JOB INVOLVEMENT IN A NON-WESTERN PUBLIC SECTOR: ITS ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES

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摘　　要

　　工作投入感係指員工對於所擔任的工作之心理認同感。傳統上，工作投入感並未受到組織理論學者的重視，這方面的研究也相對的不多見。本研究係由多角度的觀點入手，建構一個影響員工工作投入感的分析架構，再以實際的政府部門員工爲經驗研究之對象。研究結果發現工作特性與自我影響的察覺是兩個影響工作投入感高低的主因，而工作投入感則又影響到員工的工作績效與對組織認同的程度。本文最後深入討論研究結果的意涵。

Abstract

　　Job involvement, defined as the extent to which one's psychological identification with the job, plays an important role in facilitating effective management. This study examines the causes of job involvement and the influences of job involvement on organizational commitment and job performance, in a case study of the Taipei Municipal Government.

　　A model of job involvement, constructed from multiple theories: individual dispositions, organizational situations, a mixture of both, and purposive calculations, was tested by secondary data as well as with interviews of managers. Among others, results indicate that job attributes and self-influence were the top two predictors of job involvement, that job involvement significantly influences organizational commitment, and also, job performance, though the influence from a third factor needs to be recognized.

In sum, this study has demonstrated the utility of using multiple perspectives in understanding job involvement. Putting both quantitative and qualitative information into a single study also enhances the broadness of analyses and findings. Implications of this study for the theory of job involvement in organizational effectiveness, methodological improvements, and practice were also discussed.

Researchers have found job involvement to be a factor affecting various indicators of organizational effectiveness such as job performance, organizational commitment, absenteeism, and turnover (Baba, 1989; Blau & Boal, 1987; Cheloha & Farr, 1980; Stevens, Beyer & Trice, 1978). High job involvement, as Dewhirst (1973) notes, is also a characteristic of an energetic and productive organization. Partly for these reasons, Walton (1985) urges managers to foster employees' involvement in work instead of relying on obligation and obedience as ways to promote organizational effectiveness.

The predicament for practitioners is, however, that they may lack sufficient knowledge about what gives rise to job involvement and wht about its potential impact. In organizational studies, interest in examining job involvement is scattered compared to interest in other work-related attitudes like job satisfaction. Two previously reviewed papers (Hollenback, Connolly, & Rabinowitz, 1984; Rabinowitz & Hall, 1977) noted, implicitly or explicitly, that knowledge concerning the nature of job involvement remains largely disjointed, North American-culture based, descriptive, and, perhaps, atheoretical.

A rigorous examination on job involvement, calling for improvements in the research design, on both a theoretical and methodological level, is thus needed. The purpose of this study is precisely to meet that challenge. This paper is organized into several sections. First, it defines the concept of job involvement. It then offers multiple theoretical perspectives for outlining a research framework of job involvement and, accordingly, some testable hypotheses. The following two sections describe the methodology and the findings, respectively. Finally, the implications of this study are explored. The research model is tested in a non-Western organizational setting, the Taipei Municipal Government of Taiwan, to increase its cross-cultural application.

WHAT IS JOB INVOLVEMENT

To some extent, job involvement is still not a well-defined concept. Disputes

center on whether job involvement is a uni-dimensional or multi-dimensional concept, which leads to further debate concerning the way in which the measurement scale should be designed. Lodahl and Kejner (1965), two pioneers in this field, defined job involvement as a multi-dimensional structure which includes both the self-esteem and the self-image conceptualization. The former holds that an individual becomes more involved in his job when his sense of esteem is affected by his performance. The latter view holds that job involvement results from a psychologial identification with the work. Saleh and Hosek (1976) as well as Newton and Keenan (1983) also adopted a multi-dimensional measurement of job involvement.

Recently, Kanungo (1979; 1982) advocated the sole usage of a self-image concept. The advantages of adopting the self-image definition are identified as follows: (a) it is a better predictor than self-esteem conceptualization (Newton & Keenan, 1983); (b) it is predicted best by the individual and situational variables (Saal, 1981); (c) it avoids the conceptual redundancy between the involvement-as-self-esteem definition and intrinsic motivation (Lawler & Hall, 1970); and (d) it can be distinguished from other work-related behaviors (Jans, 1982; Blau, 1985), including job satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, professionalism (Ben-Porat, 1979; Lawler & Hall, 1970; Morrow & Goetz, 1988), and organizational commitment (Blau, 1987; Brooke, Daniel, & Price, 1988). In line with the above argument, this study takes a self-image conceptualization. Job involvement is therefore viewed as the degree to which an individual psychologically identifies with a specified job to which he or she is assigned.

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES ON JOB INVOLVEMENT

An examination of previous studies on job involvement indicates that job involvement may be associated with correlates such as job satisfaction, job characteristics, the Protestant work ethic, organizational commitment, and so on (for an up dated review, see Shih, 1991). However, most studies conducted bivariate analyses so that their explanatory abilities are limited and their thinking about possible correlates of job involvement is confined to one or two perspectives. They also gave little attention to theoretical aspects that link job involvement and its correlates, or, in other words, to why a certain factor can explain job involvement. Still, there are some studies that see job involvement as the outcomes of as many variables as an be enumerated. Consequently, the integrity of the research design is diminished, and its results may not be very helpful to practitioners.

