Job Involvement

A Summary of Workforce Research Evidence Relevant to the Child Welfare Field

What is job involvement?

Job involvement refers to an individual's psychological identification with their job (Kanungo, 1982). The preferred measure is the 10-item *Job Involvement Questionnaire*, which includes questions such as, "Most of my interests are centered around my job," "I consider my job to be very central to my existence," and "Most of my personal life goals are job oriented" (Kanungo, 1982).

Why is job involvement important?

Job involvement is important because it is associated with several important work outcomes. Specifically, it is strongly related to job satisfaction (Brown, 1996), organizational commitment, and career commitment (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005). Of the three types of organizational commitment (i.e., affective commitment—emotional attachment to the organization, normative commitment—perceived obligation to remain with the organization, and continuance commitment—perceived costs associated with leaving the organization), job involvement is most strongly related to affective and normative commitment and only modestly related to continuance commitment (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005). Job involvement is moderately associated with lower turnover intentions (Brown, 1996) and modestly associated with lower turnover (Rubenstein, Eberly, Lee, & Mitchell, 2017). It is also modestly associated with work-family conflict (Brown, 1996), such that those who are more involved with their job are more likely to experience challenges due to competing work and family demands. More specifically, the conflict is related to work roles interfering with family roles (Ford, Heinen, & Langkamer, 2007). In contrast, job involvement is not associated with job stress (Ford et al., 2007). Meta-analytic research has not found any meaningful relationships between job involvement and job performance (Brown, 1996), though it has been nearly 25 years since the last meta-analysis that looked at both, and some refinements have since been made in how job involvement is measured.

What contributes to job involvement?

Meta-analytic research on job involvement thus far has focused on assessing factors that are merely associated with job involvement, not on strategies for improving it or on examining whether improving it affects outcomes like performance and turnover. However, there are many additional factors that are associated with job involvement and seen as potential influences. These factors fall into three categories: personality, job characteristics, and supervisor behaviors.

Personality

Of the personality variables that have been researched, the strongest connections to job involvement have been found for internal motivation, work ethic endorsement, and self-esteem. People who are intrinsically (vs. extrinsically) motivated, believe in the importance of hard work, or have high self-esteem are likely to have higher job involvement (Brown, 1996).

Job Characteristics

Several job characteristics are moderately connected to job involvement. Specifically, job involvement is higher when jobs involve autonomy, feedback, complexity, interdependence with others' work, social support, tasks that have impact on others' lives, use of a variety of skills, and the opportunity to complete whole pieces of work with visible outcomes (Humphrey, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007).

Supervisor Behaviors

When supervisors allow employees to participate in decision-making around performance standards, job involvement among employees is likely to be higher (Brown, 1996). The same is true when supervisors are warm, friendly, and concerned for their employees' well-being (Brown, 1996).

QIC-WD Takeaways

► Job involvement is strongly related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and career commitment.

► Job involvement is moderately associated with lower turnover intentions and modestly associated with lower turnover.

► People with higher job involvement are somewhat more likely to experience work-family conflict.

► Job involvement is not related to job stress or job performance.

► There is little evidence as to what actually causes job involvement, but potential influences include several personality factors, job characteristics, and supervisor behaviors.

► Research is needed to develop and test strategies to improve job involvement and to test whether improving job involvement improves performance and/or reduces turnover.

► Practitioners or researchers who would like to assess job involvement should consider the 10-item *Job Involvement Questionnaire* (Kanungo, 1982).

References

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