

# Organizational Climate & Job Involvement among Virtual Workers in Service Organizations

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*Globalization and technology has revolutionized the workforce and as a result virtual work emerged as an option for upcoming service organizations. The increased use of virtual work has not been accompanied by concomitant research efforts to understand better the socio-psychological contributors to effective virtual work environment. The present paper tries to explore the relationship between perceived organizational climate and job involvement in virtual workers. The sample consisted of 100 virtual workers working in hospitality in India. A co-relational research design was employed. Data were collected through using questionnaire method. The results revealed that perceived organizational climate is not significantly related to job involvement and virtual work has revolutionized behavior within organizations.*

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## Introduction

As the technology advanced and liberalization came in early nineties in India, it not only changed individual's lifestyle to a large extent but also brought the world closer. As a result, laws, economies, and social movements are forming at the international level. This globalization brought big changes in organizations also. Virtual working is one of them. The major virtue of virtuality is that, if done right, it creates truly agile organizations well equipped to negotiate the crumbling markets of recession (Birkinshaw, 2010)

It is becoming commonplace for organizations to have large numbers of employees who work off-site, telecommuting from a home office, phoning from a car or airplane while traveling on business, or teleconferencing from a hotel room or vacation spot. For multinational companies and organizations who work across the borders and cost cutting is one of the issues with increasing their efficiencies in terms of customer focus, this might prove profitable as in the case of IBM which reports that firm estimates \$ 100+million are saved each

year. But from the psychologist's perspective whether really these virtual working helps individuals as virtual workforce to balance out their work and life issues and increasing workforce feels satisfied from this kind of working? The downside of electronically connected virtual workplaces is that employees are often expected to work, or to be available, beyond the normal working hours of the organization. Henttonen and Blomqvist (2005) argued that information technology plays an important role in virtual teams but virtual team work involves significant social redesign.

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Virtual teams are the next logical step in the evolution of organizational structures (Lipnack & Stamps, 1999). Townsend and colleagues (1998) defined virtual teams as "groups of geographically and/or organizationally dispersed coworkers that are assembled using a combination of telecommunications and information technologies to accomplish an organizational task". Organizational climate, manifested in a variety of human resource practices, is an important predictor of organizational success. Numerous studies have found positive relationships between positive organizational climates and various measures of organizational success, most notably for metrics such as sales, staff retention, productivity, customer satisfaction, and profitability (Greatworkplace, 2009).

## Job Involvement

As organizations and workers continue to adopt virtual work the effect of this organization's climate on job involvement is not explored. When there is no face to face accounting in most times in virtual setting and one is working in home environment or vacation where there is generally so much of distraction, how involved is virtual worker in his job?

Job involvement has been defined as an individual's psychological identification or commitment to his / her job (Kanungo, 1982). It is the degree to which one is cognitively preoccupied with, engaged in, and concerned with one's present job (Paullay et al., 1994: 224) Mashayekhi, Sajjadi & Tabrizi (2013) found positive relationship between organizational climate of schools and job involvement of 130 physical teachers at Jiroft city of Iran. If there is serious "financial tsunami", the financial service personnel may lose confidence and this may influence their job involvement, and even, they lose their jobs. It was attempted to understand the critical factors of their job involvement after suffering from the "financial tsunami" attack. Some suggestions were put forward to restore the job involvement of the financial service personnel. The empirical analysis discovered that "perceived organizational support" (POS) was the significant direct effect on job involvement of the employees. Peer relationship positively had an influence on job involvement through perceived organizational support; the direct effect was weaker than the indirect effect. These results demonstrated that peer relationship was conducive to job involvement of the

financial service personnel via the five constructs of perceived organizational support. In another result, the direct effect of financial service personnel's guanxi networks on job involvement was weaker than the indirect effect (Hao, Jung & Yenhui, 2009).

### **Work Alienation**

Work alienation and job involvement are correlated with one another (Hirschfeld & Field, 2000). Studies by Rose and colleagues (2002; 2004) have found a very strong link between Organizational Climate and employee reactions such as stress levels, absenteeism and commitment and participation. Griffin et al's (2000) organizational climate model accounts for at least 16% single-day sick leave and 10% separation rate in one organization.