Job involvement can be better understood by making some necessary theoretical and methodological changes in the research design. Important to this effort is the conception of multiple perspectives in order to develop a holistic picture of job involvement; the use of multivariate analyses in reaching more rigorous explanations;. and the exploration of the utility of the qualitative approach. This section concentrates on the development of a theoretical model of job involvement and some testable hypotheses.

Four Theoretical Perspectives

Psychological studies of human behavior generally indicate that job attitudes, like job involvement, are acquired, and that the sources of learning are often multiple rather than singular. Thus, one needs to look at the process of attitudinal formation from diverse perspectives. The logic underlying this holistic viewpoint is that one's attitude toward the job is more likely the combined product of different sources of learning. Three main sources that are often reported are individual dispositions, organizational situations, and a mixture of both. But, another important, though less frequently mentioned, perspective should be added — calculative reasoning.

The dispositional view of job attitude is the earliest approach found in organization studies. The foundation of this approach is a set of common assumptions: that people have certain dimensions, that these dimensions have some stability over time, and that they are useful in predicting individual behavior across situations (Staw & Ross, 1985)., Historical evidence supporting this approach can be found in many cases. For example, one particular type of personality — the internal type — has been extensively employed as a correlate or determinant of job attitudes or one might say, of job satisfaction.

The second perspective sees the formation of job attitude, in Pfeffer's (1982, p.5) terms, as an "externally constrained or situationally determined" process. The situationists assume that the social environment in which individuals work influences their cognitive perception of jobs. The social context will direct the individual's attention to certain information and provide organizational or group expectations regarding behavior (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Therefore, job involvement as an attitude may be viewed as the acceptance of a belief that working hard is a virtuous and is necessary for a responsible adult, or for the good of the organization. Notice that the social context often refers to two major organizational subsystems: job context and job content.

The interaction perspective is the third approach to investigating job attitudes. This viewpoint emphasizes that examining interactions between different driving forces particularly, person-environment (or disposition-situation) interactions, will result in more thorough explanations of the variance in job attitudes or behaviors. Taking either the dispositional or the situational approach separately only depicts a portion of the whole picture. In this regard, the impact of work needs, or the satisfaction of needs, on job involvement is unquestionable, but a better prediction of job involvement may occur when congruence between salient needs and the satsifaction of salient needs is achieved (Kanungo, 1982).

The fourth approach views job attitudes as the outcome of an individual's purposive calculations rather than as the outcome of socialization, as the other three commonly emphasize. Pfeffer described it as a product of "purposive, boundedly or intendedly rational, and prospective or goal directed" processes (1982, p. 5). A "side-bets" concept of organizational commitment (Becker, 1960) provides an excellent example to illustrate this point. According to Becker, maintaining a consistent commitment to the organization and its policies is a necessary behavior to avoid losing personal interests incurred from the ocurse of employment. However, it is understandable that tangible materials as well as intangible costs and benefits, such as the feelings of one's coworkers, are all likely to be included in the scope of calculations.

Research Framework

An outline of these four perspectives is the first step toward the development of a theoretical model of job involvement. It sets up overall parameters for the building of a research framework. The next step then is to establish certain representative factors within each perspective to explore their relationships with job involvement. These factors should be able to cover the core of each theoretical perspective. Two criteria were used to select them: their theoretical significance based on the literature and logical inferences, and their degree of controllability in the real organizational setting. In so doing, this study can realize three important objectives: holism, elegance (using fewer variables but yielding a stronger explanatory power), and action research in which the findings have practical applications.

