

*Examining the Mediator Role of Job Engagement in the
relationship between Significant Work and Organizational
Commitment of Faculty Members*

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Abstract

The main purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of significant work on organizational commitment to the mediator role of job engagement among faculty members. The type of this research was applied based on purpose and descriptive-correlational in terms of implementation technique. The population in this research was all faculty members of Islamic Azad University of Fars Province (1997 People). Using Cochran formula, 385 people were selected as the sample size. The stratified sampling method was based on the size of the population. The research data was collected by distributing questionnaires among samples. Descriptive and inferential statistics and SPSS and PLS software were used to analyze the data. The results of this study showed that significant work has a positive effect on organizational commitment and job engagement. In addition, considering the positive impact of significant work on organizational commitment in the presence of the mediator variable of job engagement, job engagement could play a role as a mediator variable in the relationship between significant work and organizational commitment.

Key Words: Significant Work, Organizational Commitment, Job Engagement, Faculty Members.

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Introduction

Organizational commitment is an important occupational and organizational perspective that it has been the favorite of many researchers in the field of organizational behavior and psychology, especially social psychology, over the past years. This attitude has undergone a change over the past three decades. Perhaps the most significant change in this domain is relates to the multidimensional attitude toward this concept. One of the hidden but influential factors on employee behavior is their commitment to the organization. Paying attention to the commitment of human resources is very important both in the public sector and in the private sector (Kthand and Strasser, 2011). There are many reasons why an organization should increase the level of organizational commitment of its members. First, organizational commitment is a new concept and is generally different from dependency and job satisfaction. Second, the efficiency and development of each organization depend largely on the proper use of human resources. As the companies and organizations grow larger, the problems of this great power are also added. One of the most important motivational issues that is nowadays expanded with an extensive volume of industrial and organizational psychology studies is the issue of organizational commitment. Experts in management science have defined organizational commitment as "an attitude or

orientation towards an organization that links a person's identity to an organization" (Mathieu and Zajak, 1990). The human resources of each organization are worthwhile sources for that organization, which can help it to achieve its goals. Specialist and loyal faculty members, consistent with values and organizational goals with a strong motive and committed to maintaining organizational membership are the essential needs of any organization. The university requires faculty members to go beyond the duties and responsibilities of their regular routine. Many societies did not have the ability to use these blessings just because of the lack of human resources, despite the abundance of natural resources. While other nations have progressed rapidly only due to the use of committed human resources despite the lack of abundant natural resources.

Job engagement of individuals can be influenced by several factors such as coherence and coordination between people, friendly and intimate relationships among faculty members, and achieving a series of values. At higher levels of people's perception, managers and administrators of an organization have positive qualities and do not differentiate between them, and have the same rights to them, which has an important role in increasing their commitment. With increasing job engagement, interactions between the various components of the organization and its structures will improve the

quality and will lead to increased customer satisfaction. Therefore, faculty members' enthusiasm and interest are one of the most important factors in the development of each university. Because exploitation and optimal utilization of faculty members' abilities and talents are the primary goals of each university, it can play a key role in achieving justice, commitment and satisfaction about faculty members. In each organization, there are several people who work and can be placed within a continuum in terms of the amount of interest and commitment that they have to carry out their occupation. Sometimes people who are not motivated and lack of job engagement in the organization enjoy the benefits that they may not deserve for reasons such as inefficiencies in management that cause injustice in the organization. On the other hand, other committed employees have set their goals as the goals of the organization and have a lot of commitment and motivation in doing their job. Nevertheless, they do not receive the attention and the benefits that deserve and fit their function.

It is expected that the time lapse and the understanding of such a meaning of work will affect the level of interest and commitment of committed people, and may even reduce it. Therefore, the development and preservation of just behaviors and the creation of a sense and perception of the meaning of work in the university and faculty members are necessary to increase the positive attitudes,

job engagement and loyalty, motivations, efforts and individual and collective performance of the faculty members. However, it should be noted that the development and planning in order to act appropriately to meet these conditions requires understanding the various dimensions of the meaning of work from the employee's point of view and how it affects job engagement and organizational commitment.

Harpaz and Fu (2002) have divided the features of work definition (significant work) from the employee's point of view on the centrality of work, legal norms, economic relations, interpersonal relationships, significant tendencies, and mandatory norms.

