

## **“A Watched Pot Never Boils.” Exploring the Impact of Job Autonomy on Organizational Commitment among New Employees: A Comprehensive Study of How Empowerment and Independence Influence Workplace Loyalty and Engagement in Early Career Stages**

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**Abstract :** In today's highly competitive business environment, employees are considered a source of competitive advantage. Researchers have looked into job autonomy's effect on organizational commitment and declared superior organizational performance strongly depends on the effort and commitment of employees. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between job autonomy and organizational commitment from newcomer's point of view. The mediation role of employee engagement (physical, emotional, and cognitive) was also examined in the case of Ethiopian Commercial Banks. An exploratory survey research design with mixed-method approach that included partial least squares structural equation modeling and Fuzzy-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis technique were using to address the sample size of 348 new employees. In-depth interviews with purposive and convenientsampling techniques are conducted with new employees (n=43). The results confirmed that job autonomy had positive, significant direct effects on physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement (path coeffs. = 0.874, 0.931, and 0.893). The results showed that the employee engagement driver, physical engagement, had a positive significant influence on affective commitment (path coeff. = 0.187) and normative commitment (path coeff. = 0.512) but no significant effect on continuance commitment. Employee engagement partially mediates the relationship between job autonomy and organizational commitment, which means supporting the indirect effects of job autonomy on affective, continuance, and normative commitment through physical engagement. The findings of this study add new perspectives by positioning it within a complex organizational African setting and by expanding the job autonomy and organizational commitment literature, which will benefit future research. Much of the literature on job autonomy and organizational commitment has been conducted within a well-established organizational business context in Western developed countries. The findings lead to fresh information on job autonomy and organizational commitment implementation enablers that can assist in the formulation of a better policy/strategy to efficiently adopt job autonomy and organizational commitment.

**Keywords :** employee engagement, job autonomy, organizational commitment, social exchange theory

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