Accordingly, a research framework of job involvement is depicted in Figure 1. The model suggests that job involvement is the product of the following factors: demographic variables, personal-psychological variables (work needs, locus of
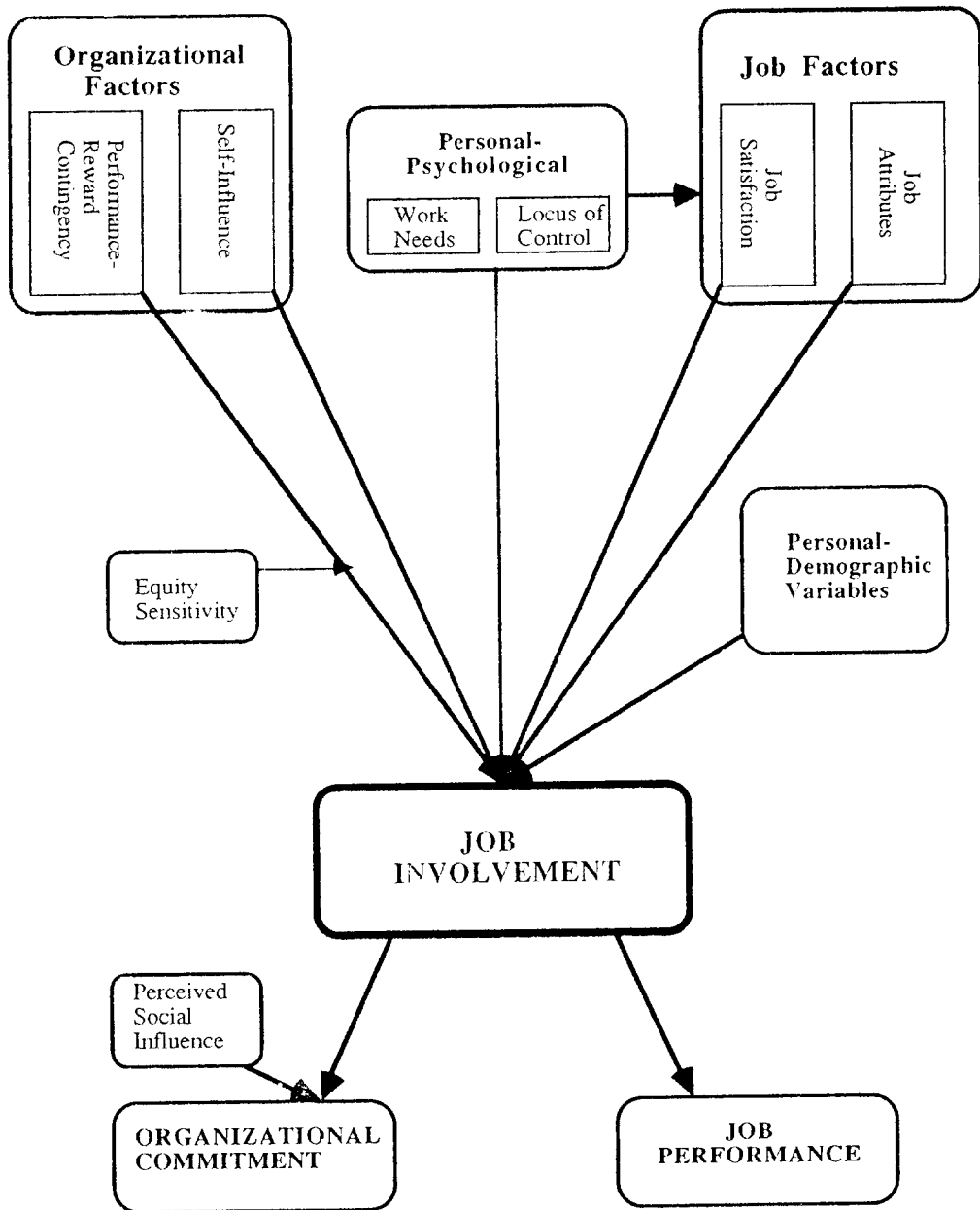
FIGURE 1 Research framework of job involvement

control, and equity sensitivity), job attributes, job satisfaction, perceived self-influence, and performance-reward contingency. The first two sets of variables represent the dispositional approach. The last four variables characterize the components of the situational approach, which includes job factors and organizational factors. Interactions occur between personal-psychological factors and situational factors. In addition, some demographic features (e.g., age, position, and performance ratings) exemplify the calculative view. In exploring the consequences of job involvement, the focus centers on how job involvement influences organizational commitment and job performance. The perceived social integration is likely to moderate the relationship between job involvement and organizational commitment. Arguments underlying the model are briefly discussed below.

The influence of personal psychological tendencies on job attitude has been one key element of traditional theories of work-related human behaviors (Alderfer, 1977). Among others, work needs and locus of control are two frequently mentioned personal traits. Conventional wisdom asserts that people with intrinsic types of work needs (e.g., the Protestant) or with an internal type of personality are more likely to be involved in their jobs than their counterparts. These persons attribute outcomes to their own efforts rather than to the outside environment. Thus, job involvement is consistent with their value structure.

The second source of influence of job involvement is the job itself and its surrounding. On the one hand, studies have indicated that a stimulating job, or in other words, a job that is seen as challenging, significant and inclusive of a variety of work, will pique interest of individuals in becoming highly involved in their jobs in order to feel successful or to achieve a sense of accomplishment. In this sense, the characteristics of the jobs themselves become a main source of motivation, which leads to greater job involvement. On the other hand, studies show the impact on job involvement of the treatment employees encountered in an organization. Two important representative factors are the perception of one's own importance in the organization and the perception of justice in performance appraisals. Believing that one can affect the course of one's own job increases the level of psychological identification with the job. Dickson (1981) contends that the perception of influence on or participation in the work process is one effective method, through interaction and communication, to influence the degree to which personal needs in the workplace are met. The perception of justice in management practices is also critical to the development of job attitudes. The demand for justice applies to virtually every management practice. Since the outcome of performance appraisals are often closely tied to employees' main interests, fairness in performance appraisals should be

of particular concern (Gabris & Mitchell, 1985). The perception of congruence between the two, an index of justice, as Staw (1974) contended, will then influence employee motivations to become involved with the job. In summary, satisfaction with a job, that is with both job content and job context, provides motivation for involvement in the job. When an individual is satisfied with his job, he is likely to continue to commit himself to it in order to maintain his satisfaction and to avoid cognitive dissonance. This leads one to view job satisfaction as the first step toward job involvement.