-The centrality of work is a degree of general importance that the work in personal life gives a person every time (Dubin et al., 1975).

-Legal norms are a series of developed normative hypotheses that shows what is expected of work and worker

-The economic tendency refers to the economic benefits obtained through work.

-Interpersonal relationships focus on human relationships with colleagues and supervisors through work.

-The significant trends express the amount of entertainment, interest, or satisfaction that makes the work attractive.

-Necessary norms are the company's expectations from the worker (Harpaz and Fu, 2002).

At the same time, the job engagement for work is one of the

other factors that affects the component of civil-organizational behavior (Hakanen et al., 2005). The job engagement is the amount of engagement and attachment (Schuffle et al., 2002), as well as the desired engagement with the job. In other words, according to Baker & Liter (2009), the job engagement is a state of job health that is positive, pleasing, and provocative. Moreover, on this basis, engaged employees have a lot of energy and are more engaged in occupations, and they are highly proficient in their profession. According to Driscoll et al. (2006), it can be effective on devotional behavior and promotion of employee's job performance, which correspond with the spirit of women's relief. However, such an incentive in the workplace requires some intrinsic qualities, and in this regard, Grant & Berg (2010) and Parker, Jimmieson & Amiot (2010) in their research found that people who are at a high level in terms of self-determination motivation, have more control and job engagement than their own job. Ferent, Gagne & Austin (2010) also showed that job engagement of self-determination is a mediator of the relationship between the quality of communication with colleagues and job burnout. Ahmad & et al (2019) in their research found that strong positive relationship between meaningful work and work engagement. Gharib Zadeh & Alizadeh (2018) in study the relationship between spirituality in the workplace and job engagement with the role of mediation in psychological

empowerment found spirituality in the workplace has a direct impact on job engagement.

The Islamic Azad University can be considered one of the most important organizations of the country. faculty members of the Islamic Azad University can play an effective role in fulfilling their special and important goals by doing their daily routines. In this regard, it is important to consider factors such as the perception of the meaning of work, organizational commitment, and job engagement, which can provide the basis for the progress of the University. Considering the occupational category of employees, one should mention organizational development factors that optimize administrative structures, reduce energy waste and time, take the correct position, and optimize the flow of information and communication (Khalkhali et al., 2008). It should also be noted that in every occupation, there are people who do not feel the attachment and commitment to their jobs and the work environment is not enjoyable for them. By the very last days of their career, they are provoking misery for themselves and others, and hurt their mission with the lack of good roles. Since the presence of committed and responsible human resources is one of the ideal goals for organizations, fairness in organizational decisions makes employees feel positive and pleasant to organization and management and work more for the growth and productivity of the organization.

So far, the issue of significant work effects has not been important to managers, because organizations are more developed than the past and pursue broader goals and in order to achieve their transcendental goals, they have to try to analyze and analyze meaningful work for the employees. The process of understanding employees from their work affects attitudes and behaviors that play a decisive role in high performances. It also provides confidence and constructive opinions. Managers can achieve the most difficult and even most strenuous goals, while benefiting from the voluntary cooperation of their employees. Failure to understand the meaning of employees from their work has many negative consequences and has a devastating effect on employee morale because it overlooks human resources and employee motivation and undermines the spirit of effort and activity in them.

From what has been mentioned, it turns out that the perception of the meaning of work and job engagement is in general a pleasant

and pleasant feeling that one can benefit them. The reports and statistics show that in our country the problem and the significant work relationship, job engagement and organizational commitment have been less expertly studied and analyzed. In the past research, it was found that most of the researches done on organizational behavior are about attitude of occupational attachment and organizational commitment, and less attention to significant work and job engagement have been addressed. In recent years, the importance of creating the significant work and feeling of commitment to the job and the organization has become more evident than before, but yet such research, despite the emphasis on them, it has not yet been established in our country. Therefore, the problem that the present study seeks to address is whether meaningful work affects organizational commitment to the mediator role of job engagement in the branches of the Islamic Azad University. Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of research.