Mishra and Wagh, (2004) conducted a study on public and private sector executives on the job involvement dimension. Two groups of executives differ significantly on mean score. Further they pointed out that reward work culture and environment, challenging job delegation of authority and responsibility were found to be potential factors for job involvement. Usually the higher one's identification or involvement with a job, the greater is the job satisfaction (Schultz & Schultz, 2004). It was found that when involvement is low, one's relationship with the company cannot be really strong. On the other hand when involvement is high the relationship stays strong even at low level of satisfaction. Furthermore while establishing the relationship between

commitment and involvement he observed that the committed employees in marketing were low on the involvement factors (Ashok, 2002)

Past studies that have examined correctional staff support for rehabilitation and punishment policies have produced conflicting results. Most studies have focused on personal characteristics including age, gender, job position, tenure, education, marital status, prior military service, and race. To expand the area of inquiry and assess the potential antecedents of the work environment regarding correctional staff support for inmate rehabilitation or punishment the impact of job stress, job involvement, and organizational commitment on staff attitudes towards the rehabilitation or punishment of inmates was examined. Findings indicated that job involvement and organizational commitment positively influenced correctional staff support for rehabilitation policies; however, job stress and job satisfaction did not have a significant effect on correctional staff attitudes towards either punishment or rehabilitation. (Lambert, Hogan, Barton & Oko, 2009)

Emery and Barker (2007) suggested that the organizational commitment of customer contact personnel was significantly correlated with customer satisfaction but not profit and productivity. On the other hand, the job involvement of customer contact personnel was significantly correlated with customer satisfaction, profit and productivity. There was a significant difference between the team

and non-team structures for job involvement, but not for organizational commitment of customer contact personnel.

Dimitriades (2007) explored to highlight the nature of inter-relationship(s) between service climate and job involvement in impacting customer-focused organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) of frontline employees in a diverse cultural context, at the crossroads of East and West. He provides empirical evidence of the applicability in Greek service contexts and illuminates the complex nature of interrelationships between organizational climate for service and job involvement in predicting customer-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors, expanding the OCB literature. In a study in New Zealand, Guthrie (2001) showed a positive association between use of high involvement work practices (HIWP's) and employee retention and firm productivity. Cohen's (1999) research supported the important status of job involvement as an antecedent of organizational commitment. Specifically, Cohen argued that those individuals with high levels of job involvement, which stems from positive experiences on-the-job (Kanungo, 1979; Witt, 1993), make attributions from these experiences to the organization.

Brown & Leigh (1996) investigated the process by which employee perceptions of the organizational environment are related to job involvement, effort and performance. The researchers developed an operational definition of a psychological climate to their own well being. Perceived psychological climate was then related to job involvement, effort and

**Perceptions of a motivation and involving psychological climate were related to job involvement.**

performance in path-analytic framework. Results showed that perceptions of a motivation and involving psychological climate were related to job involvement, which in turn was related to effort. Gable and Dangelo (1994) studied and addressed the effect of job involvement on the relationship between Machiavellianism and job performance. The results showed a significant effect for managers who perceive themselves as possessing high levels of job involvement. No effect was found for managers who perceived themselves as having low levels of job involvement.

**Sample**

As virtual working is still in its early age in India, the present study was on a sample of 100 male virtual workers with post graduation, 3 years of work experience and mean age of 26.5 years selected adopting purposive sampling method on the availability basis as well as on the willingness to participate in this study. Respondents were selected from various organizations in IT, ITES, and hospitality sectors being residents of Delhi and NCR (National Capital Region). Product movement correlation was applied to find out the relation between the variables.

**Measurement**

The organizational climate inventory developed by Chattopadhyay &

Agarwal (1976) was used to measure perceived organizational climate which consisted of 70 items. OCI dimensions were performance standards, communication flow, reward system, responsibility, conflict resolution, organizational structure, motivational level, decision making process, support system, warmth, identity problems. Reliability coefficient by Spearman-Brown Formula was .898. P being .001 on 68 out of 72 items shows validity.