Job involvement can be the result of interactions between personal psychology and organizational situations as well. Although the main proposition contends that intrinsically motivated people or internals tend to be the job-involved workers, it may be equally true that extrinsically motivated employees or externals will be involved in their jobs as long as their salient needs are satisfied. Such an interactional effect is built upon the theory of salient-need satisfaction (Gorn & Kanungo, 1980). Another possible interaction is the impact of equity sensitivity on the relationship of perceived performance-reward contingency and job involvement. Huseman, Hatfield and Miles (1987) suggest that different people may possess different ideas of what fairness is. Therefore, job involvement is probably not only affected by the objective congruence between reward and performance, but also by subjective perceptions of equity.

The fourth source of influence on job involvement is personal investment in the course of employment. The basic argument here is the investment-driven concept. That is, job involvement, or more broadly, job attitudes that the organization desires from its employees are manifested when employees purposely behave in such a way as to maintain their best interests in the organization. Factors such as position, age, tenure, and performance ratings are perhaps the best index of this investment effect. They are often accompanied by side-bets because they determine the level of salary adjustment and bonuses, promotions, etc.

The influence of job involvement on organizational commitment and on job performance are the two main concerns in this study. Employees usually develop their psychological contracts with organizations via the specific job to which they were assigned. For them, jobs become the main source of situational stimuli and provide the channel through which they participate in both the formal and informal networks. Thus, the level of job involvement is a precondition to the development of organizational commitment. In fact, this is a kind of escalation from the level of the job to the organization as a whole in terms of the psychological identification (Morrow, 1983). But, along with job involvement, the impact that the group

factor produces on organizational commitment should be considered. The work group is the entity to which the individuals belong and also from which they obtain support. Porter and Steers (1973) indicated the negative impact of a lack of support on employee's alienation or isolation from the workplace. The relationship between job involvement and job performance seems to be self-evident. Without committing to the job, higher job involvement would become quite impossible, although job involvement may not necessarily leads to higher job performance.

The above argument leads to the following six hypotheses:

H1: Job involvement is affected by the work situation, including job satisfaction, job attributes, perceived self-influenced and reward-performance congruence.

H2: Individual dispositions, such as work needs or locus of control, influence the degree of involvement in a job.

H3: The degree of involvement in the job is the product of purposive calculations.

H4: Higher job involvement occurs when psychological dispositions are matched by the conditions of organizational situations.

H5: Higher job involvement leads to higher organizational commitment; the relationship is further enhanced by consideration of the group factor.

H6: Higher job involvement leads to higher job performance.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

This study draws on two types of data: secondary data and interviews with managers. Participants in both cases are all civil servants in the Taipei Municipal Government, Taiwan. The secondary data, collected by Lin (1989), includes 598 subjects who collectively worked at 24 out of 27 municipal agencies and 5 out of 16 district offices (707 were originally sampled based on the method of Probability of Population to Size; 84.5% response rate). Subjects were sampled in such a stratified and random way that they as a whole can represent the whole range of municipal agencies. A typical participant from this sample pool is male, middle aged (31 to 45), highly educated (university level or its equivalent), married, and of non-managerial status. His organization and rank (position) tenure is short, although

he has typically been in the civil service for over 10 years.

The interview data are composed of 31 interviews of high-level public managers interviewed by this author in May, 1990 (four of them responded in written format). They are intentionally selected to represent the same agencies included in the survey data. Interviews lasted on average from 40 minutes to over one hour. Of the 31 managers, 13 are directors (heads of agencies), 5 are deputy directors, and 13 are divisional chiefs. Note that the secondary data basically represents the viewpoint of public employees while the interview data reflects managers' opinions.

Measurements

Several procedures were followed to develop the measurement scales for the secondary data and to assure their content and construct validity. First, for each theoretical construct, a number of survey items, based on their literal meanings, was selected as a plausible measurement scale. This scale was further refined through item analyses to delete the items, if any, that were not consistent with that measurement scale. Third, all of the retained items were then factor-analyzed simultaneously to see if they indeed loaded on nine respective factors. Finally, factor scores were used as the basis for conducting statistical analyses.

Results of the factor analysis produce nine conceptually separated factors. The structure of each factor (i.e., items in each factor) is largely the same as those originally suggested based on the face values. The only significantly restructured construct is "self-influence." The reliability of each measurement scale (indicated by Cronbach's α) is as follows: job attributes (.79), job involvement (.65), job satisfaction (.85), organizational commitment (.78), locus of control (.67), work needs (.76), self-influence (.68), social integration (.70), and performance-reward contingency (.74). Given that this is a secondary study, these reliabilities are basically acceptable, even if not entirely adequate.

In the interviews, managers were asked to respond to 12 open-ended questions. These questions are designed to better understanding of important factors that may contribute to, or inhibit, the development and the impact of job involvement. With the open-ended questions, the nature of job involvement can be seen through the worldview of practitioners. The interview data was selected according to three criteria: (1) the extent to which information is related to preconceptions toward job involvement, based on the literature, (2) the degree of newness of the information, and (3) the recurrence of information. These procedures help

to achieve objectivity in the qualitative approach (Kirk & Miller, 1986). Shih (1991) has offered a full description of two measurements.