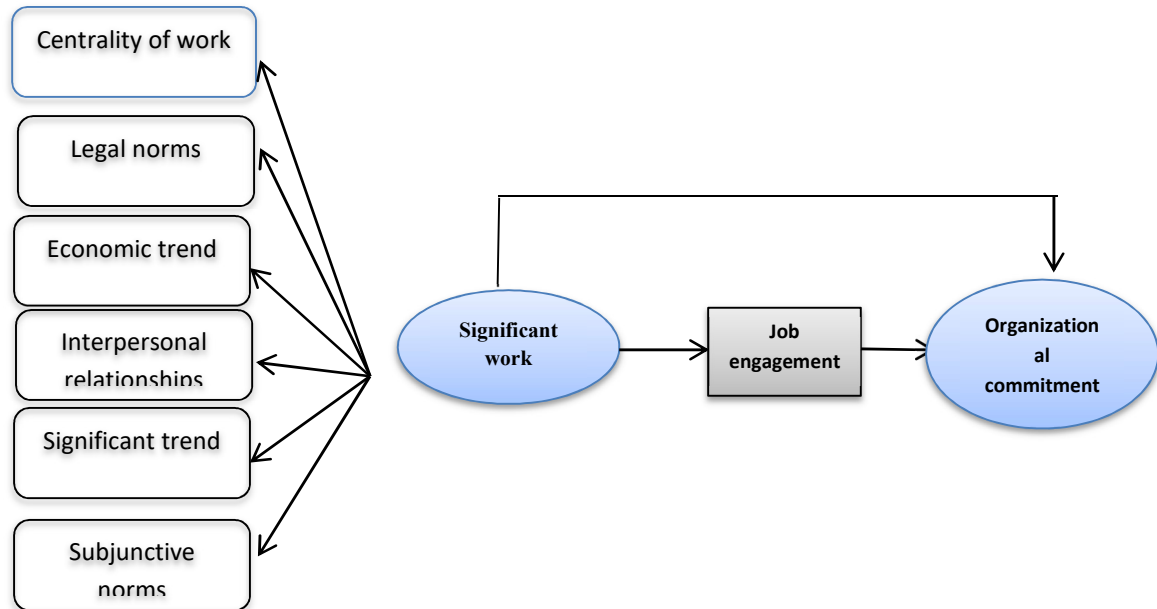


Fig1. Conceptual model of research derived from Sang and Jan (2016)

Research hypotheses

- Meaningful work has a positive impact on organizational commitment.
- Meaningful work has a positive impact on the job engagement.
- Job engagement has a positive impact on organizational commitment.
- Job engagement plays a mediating role in the relationship between meaningful work and organizational commitment.

Research method

In this research, based on the nature of the subject and the purpose of the research, descriptive-correlation research has been used. Descriptive, in this paper, the purpose of this study was to describe and analyze the opinions of Faculty members of Islamic Azad University of Fars Province, and the correlation is because of the impact of significant

work on organizational commitment with the mediator role of job engagement. The population in this research includes all Faculty members of Islamic Azad University of Fars Province. Information of this study was collected from 385 employees, administrative staffs, and professors of five large Islamic Azad University branches included Shiraz, Kazeroon, Larestan, Eghlid, and Dariyon. These university branches have been selected by cluster random sampling. University branches were divided into six different parts based on their size included major, very large, large, medium, small, and center. The respondents of our study were sorted into several groups, so that 68.6% of respondents were male and 31.4% were females. Also, about the duration of their recruitment at their organizations, 12.7% of all has

been worked for <5 years, 30.9% was worked between 5 and 9 years, 28.1% has been working for 10-14 years, 18.7% has been working for 15-19 years, and finally 2.3% of the employees has been working is that it requires a smaller number of samples and it used as a powerful way when the number of samples and the measurement is low and variable distribution is indefinite. We use Krejcie and Morgan formula to choose a sample from universities.

Measurement tool

Organizational commitment questionnaire: In this research, Meyer and Allan's organizational commitment questionnaire (1990) has been used with 24 questions that measures the dimensions of emotional commitment, continuous commitment, and normative commitment. The questionnaire was designed in the form of questions closed answer with a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree up to strongly disagree).

Job engagement: In this research, Schaufeli and Salanova 's job engagement questionnaire (2001) have been used with 17 questions that measures the dimensions of energy, dedication and absorption. The questionnaire was designed in the form of questions closed answer with a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree up to strongly disagree).