*Job Involvement Scale:* Singh (1984). The 20 items which constituted the scale related to the areas namely intrinsic motivation, attachment to work, fulfillment of organizational demand, commitment for work, internalization of organization goals, and organizational identification. The reliability of the job involvement scale computed by the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is .85. The coefficient of co-relation between the scores on the two tests is .93 (N=400). The results of the factor analysis indicate that 89% of the items had significant loading on factor-I indicating the unidimensionality of the scale. Out of the twenty items constituting the scale, 13 were true keyed and remaining 7 items were false keyed. The possible scores of each item ranged from one to four. Since the scale consists both true keyed and false keyed items, two different patterns of scoring were adopted.

### Procedure

With due permission from authorities of organizations, questionnaires and an interview schedule were administered

after establishing rapport with the subjects. For assessing over view of virtual workers, a detailed interview of 10 virtual workers as per their availability was taken by the researchers.

### Results & Discussion

The hypothesis stated that there will be significant relationship between perceived climate with job involvement among virtual workers. Table 1 shows that perceived organizational climate and job involvement is not significantly correlated. Various possible reasons can be advanced for this finding. The results are in line with researcher's observations taken during the interviews with virtual workers:

**Perceived organizational climate and job involvement is not significantly correlated.**

"I have both opinions. It is better to be in office, I think. Atleast one has some schedule; at 9 am you have to get ready and in evening at least by 8-9 you will be back home. But right now I don't have any schedule. I have to work anytime anywhere; its like 24x 7. My Efficiency decreases in home". Sector C Case IT.

"We can save time and energy by working virtually but it depends on circumstances, I have small kids and my wife is also working in a bank. So at times its convenient for me to take care of kids as I work from home but it has its distractions at times. Yes, overall I am

**Table 1 Pearson Correlation Matrix of Virtual Workers (N=100)**

	Job Invol	Per Std	Comm Flo	Rwd Sys	Resp	Conf Org Strc	Moti-Lvl	DM	SS	Warmth	Id Prob	OC	
<b>Job Invol</b>	1												
<b>Per Std</b>	.02	1											
<b>Comm Flo</b>	-.01	.46(**)	1										
<b>Rwd Sys</b>	.02	.72(**)	.52(**)	1									
<b>Resp</b>	.09	.25(*)	.36(**)	.27(**)	1								
<b>ConfReso</b>	-.02	.68(**)	.59(**)	.63(**)	.31(**)	1							
<b>Org Strc</b>	.04	.11	.14	.23(*)	.03	-.03	1						
<b>MotiLvl</b>	-.05	.41(**)	.74(**)	.50(**)	.33(**)	.47(**)	.13	1					
<b>DM</b>	.03	.47(**)	.85(**)	.60(**)	.25(**)	.63(**)	.12	.70(**)	1				
<b>SS</b>	-.00	.54(**)	.72(**)	.63(**)	.28(**)	.64(**)	.19	.54(**)	.63(**)	1			
<b>Warmth</b>	-.10	.36(**)	.56(**)	.34(**)	.53(**)	.30(**)	.14	.67(**)	.41(**)	.31(**)	1		
<b>Id Prob</b>	.04	.69(**)	.63(**)	.71(**)	.32(**)	.76(**)	.18	.53(**)	.64(**)	.77(**)	.43(**)	1	
<b>OC</b>	.00	.73(**)	.87(**)	.78(**)	.46(**)	.77(**)	.24(*)	.79(**)	.84(**)	.81(**)	.63(**)	.84(**)	1

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Job Invol: Job Involvement

Per Std: Performance Standards

Comm Flo: Communication Flow

Rwd Sys: Reward System

Resp: Responsibility

ConfReso: Conflict Resolution

Org Strc: Organization Structure

MotiLvl: Motivational Level

DM: Decision Making

SS: Support System

Warmth: Warmth

Id Prob: Identity Problem

OC: Organizational Climate

happy as I am a family man now. At this stage I am not very aggressive in work. Earlier I was”.

H Case, GM Hospitality

“I personally don’t prefer to be a virtual worker as there are so many distractions at home and in a case of any escalated mail, I cannot ask or control my team from home. My team members can work from home. I have no objections but I don’t. Job involvement is not much in comparison to my first company”.