FINDINGS

The analyses of both the secondary data and the interview data aim to address three main concerns of this study. First, will the level of job involvement vary with the variation of each single variable? Second, to what extent can the research model explain the variance in job involvement and what are the relatively better predictors? Finally, how does the qualitative data cross-check with findings from the secondary data? and how does it enlarge understanding of the nature of job involvement?

The difference of mean factor scores

Tables 1 and 2 report the results of two descriptive statistics. Table 1 lists the intercorrelations among variables. Table 2 (t-test analyses) shows the mean factor

TABLE 1 Correlations among research variables

	JI*	OC	JS	JA	CN	SI	IN	WN	LC
JI	1.00								
OC	.51	1.00							
JS	.28	.44	1.00						
JA	.37	.45	.43	1.00					
CN	.21	.33	.23	.19	1.00				
SI	.23	.41	.43	.30	.25	1.00			
IN	.39	49	.49	.51	.27	.35	1.00		
WN	.26	.34	.25	.30	.11	.19	.28	1.00	
LC	.25	.43	.24	.25	.18	.27	.25	.15	1.00

Note: the number of cases differs from entry to entry in the Table. But most of them fall between 580 and 598.

Note: all correlation coefficients are significant at $p < 0.05$.

* JI (Job involvement); OC (Organizational commitment); JS (Job satisfaction); JA (Job attributes); CN (Performance-reward contingency); SI (Social integration); IN (Self-influence); WN (Work need); LC (Locus of control).

Table 2 Mean factor scores of job involvement by subgroups

Variable	Subgroup	N	Mean scores	Difference of mean	t-value
Age	35 -	212	-.089	.101	-2.04 *
	36-50	217	.012		(35 - vs. 50+)
	50 +	167	.101		
Rank	10-14	32	.564	.431	-6.72*
	6-9	239	.133		("10 14" vs.
	1-5	325	-.151		"1-5")
Position	Manager	472	.255	.321	-3.91*
	Non-manager	124	-.066		
Government tenure	0-10	268	-.105	.159	-2.36*
	11-20	206	.054		("0-10" vs. "21+")
	21 +	121	.137		
Work needs	Intrinsic	178	.255	.810	6.48*
	Extrinsic	118	-.455		
Locus of control	Introverts	170	.284	1.185	4.38*
	Extroverts	21	-.901		
Contingency[1]	High	122	.281	.587	-4.89*
	Low	115	-.306		
Job satisfaction	High	118	.299	.673	-5.60*
	Low	118	-.374		
Self-influence	High	101	.555	1.029	-8.43*
	Low	111	-.474		
Job attributes	High	118	.424	.974	-8.75*
	Low	119	-.550		
Performance ratings[2]	A	123	.262	.313	2.71*
	Mixed	390	-.051	.085	(3B vs. 3SB)
	B	39	-.136	.398	
Equity sensitivity	Entitleds	74	.166	.114	2.11*
	Equity	447	.052	.141	(Benevolents vs.
	Benevolents	69	.193	.027	Equity)
Organizational commitment[3]	High	240	.660	1.452	-13.06*
	Low	122	-.828		

1: The "high group" refers to people whose factor scores are in the top 20% of index scores; the "low group" refers to those in the lower 20%.

2: "A" refers those who obtained the best rating for each of the three consecutive years; "B" refers to employees who obtained the second best rating in three consecutive years.

3: In this case, job involvement serves as the independent variable.

scores of job involvement under different circumstances and indicates whether the difference is significant at the 0.05 level (the table reports only those carrying a significantly difference). The information presented in both tables permits the following three observations.

First, employees, who are older, who have longer government tenure, who hold a higher rank in the agency, who hold managerial positions, or who have higher performance ratings, have higher scores on job involvement than do their counterparts.

Second, in terms of dispositional variables, intrinsically-motivated and internal employees are more involved in their jobs than extrinsically-motivated and external employees. But the pattern is not as clear in terms of equity sensitivity.

Third, the results also indicate that those who scored higher on job involvement tended to also show greater job satisfaction, higher perception of having a more challenging job required varied skills, higher self-influence in the organization, higher reward-performance contingency, and higher organizational commitment.

One should not read too much into these results, however, because only descriptive statistics are used. Nevertheless, they establish basic directions which may help to generate more elegant multivariate analyses. That is to say that variables failing to show relationships with job involvement based on descriptive statistics need not to be included in multivariate analyses.