Significant work: In this research, Harpez & Fu's (2002) questionnaire with 18 questions were used that measures the dimensions of work centrality, legal norms, economic relations,

interpersonal relationships, significant tendencies and subjunctive norms. Content validity of the questionnaires was reviewed and approved by the supervisors, consultants and educational administration specialists. In addition, the construct validity of the questionnaire was calculated and validated using a confirmatory factor analysis technique. In the confirmatory factor analysis method, "the researcher already has a theoretical foundation, and its purpose is to identify a pattern from the factor that the theory has expressed. Therefore, in the confirmatory factor analysis, the researcher seeks out the factors and components that have theoretical and empirical support and when it is used, the researcher already has a theoretical framework.

In the present study, due to certain theories for construct validity, the confirmatory factor analysis method has been used. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaires. The reliability of the organizational commitment questionnaire was 0.80 and for its components, namely the emotional commitment, continuous commitment, and normative commitment was obtained 0.92, 0.91, and 0.94, respectively. Also, the reliability of the job engagement questionnaire was 0.74 and for its components, namely the energy, dedication and absorption was obtained 0.84, 0.88 and 0.88, respectively. The reliability of the questionnaire of the significant work was 0.75, and for its components, namely the

centrality of work, legal norms, significant tendencies, economic factors, interpersonal relationships, and subjunctive norms was obtained 0.82, 0.81, 0.80, 0.76, 0.73, 0.84, respectively, which indicates a high reliability of measuring instruments.

In Table 1, the statistical factor loading is calculated at the level of 1% for the components of each section of the research variables. The factor loading determines the severity of the relationship

between the hidden variable (construction) and the explicit variable (index) during the path analysis process. In confirmatory factor analysis, questions that do not have the proper adequacy to explain the variables of the model, after identification by standardized coefficients are eliminated; so that if it is greater than 0.4. the suitability of the questions is determined and confirms the fitting of the measurement model.

Table 1: Statistical factor loading at 1% level for the research component

No	Variable	Structure	Factor loading
		Centrality of work	0.800
		Legal norms	0.849
		Significant tendencies	0.812
		Economic factors	0.798
		Interpersonal relationships	0.701
		Subjunctive norms	0.799
		Emotional commitment	0.914
		Continuous commitment	0.929
		Normative commitment	0.942
		Energy	0.834
		Dedication	0.820
		Absorption	0.847

Research findings

In this stage, the effects of significant work (independent variable) on organizational commitment (dependent variable) and the mediator role of job engagement were investigated using structural equation method and PLS software in two states of T-values (in order to study the hypotheses) and standardized estimation (in order to examine the severity of the effect of variables on each other).At this stage, the relationships between variables were investigated using a structural model in the PLS method, and the

results were entered in two states of T-values and standardized estimation. Initially, to confirm the research hypotheses, the Bootstrapping command of the Smart PLS software was used to show the output of the t coefficients (Fig. 2). When T-values in the range are greater than 1.96 and less than 1.96, this means the meaningfulness of the relevant parameter and consequently the confirmation of the research hypotheses. As shown in figure (2), the coefficients of the three main variables of research are all above

1.96, which reflects the acceptance of research hypotheses.

In addition, in Fig. 3, the severity of the effect of variables on each other is determined using standardized coefficients (path coefficient). The path coefficient indicates the severity and type of

relationship between the two hidden variables. It is a number between -1 and +1 which, if equal to zero, indicates that there is no linear relationship between the two hidden variables, which indicates the correlation between the two hidden variables.

