanation.

The study went beyond self-efficacy's main effect on organizational commitment and proposed self-efficacy's moderating effect on job characteristics and organizational commitment. However, the proposition that different combinations of job characteristics and self-efficacy have different organizational commitment outcomes was not supported. The possible explanation is that the correlation between job characteristics and organizational commitment is so substantial that it mitigates against self-efficacy's moderating effect. In my sample, employees rated high in job characteristics consistently
reported greater organizational commitment, independent of self-efficacy, than those rated low in job characteristics. Jobs in the hospitality industry, at least in the hospitality companies surveyed in this study, may not be complex and challenging enough to cause significant variance of self-efficacy that can interact with the variance in job characteristics to influence organizational commitment. Job characteristics may be hospitality employees’ greater concern compared with self-efficacy.

Implications for Management

The prior discussion suggests that, when jobs are enriched, organizational commitment may increase and turnover may be reduced. Modifying current jobs to make them more complex and challenging could be an effective method to tackle the turnover problem. To initiate and install changes, the following steps could be taken. First, administer the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) or conduct interviews with employees to identify whether or which of the five core job dimensions are problematic (Kulik, Oldham, & Hackman, 1987).

Second, implement job enrichment functions including forming natural work units, combining tasks, establishing client relationships, vertical loading and opening feedback channels (Hackman, et al., 1975). Forming natural work units and combining tasks focus on distributing work in a logical way and in a whole piece. These functions can help increase task identity and employees’ feelings of ownership (autonomy). Establishing client relationships, which has been achieved across most hospitality jobs, can increase employees’ feelings of responsibility (autonomy), task identity and feedback. Vertical loading encourages employees to participate in “planning” and
“controlling” of the work rather than just “doing” a job (Hackman et al., 1975). Through giving more autonomy, skill variety and making the job more significant and meaningful, vertical loading can psychologically empower employees. Opening feedback channels is self-explanatory.

As discussed above, skill variety and task significance were found to have a most important influence over the organizational commitment of the hospitality employees in my sample. Vertical loading could be the most useful method to achieve higher skill variety and task significance. Specifically, managers could give employees more discretion in setting schedules, deciding on work methods, and advising or helping to train less experienced employees (Hackman, et al., 1975). Employees should also be given higher authority and encouraged to seek problem solutions on their own.

Third, increase employees’ perception of the jobs’ characteristics. It is perception that leads to responding behaviors. Individuals may not always have accurate perceptions of their jobs. After jobs are actually enriched, managers should communicate to employees about how much skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback the jobs have. For example, in terms of task significance, employees should be educated that serving customers is a significant and meaningful task. “When an individual understands that the results of his work may have a significant effect on the well-being of other people, the meaningfulness of that work usually is enhanced” (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

Finally, continuously involve employees in work redesign. Based on the discussion that jobs in the hospitality industry are not well enriched, I expect that self-efficacy will decrease for some employees when the work is redesigned. When jobs
become more complex and challenging, individuals’ beliefs in their task-performing capability may be weakened. At this stage, continuously enhancing job characteristics may not be appropriate to improve the match between the job and employees’ self-efficacy. Employees’ opinions on the magnitude and direction of the job design should always be considered.

Limitations

A few limitations of this study should be noted. The nature of the sample greatly limits the study’s generalizability to the entire hospitality industry. The two hotels, restaurant chain, and marketing department of another hotel were chosen at convenience. Employees were not randomly selected from each property. Although the sample involved a broad spectrum of occupations (housekeepers, food servers, dealers, office clerks, sales persons) and positions (line staff and different levels of managers) in the industry, a large proportion of the respondents were fast food servers and hotel sales people.