The explanatory power of the research model

The multivariate analyses are aimed at determining the degree of explanatory ability of the research model. This can be attained by regression analysis. In conducting regression analyses, hierarchical analysis, rather than a stepwise procedure, was followed to maintain the theoretical interests (Hollenback et al., 1984). The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 indicates that 24.2% of the variance in job involvement is explained by the model, and 54.6% of the variance in organizational commitment can be attributed to it. Perceived self-influence and job attributes are the two most important factors in explaining job involvement when all factors are considered simultaneously (.19 and .16 beta coefficients, respectively). However, unexpectedly, job satisfaction did not prove to be a good predictor of job involvement (cf. Rabinowitz, 1981). Its beta coefficient is low and not significant. As to the variance in organizational commitment, results indicate that job involvement has the best beta coefficients

TABLE 3 The explanatory power of the proposed model

Independent variables (in order when applicable)	Beta coefficients of the independent variable when the dependent variable is	
	Job Involvement	Organizational commitment
Job involvement	----	.258*
Social integration	----	.120*
Job satisfaction	.015	.104*
Job attributes	.161*	.135*
Performance-reward contingency	.099*	.070*
Self-influence	.190*	.102*
Work needs	.115*	.116*
Locus of control	.125*	.179*
Demographic characteristics	a	b
Performance ratings	.000	.022
Cumulative R²	*.242*	*.546*

*: $p < 0.05$. N = 569

a: Of the demographic variables, "rank in the organization" has the highest beta coefficient (.092), but it is not significant.

b: Of the demographic variables, "age" has the highest and significant Beta (.15).

(.258), followed by locus of control (.179), age (.15), job attributes (.135), perceived social integration (.120), and so on. In fact, job involvement alone accounts for over 30% of the variance in organizational commitment.

These findings are basically reaffirmed in the structural equation model based on the LISREL program (see Figure 2). The structural equation model is a more rigorous method in terms of building a cause-effect relationship. Based on the number shown in the figure, self-influence produces the greatest total effect (direct and indirect) on job involvement, and job attributes are ranked second. A one-unit increase of perceived self-influence will increase the level of job involvement by .280. Besides, the results also indicate that job involvement has the highest impact on organizational commitment.
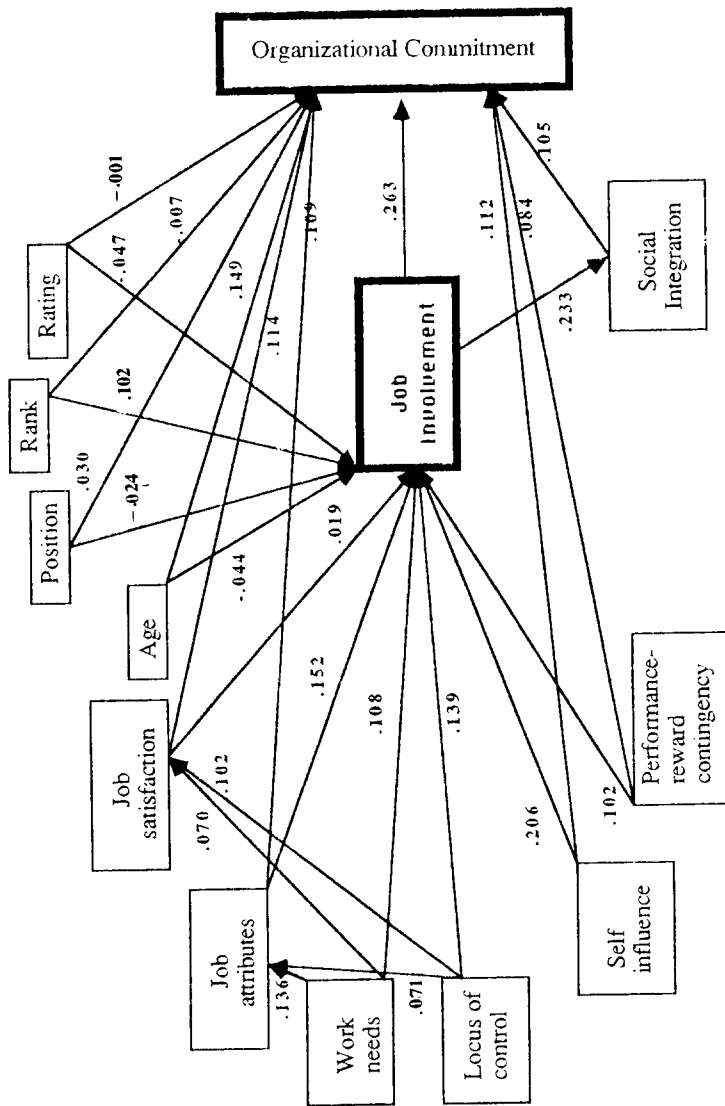
Figure 2 Structural Coefficients in the Model

Chi-Square with 15 d.f. = 172.12 (p< .001)
Goodness of Fit index = .963
R square for Job Involvement = .239
R suare for Organizational Commitment = .507

Managerial views of job involvement

The results of the secondary analyses reported above, as indicated earlier, in essence reflect public employees' perceptions of job involvement. What about the viewpoints of public managers on the nature of job involvement? When asked to list important factors that may enhance or inhibit job involvement, managers interviewed identified approximately 35 different factors. Table 4 summarizes these factors and their frequencies. Overall, their explanations also fit into the same four perspectives that underlie the theoretical framework of this study.