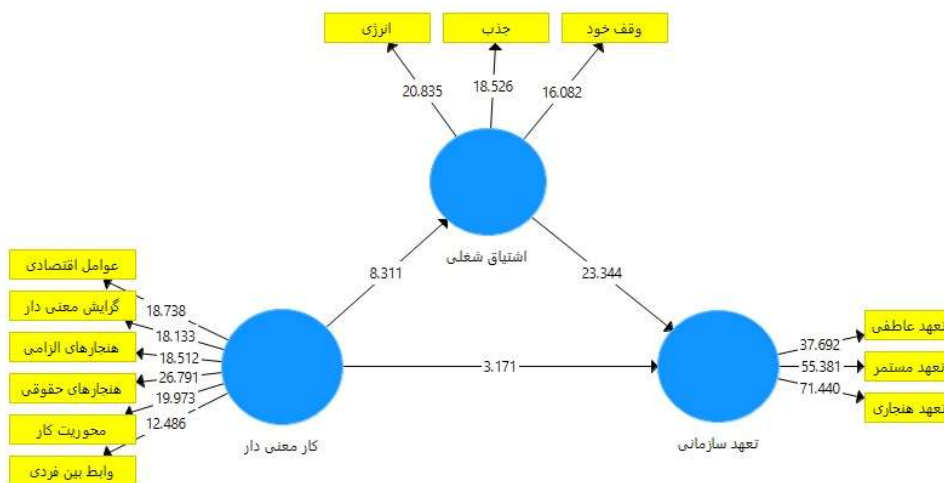


Fig 2. Investigating T-values for testing hypotheses

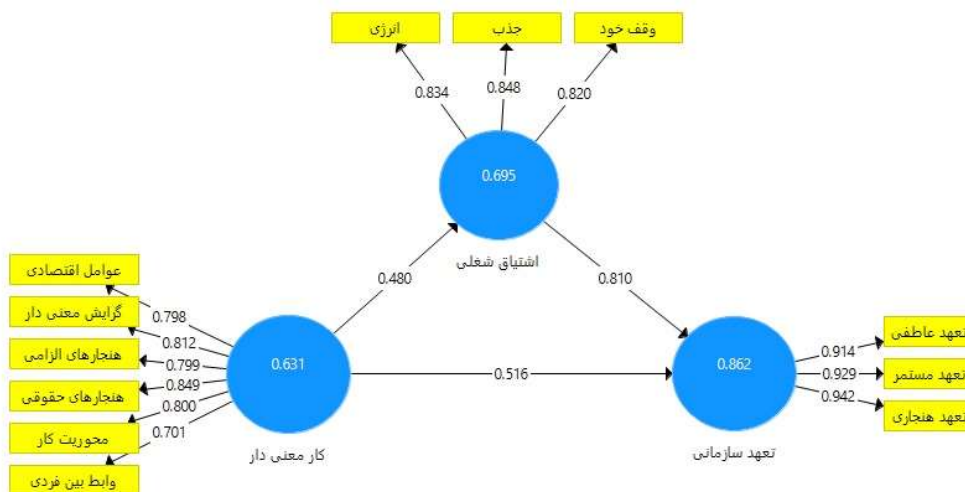


Fig 3. Investigating the severity of the effect of variables on each other with standardized coefficients Investigating research hypotheses using the results obtained from model estimation

The first hypothesis: The significant work has a positive effect on the organizational commitment.

As shown in Figures (2), (3), and Table (2), the t value obtained from the software output (3.127) in order to examine the effect of significant work on organizational commitment is more than 1.96. As a result, significant work has a positive impact on the organizational commitment. In

addition, the results of path analysis showed that the path coefficient between these two variables is equal to 1.127, which indicates that 12.7 percent of organizational commitment changes are explained by significant work. This result suggests that a unit of change in significant work changes 12.7 percent of organizational commitment.

Table 2. Path analysis to examine the first hypothesis

No	hypothesis	Path coefficient	T Statistics	P Values	Result
1	Significant work -> Organizational commitment	0.127	3.127	0.002	Acceptance of the hypothesis

Second hypothesis: The significant work has a positive effect on the job engagement.

As shown in Figures (2), (3), and Table (3), the t value obtained from the software output (8.592) in order to examine the effect of significant work on job engagement is more than 1.96. As a result, significant work has a positive impact on the job

engagement. In addition, the results of path analysis showed that the path coefficient between these two variables is equal to 0.480, which indicates that 48 percent of job engagement changes are explained by significant work. This result suggests that a unit of change in significant work changes 48 percent of job engagement.

Table 3. Path analysis to examine the second hypothesis

No	hypothesis	Path coefficient	T Statistics	P Values	Result
1	Significant work -> Job engagement	0.480	8.592	0.000	Acceptance of the hypothesis

Third hypothesis: The job engagement has a positive effect on the organizational commitment of the employees in the social security organization.

As shown in Figures (2), (3), and Table (4), the t value obtained from the software output (22.740) in order to examine the effect of job engagement on organizational commitment is more than 1.96. As a result, job engagement has a

positive impact on the organizational commitment. In addition, the results of path analysis showed that the path coefficient between these two variables is equal 0.810, which indicates that 81 percent of

organizational commitment changes are explained by job engagement. This result suggests that a unit of change in job engagement changes 81 percent of organizational commitment.