Another limitation of the findings is common-method bias. Part of the survey was administered by managers rather than by myself. The questionnaires may not have been accurately understood and completed, i.e., the survey responses may not have accurately reflected participants’ perception of their work and themselves. Last, since the study is not an experiment, predicting interpretation on the relationship between job characteristics and organizational commitment is not technically justified. It is possible that employees committed to an organization have higher perceptions of the characteristics of their jobs.
Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Study

This study revealed that overall job characteristics and two of the core job dimensions, skill variety and task significance, may be determinants of organizational commitment. Enriching jobs in the hospitality industry may well increase employees' organizational commitment and decrease turnover. Self-efficacy was not found to be predicting organizational commitment. It was proposed that employees who perceive their jobs as low in job characteristics and have low self-efficacy and those who perceive their jobs as high in job characteristics and are high in self-efficacy will have greater organizational commitment, while the employees who perceive their jobs as low in job characteristics and have high self-efficacy and those who perceive their jobs as high in job characteristics and have low self-efficacy will be less committed to their organizations. However, the proposed directional outcomes of the interaction of job characteristics and self-efficacy on organizational commitment were not found.

The findings of this study should not, however, hinder further studies on the proposition that different combinations of job characteristics and self-efficacy may influence organizational commitment differently. The sample of this study consisted of employees from four hospitality companies selected at convenience. The nature of the sample restricts inference of the findings of the current study to the hospitality industry in general. Additionally, common-method bias in the study also limits the generalizability of the findings. As the hypotheses of this study have relatively sound theoretical bases, further studies on the interactive effect of job characteristics and self-efficacy on organizational commitment should be conducted with more representative samples and more complicated research devices.
REFERENCE


Dear Employees,

The following survey is part of a research study designed to examine your perception on your workplace and job. Please take a few minutes to respond to the attached survey. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary and under NO circumstances will your individual responses be reported to anyone. By completing the attached survey, you are acknowledging your understanding of this study and agree to participate in the same.

After being statistically analyzed, all completed surveys will be stored separately in a locked file cabinet for two years in my faculty advisor's office in the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. If you have any questions regarding this research, please feel free to contact me at (702) 732-8973.

Thank you very much for your participation!

Sincerely,

Min Fang
Graduate Student, UNLV
APPENDIX B

WORK PERCEPTION SURVEY

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration

Please circle the response best describes your job using the following scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Little</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. How much autonomy is there in your job? That is, to what extent does your job permit you to decide on your own how to go about doing the work?

2. To what extent does your job involve doing a "whole" and identifiable piece of work? That is, is the job a complete piece of work that has an obvious beginning and end?

3. How much variety is there in your job? That is, to what extent does the job require you to do many different things at work, using a variety of your skills and talents?

4. In general, how significant or important is your job? That is, are the results of your work likely to significantly affect the lives or well being of other people?

5. To what extent does doing the job itself provide you with information about your work performance? That is, does the actual work itself provide clues about how well you are doing – aside from any "feedback" co-workers or supervisors may provide?

Please circle the response best describes how accurate the following statements about your job are.

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6. The job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. The job provides me the chance to completely finish the pieces of work I begin. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. The job requires me to use a number of complex or high-level skills. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. This job is one where a lot of other people can be affected by how well the work gets done. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. Just doing the work required by the job provides many chances for me to figure out how well I am doing. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. The job gives me a chance to use my personal initiative and judgment in carrying out the work. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. The job is arranged so that I can do an entire piece of work from beginning to end. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. The job is quite difficult and involves no repetitiveness. (Please go on to the back) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. The job itself is very significant and important in the broader scheme of things. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. After I finish a job, I know whether I performed well. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Please circle the response best describes how much you agree with the following statements about yourself:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. I am confident about my ability to do my job. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. I have mastered the skills necessary for my job. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Please circle the response best describes how much you agree with the following statements about your hotel.
19. If the values of this organization were different, I would not be as attached to this organization.

20. Since joining this organization, my personal values and those of the organization have become more similar.

21. The reason I prefer this organization to others is because of what it stands for, its values.

22. My attachment to this organization is primarily based on the similarity of my values and those represented by the organization.

23. What this organization stands for is important to me.

24. I am proud to tell others that I am a part of this organization.

25. I talk up the organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.

26. I feel a sense of "ownership" for this organization rather than being just an employee.

Please answer the following questions about yourself:

27. How long have you been working with your hotel/restaurant? ______ year(s) and ______ month(s).

28. What is your age? ________.

29. What is your gender? (Please circle one) 1. Male 2. Female

VITA

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Thesis Title: Job Characteristics and Self-efficacy as Predictors of Organizational Commitment

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