Like the results of the secondary analyses, in which the situational perspective appears to be a relatively better one in explaining job involvement, most of the factors reported by managers are either organizational factors (cited 68 times by managers) or job factors (40 times). Specifically, managers more frequently single out the importance of the following factors: the chance of promotion, levels of pay, work environment, leadership styles, job interest, sense of achievement, the job routine, knowledge about the job, personality, and work ethics. Comparing these factors with the findings from the quantitative analyses, one can find a higher degree of conformity between the two.

Nevertheless, there are factors, particularly leadership styles, stressed by managers that are not investigated in the survey data. According to managers, leadership style is the most crucial factor. Seventeen out of thirty-one managers (55%) interviewed reported its importance. They believed that diffent management styles can increase job involvement or in fact discourage motivation to become more involved in a job. For example, showing support for employees (e.g., public recognition) will produce a positive impact. But the most critical element is perhaps justice in leadership behavior; for instance, justice in the sense that decisions regarding promotion and performance rating are fair. This finding indeed echoes the central arguments of Lin's study (1989). The impact of leadership on job involvement occurs not only between middle manager and their subordinates, but also between top and middle management. Cases occur in which middle managers who were very involved in their jobs become apathetic toward their work because they feel they are treated unjustly by a new superior. This happens particularly often in the transition of top management.

Another noteworthy point made by the managers who were interviewed is the identification of interaction effect, an effect not significantly evidenced by the results of the secondary data. Managers pointed out that job involvement is often the combined product of, for example, leadership styles, perceived justice, and the

TABLE 4 *Factors affecting job involvement as given by managers*

General Reasons	Frequencies of citation
(A) *Organizational Factors*	68
Work environment	7
Promotion	13
Pay	10
Leadership	17
Others (e.g., training, job security, etc.)	11
(B) *Job Factors*	40
Job interest	5
Routine	4
Professionalism	4
Job importance	3
Sense of achievement	6
Knowledge-based	11
Others (e.g., challenging job, job competence, job feedback, etc.)	4
(C) *Personal Factors*	15
Personality	4
Family-related reasons	4
Age	3
Others (e.g., aspiration, health, etc.)	4
(D) *Others*	11
Work ethics	6
Social status of public servants	3
External environment	1
Policies, laws, and regulations	1

Number of cases = 31

attitude of work groups. A better understanding of job involvement could be brought about through consideration of the impact of their interactions. The role of the interaction perspective is also found in their comments on the relationships between job involvement and performance on both individual and organizational levels. Here, managers thought that although job involvement is a necessary condition for higher job performance, its impact depends on its interaction with other factors such as, again, leadership styles.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study examines the nature of job involvement through an approach different from previous ones in terms of its theory-building and methodology. Its rigorous methodology enables this study to show how multiple perspectives contribute to the understanding of job involvement. In general, the results of three stages of data analyses support the basic argument of this study which is reflected in six proposed hypotheses. Moreover, the findings provide implications for the role of multiple perspectives in observing job attitudes and for improving future research design. The practical implications should not be ignored, either. These will be discussed in more detail below, but not necessarily in order.

The extent to which the six proposed hypotheses are empirically supported is the first concern of this study. The findings, as presented in the prior section show the significant influence on the level of job involvement of job characteristics, perceived self-influence, and reward-performance contingency (H1, but the effect of job satisfaction is not significant); intrinsic motivation and internality (H2); and rank in the organization (H3; but the effects of age, position, and performance ratings are not significant). Specifically, job attributes and self-influence are the two best predictors of job involvement. The results also affirm the positive impact that job involvement has on organizational commitment (H5) and job performance (H6). Although the role of the interaction perspective (H4) in explaining job involvement is only partially affirmed based on the secondary data, managers interviewed do indicate that factors influencing job involvement are often intermingled.

What do these empirical results mean, more specifically, in terms of the applicability of multiple theories in explaining the nature of job involvement? Confirmations to the first three hypotheses indicate the basic fact that job involvement can be separately explained by different theoretical perspectives, including situational, dispositional, and calculative theory, which underlie each hypothesis. In particular,

it is the situational perspective (including job attributes and self-influence, H1) that has the most comparative power in understanding employees' levels of job involvement in this specific case.

The fact that job attributes and perceived self-influence are the two best predictors of job involvement have important practical implications. That managers can in fact control the course of both, factors meeting the needs of employees without expending financial resources, implies that job involvement is an attitude subject to enhancement by design. For example, employees will be more willing to commit to their jobs if the jobs are designed to have more challenging features, opportunities to attain a sense of achievement, and less routine, among other things. Also, higher job involvement may be expected if managers allow employees more autonomy in deciding the course of their own jobs and more opportunity to participate in activities related to their jobs. These practices in fact echo the conventional management philosophy based on the so-called Theory Y, referring to the use of intrinsic-type instruments. Nonetheless, as the managers cautioned, both participative and job design approaches may be successful as long as dissatisfaction with fulfillment of extrinsic needs (e.g., insufficient pay) is not overwhelming or unless the effect of other factors such as justice in leadership behavior overcomes the adverse impact incurred from dissatisfaction.