Table 4. Path analysis to examine the third hypothesis

No	hypothesis	Path coefficient	T Statistics	P Values	Result
1	Job engagement -> Organizational commitment	0.810	22.740	0.000	Acceptance of the hypothesis

Fourth hypothesis: The job engagement plays a mediator role in the relationship between significant work and organizational commitment.

As shown in Figures (2), (3), and Table (5), the t value obtained from the software output (8.195) in order to examine the mediator role in the relationship between significant work and organizational commitment is more than 1.96. As a result, job engagement has a mediator role in the relationship between significant work and organizational commitment. In addition, the results of path analysis showed that the path coefficient between these two variables is equal to 0.389, which indicates that 38.9 percent of organizational commitment

changes are explained by significant work in the presence of mediator role of job engagement. This result suggests that a unit of change in significant work changes 38.9 percent of organizational commitment in the presence of mediator role of job engagement.

As shown in Fig. 3, the overall path coefficient between two variables of significant work and organizational commitment is 0.516. This value is obtained from the sum of the direct path coefficient in Table (2) (0.127) with the indirect path coefficient in Table (5) (0.398). Therefore, it can be stated in general that 51.6 percent of organizational commitment changes are explained by the significant work.

Table 5. Path analysis to examine the fourth hypothesis

No	hypothesis	Path coefficient	T Statistics	P Values	Result
1	Significant work -> Job engagement -> Organizational commitment	0.389	8.195	0.000	Acceptance of the hypothesis

Studying the quality of the research model

In Table (6), SSO displays the sum of the squares of the observations for each hidden variable block, the SSE represents the sum of the predicted error squares for each hidden variable block, and Q^2 (1-

SSE / SSO) also shows the joint validity index. If the joint validity index of the hidden variables is positive, the measurement model has a good quality. As shown in Table (6), our model is also suitable based on this criterion that is, the positive values

Table 6. Examining the quality of the research model using the Q^2 index

No	Variable	SSO	SSE	Q^2
1	Significant work	1200	637.361	0.469
2	Job engagement	600	223.636	0.627
3	Organizational commitment	600	382.708	0.379

Discussion and conclusion

The first hypothesis: The significant work has a positive effect on the organizational commitment

As shown in Figures 2, 3, and Table 2, the first hypothesis of the research is confirmed. The significant work has a positive effect on the organizational commitment. In other words, Employees who understand more significance from their work, they show more commitment to the organization belong to that. The results obtained from the path analysis indicated that the path coefficient between these two variables is equal to .127, which indicates that 12.7 percent of the organizational commitment changes are explained by the significant work. This result suggests that a unit of change in the significant work changes 12.7 percent of organizational commitment. The findings of this study are consistent with the results of Ivtzen et al. (2013), Morin (2008), Morse and Weiss (1955).

In explaining the main results of this hypothesis, it can be argued that understanding the deeper meaning of work may help to understand individuals from the world around them and facilitate their personal development. When employees understand the meaning of their work, their pessimistic behaviors decrease and have positive effects on their job attitudes. On the other hand, organizational commitment as a dependent variable represents the force that forces one to stay in the organization and work with belonging to achieve the goals of the organization, that is, organizational commitment is associated with a series of productive behaviors. A person with a high organizational commitment stays in the organization, embraces its goals, and demonstrates a great deal of effort and even self-sacrifice to achieve those goals. Therefore, it can be said that there is also a significant increase in organizational commitment.

Second hypothesis: The significant work has a positive effect on the employee's job engagement.

As shown in Figures 2, 3, and Table 3, the second hypothesis of the research is confirmed. The significant work has a positive effect on the employee's job engagement. The results obtained from the path analysis indicated that the path coefficient between these two variables is equal to 0.480, which indicates that 48 percent of the job engagement changes are explained by the significant work. This result suggests that a unit of change in the significant work changes 48 percent of job engagement. In other words, employees who have understood the meaning of their work, have a higher job engagement, and their positive mental attitude toward work has a significant effect on job engagement. The mental value that employees make for their positive participation in their jobs, will not only make a work experience, but also improve their mental stability. The findings of this study are consistent with the results of Albrecht (2013), Chen et al. (2011), Stringer (2007), May et al. (2004). In explaining the results of this hypothesis, it can be argued that meaningful work is one of the essential aspects of spirituality at work that determines how employees interact in their daily work at the individual level. Significant job indicators include job enjoyment, energy, and job satisfaction, the relevance of one's work to what he or she thinks is important in life, the amount of

time to go to work, the feeling of being useful at work, and the concept of having Work for the person. On the other hand, job enthusiasm is defined by using all of their existence in job roles. In the passion for the job, individuals play or express all of their physical, cognitive, and emotional roles. Job enthusiasm makes employees feel energized and bold. Therefore, understanding the meaning of work increases job enthusiasm.