D Case IT Sector

The integrated model theory covers the dispositional approach in which job involvement is viewed as dependent on individual personality. The influence exerted by some stable personal characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, external and internal control features, job seniority, dwelling locations, the intensity of high level work demands in terms of time and responsibility and the protestant work ethics will ensure individuals hold different work attitudes and behavior (Sekaran & Mowday, 1981). In a situational determined approach, job involvement can be viewed as the personal attitude towards the particular job.

Technology usage is also one factor which affects job involvement. Jain & Rathore (2011) investigated stress due to technology on software professionals and found continuous stress affects the person’s job involvement negatively. And virtual workers’ work is technology based only and comput-

ers or telephones are most important tool and part of environment of their work.

**Continuous stress affects the person’s job involvement negatively.**

This can be explained by the following studies where job involvement gets affected by other factors also.

When virtual distance is relatively high the following critical success factors significantly degrade:

- Job satisfaction drops off by over 80%
- Innovation falls by over 90% and competitive advantage is severely impacted.
- On time/on budget project performance suffers by over 50%
- Goal and role clarity decline by over 60% (Lojeski, 2009)

Utilizing panel data for three age groups from the 1972-73 and 1977 Quality of Employment Surveys, Lorence and Mortimer (1985) investigated the life course and found job involvement is quite volatile in the initial stages of the work career, it becomes more stable, supporting the aging stability hypothesis as workers grow older. The results of study also indicate that the potential of applying a life span developmental perspective to the study of the sources and consequences of job involvement.

Virtual work perceived organizational climate is very different from traditional organizations climate in terms of socialization. Lodahl and Kejner (1965) emphasized that during the process of socialization, certain work values are injected into the individual that remains even at the later stage in the form of attitude towards job. Mishra and Shyam (2005) conducted a study to find out the relationship of social support and job involvement in prison officers. Job involvement scale developed by Kapoor and Singh (1978) and serial support scale developed by Cohen, Mermistein, Kmatrek & Hoberman (1985) were administered on a sample of 200 prison officers. The results showed that serial support, and belonging support have significant positive relationship with job involvement. Stepwise multiple regression analysis suggests that overall serial support is a significant predictor of job involvement of prison officers. The other predictors are belonging, support, appraisal support and tangible support.

**Teams using computer mediated communication system (CMCS) could not outperform traditional (face to face) teams under otherwise comparable circumstances.**

In an exploratory study, virtual teams versus face to face teams by Warkentin, Sayeed and Hightower (1997) it was found that teams using computer mediated communication system (CMCS) could not outperform traditional (face to face) teams under otherwise comparable circumstances. Further relational links among the

team members were found to be a significant contributor to the effectiveness of information exchange. Though virtual and face to face teams exhibited similar levels of communication effectiveness, face to face team members report higher levels of satisfaction. Findings of 957 surveyed employees from four evangelical higher education institutions found a negative correlation between climate and commitment in staff members. Administrators were found to have a more favorable view of their institutional climate than staff. Employee age, tenure, and classification had predictive value for organizational climate, whereas only employee age and tenure predicted organizational commitment (Thomas, 2008).

Research studies over the past two decades, which have explored the construct of job involvement, have approached it from two different perspectives (Sekeran & Mowday, 1981). First, when viewed as an individual difference variable, job involvement is believed to occur when the possession of certain needs, values or personal characteristics predispose individuals to become more or less involved in their jobs. For instance Rabinowitz and Hall (1977) found that individual characteristics such as age, education, sex, tenure, need strength, level of control and values were linked to job involvement. The second perspective views job involvement as a response to specific work situation characteristics. In other words certain types of jobs or characteristics of the work situation influence the degree to which an individual becomes involved in his / her job. Ebrahimi & Mohamadkhani (2013) studied the rela-

tionship between organizational climate and job involvement among 125 teachers of high schools in Delijan city of Iran and found there was no significant relationship between job involvement and organizational climate dimensions of spirit, hindrance, intimacy and consideration; however, there was significant relationship between job involvement and, aloofness as well as production emphasis.

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