Job involvement by design, to a large extent, is then contradictory to the view that job involvement is a stable attitude already determined prior to employment. Arguments against job involvement as an inherent trait find some grounds in this study. On the one hand, the analyses of the secondary data do not show strong evidence for the claim of a dominant effect of individual dispositions on job involvement. On the other hand, managers interviewed said that, even though few employees are inclined to be inherently job-involved, their constant involvement in their jobs is largely dependent upon management styles and other factors. The impact of dispositions on the stability of job involvement may persist where organizational treatment is not fundamentally or frequently in conflict with their needs, and where organizational culture, particularly with regard to the attitude of the work group, is consistent with their socialized values. Otherwise, attitudinal dissonance will appear, and eventually employees will do anything (e.g., voice complaints, quit) but become involved in their jobs.

The role of purposive calculations (as opposed to socialization) in influencing job involvement, though its magnitude is far less than that of the previous two, also has practical implications. Here the point is that employees tend to be more involved in their jobs as their personal investments in a given organization

increase, indexed by age, position, rank, and organization tenure. Greater personal investment is accompanied by higher costs (objective and perceived) as one decides whether to seek other employment or to ignore organizational norms. Employees often understand very well what they stand to lose objectively and materially. However, organizations can still endeavor to make employees perceive another type of cost — friendship, for instance. Working in an organizational culture and work group that is strongly bonded will lead employees to attach greater importance to these hidden influences in making their calculations. In this way, not only will the older employees become more committed to their jobs, but also the younger members and the newcomers will also most likely feel that their personal stakes are tied to the job he or she currently holds.

Yet, if multiple theories of job involvement can ever demonstrate their greater power, interactions among different perspectives must be attested to. Overall, the evidence is there, even though not overwhelmingly apparent. As indicated earlier, the fourth hypothesis which characterizes the spirit of the interaction approach was partially supported by the survey data. Moreover, the managers that were interviewed recognized the impapct of interactions on job involvement on different occasions. Such an interaction effect implies that job involvement is a complex, or combined, product of different forces and is not determined only by a single factor. It indicates instead that job involvement is the product of weighting different, and often competing, forces. That is, individuals will take a holistic approach when developing their attitudes toward jobs, even though the end result will most likely vary with each individual.

Finally, this study offers some useful suggestions for future research. In terms of theoretical issues, future study should make efforts to determine representative factors, within each theoretical perspective, that are good predictors of job involvement. Factors such as leadership styles and the work group ought to be added to that list. Were it not for the omission of these critical factors in this study, due to the limitation of the secondary study, the explanatory power of the model would be greater. Moreover, it is interesting to explore the effect that the dimension of feasibility of a task has on job involvement (Hargrove & Glidwell, 1990; Klein, 1990). Conceivably, one may become alienated from a job if he perceives what his doing to be an impossible task.

The quality of the research, however, would improve still further if several methodological issues wee better managed. First, a good measurement scale for the particular research variables is essential. One of the reasons why this study does not produce a high explanatory power, regardless its theoretical soundness, may be

due to its measurement scales, which are acceptable but not highly satisfactory. More importantly, not only should a study be able to validly measure those factors that, by nature. can be quantified, but the most challenging efforts perhaps lies in the measurement of those factors that have a more qualitative nature. Secondly, related to the above, the interview approach, or the qualitative method in general, should be used as the means of data collection. Mere reliance on the survey technique, as is the case with most prior studies, often confines the observation to some measurable variables. Cultural-based variables are omitted, although their importance is recognized. The qualitative approach allows the researcher to capture more latent variables in addition to the measurable ones. Also, multiple sources of data collection aids in cross-checking, or triangulating, the validity of the data, as was done in this study. Finally, the concept of job involvement can still be, and should be, improved methodologically. A better way to accomplish that is perhaps through the practitioners' own words. The qualitative approach helps to discover more precise definitions of job involvement and to identifyi more appropriate indicators of job involvement. That will in turn assist in the design of a valid measurement scale for the purpose of quantitative studies. Consequently, research can address the "real" concept of job involvement.

In fact, these suggestions are not completely new. In the first paper reviewed, Rabinowitz and Hall (1977: 256) indeed made similar prescriptions by noting:

> Finally,1 since most of our work has been static research, we know very little about the *process* of becoming involved in a job. Future longitudinal research should do more than correlate changes in predictor variables with changes in involvement. Methods are needed that will reveal the sequence of events and processes that take place as a person becomes "turned on" to his or her work. Holistic methods, such as case studies, observation, and clinical interviews, may be more useful here than the field surveys that have been employed almost exclusively to data.

These suggestions remain the basic ones. They are as valid today as they were then. Certainly, reiterating these suggestions for future study is not intended in any way to offset the merit of this study. On the contrary, this study is meant to take the first step in this field toward a new approach to the study of job involvement. Studying job involvement from the perspective of multiple theories is the recommended direction. The outcomes are promising, if not totally successfully. Future research should take the lessons to be learned from this study and build

further knowledge concerning job involvement. In so doing, the nature of job involvement can be better understood and therefore better utilized as a powerful management tool for increasing organizational effectiveness.

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