Third hypothesis: The job engagement has a positive effect on the organizational commitment

As shown in Figures 2, 3, and Table 4, the third hypothesis of the research is confirmed. The job engagement has a positive effect on the organizational commitment. The results obtained from the path analysis indicated that the path coefficient between these two variables is equal to 0.810, which indicates that 81 percent of the organizational commitment changes are explained by the job engagement. This result suggests that a unit of change in the job engagement changes 81 percent of organizational commitment. This hypothesis have shown that as employees have more job engagement for work, their commitment to the organization will also increase. The findings of this study are consistent with the results of Heydari et al. (2016), Kaveh and Ganji (2014). In explaining the results for this hypothesis, it can be said that the job aspiration of talented people is an emotional and intelligence

relationship that the employee has with the job, the organization, the manager, and his colleagues, which influences his double efforts in his work. On the other hand, regarding organizational commitment, organizational commitment is the tendency of the organization to survive on the part of its employees and to strive for the organization as well as to accept the values and goals of the organization. Therefore, it can be concluded that employees' job aspirations will increase their organizational commitment.

Fourth hypothesis: The job engagement plays a mediator role in the relationship between significant work and organizational commitment.

As shown in Figures 2, 3, and Table 5, the fourth hypothesis of the research is confirmed. The job engagement plays a mediator role in the relationship between significant work and organizational commitment. The results obtained from the path analysis indicated that the path coefficient between these two variables is equal to 0.389, which indicates that 38.9 percent of the organizational commitment changes are explained by the significant work in the presence of mediator variable of job engagement. This result suggests that a unit of change in significant work changes 38.9 percent of organizational commitment in the presence of mediator variable of job engagement. The findings of this study are consistent with the results of Halberg and Schaufeli (2006),

Saks (2006), Rich et al. (2010). In explaining the results of this hypothesis, it can be stated that organizations today need energetic and enthusiastic employees. Those who are passionate about their job. Generally, enthusiastic employees are fully occupied with their job and perform their job duties favorably. On the other hand, organizational commitment demonstrates the belief in and acceptance of organizational goals and values and the satisfaction of making a significant effort for the organization. In addition, passionate employees are more likely to solve job challenges and develop techniques and enhance their abilities to get a job.

According to these findings, the suggestions are as follows:

-Studying the meaning of work can be used as a tool for selecting new employees who can have significant outcomes in the performance of the organization and the appointment of employees based on their centrality of work, which is a factor affecting job commitment.

-They should be selected as trainers for new employees. These trainers then teach new employees about psychological problems and ways to deal with them.

-Employees should increase their interest through their work-related training programs. To this end, they should create conditions for a continuous reminder of the meaning of their work.

-Empowering new employees in the field of work can stimulate the potential growth and development. Interpersonal relationships and

centrality of work are also important factors affecting commitment. In a context where positive human relationships are estimated for development and growth, the meaning of the work of staff may increase. Therefore, a variety of leisure activities and staff culture plans should be created in order for employees to increase their relationships with their colleagues and supervisors.

-Advisers can be used to help employees in finding the meaning of their work and solve problems created in this work. Employee understanding of the meaning of their work can reduce undesirable effects, such as stress or depression, in their work, and can show positive attitudes or outcomes. When human resource management implements a variety of programs to help employees in finding the meaning of their work, the commitment of employees increases.

-The results of this hypothesis indicate the positive effect of job engagement in creating positive outcomes such as organizational commitment. The managers of universities should re-establish the positive outcomes of their own organizations with more emphasis on creating the engagement for employees towards their jobs. If employees feel positive about their jobs, they will be more tactful and determined in their duties, and the organization and its objectives will be prioritized and valued for them.

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