A Comparative Study On Job Involvement And Employee Motivation Between Executive And Non-Executive Private Tea Garden Employees In The District Of Dibrugarh, Assam

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Abstract

Job involvement and employee motivation are essential components influencing individual performance and organizational success. This study investigates these constructs among executive and non-executive employees in private tea gardens located in the Dibrugarh district of Assam. Standardized instruments were employed for data collection, including the Job Involvement Scale developed by Kanungo (1982) and the Employee Motivation Scale by Srivastava (2006). The total sample comprised of 290 participants, including 75 executives (50 male and 25 female) and 215 non-executives (190 male and 25 female). Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (independent samples t-tests and ANOVA). 't'-test results revealed no statistically significant differences in job involvement and employee motivation between male and female employees within the executive and non-executive categories. However, ANOVA results indicated significant differences across the four groups—male executives, female executives, male non-executives, and female non-executives—on the dimensions of job involvement, personal growth needs, self-control and autonomy. These findings align with recent research suggesting that gender does not significantly influence job involvement or motivation within the same job category (Singh et al., 2023; Hafeez et al., 2023). Executives exhibited higher levels of job involvement and a greater inclination toward personal development (Al-Taie & Khattak, 2024; Dysvik et al., 2021; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2019), while non-executives demonstrated stronger self-regulation and emotional control (Gabriel et al., 2019; Hülsheger & Schewe, 2021). The study contributes to a nuanced understanding of workforce dynamics in the tea plantation sector and offers actionable insights for strategic human resource management and employee engagement initiatives.

Keywords: *Work Motivation, Job Involvement, Employee Commitment to the Organization, Job satisfaction*

INTRODUCTION

Tea, alongside coffee and cocoa, remains one of the most consumed non-alcoholic beverages globally, with deep historical and cultural roots across continents (FAO, 2022). Derived from the Camellia sinensis plant, tea is cultivated in various regions, producing a broad spectrum of flavors and aromas that appeal to diverse palates.The global tea market was valued at approximately USD 200 billion in 2020 and is forecast to exceed USD 318 billion by 2025 (Statista, 2023). In 2018, global production was nearly 5.8 million metric tonnes, of which around 1.8 million metric tonnes were exported. The top five producers—China, India, Kenya, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka—dominate global tea cultivation. China leads with about 40% of global output, followed by India at 23%, and Kenya (ITC, 2022).India plays a dual role as both a leading tea producer and consumer. Nearly 80% of India's tea production is consumed domestically. In 2022, northern India—mainly Assam and West Bengal—contributed approximately 83% of national production, while the southern states (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka) contributed the remaining 17% (Tea Board of India, 2023). During FY 2022–23, India produced roughly 1,365 million kilograms of tea.Assam, in particular, is the backbone of the Indian tea industry, accounting for close to 50% of the nation's tea output. The state hosts over 800 registered tea estates under the Directorate of Tea Tribes and Adivasi Welfare, Government of Assam, alongside numerous unlisted gardens. These plantations are categorized into small tea growers and large estates, both vital to the region's socio-economic fabric.India is also a major tea exporter, contributing about 10% to global tea exports. In FY 2021–22, exports were valued at USD 750.63 million. Black tea remains the most popular export, followed by green, herbal, masala, and lemon varieties. Key export destinations include Russia, Iran, the UAE, the USA, the UK, Germany, and China. In Q1 of FY 2022–23 alone, tea exports to these countries totalled USD

61.48 million (Ministry of Commerce & Industry, 2023). Overall, the sector supports the livelihood of approximately 1.2 million workers in India (ILO, 2023). Tea market plays a significant role in Indian's economy. Therefore, in this study it was decided to measure the level of job involvement and motivation between the executives and non-executive employees in the private sector tea gardens of Dibrugarh district of Assam, India.Job involvement and employee motivation are critical drivers of organizational success, particularly in labor-intensive sectors like the tea industry (Bakr & Roy, 2023; Pradhan & Chatterjee, 2022). Understanding what fosters engagement and motivation among different categories of workers—especially executives and non-executives—is crucial in ensuring operational sustainability and workforce stability.Job involvement refers to the degree to which an individual psychologically identifies with their job and considers it a central part of their self-concept (Kanungo, 1982; Zhao & Kim, 2022). Motivation, on the other hand, encompasses intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence behavior, effort, and persistence at work (Deci & Ryan, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2023).Job involvement is a fundamental factor in the lives of many individuals, influencing both their physical and psychological well-being. In modern organizations, employees are expected to be intellectually and emotionally engaged in their work environment, showing eagerness, responsibility, and innovation in their roles. At the same time, organizations must provide initial support and a conducive environment to foster this involvement. Job involvement is understood as a positive state of mind characterized by energy, dedication, and attraction to one's work. Employees with high job involvement are passionate and motivated, investing considerable effort and commitment in fulfilling their responsibilities. Research indicates that job involvement is a crucial source of job satisfaction and is positively related to intrinsic motivation, public service motivation, organizational efficiency, and commitment (Gupta & Sharma, 2023; Yong, Lee, & Kim, 2023). Moreover, job involvement has been linked to reduced absenteeism, improved organizational citizenship behavior, increased self-respect, and higher performance levels. It is also negatively correlated with exhaustion, job stress, neuroticism, and lack of commitment (Alshaikh et.al, 2024; Akinyemi et al.,2024). Highly involved employees tend to perform better in safety-related tasks and experience lower job stress, contributing to better overall well-being. Job involvement can be conceptualized as the psychological assimilation of an individual with their specific job role. This assimilation promotes greater precision, safety, and dedication in task performance, which in turn reduces physical and psychological problems (Peng et al. 2024). Therefore, understanding the factors that influence job involvement is critical for enhancing employee well-being and organizational effectiveness.Contemporary studies indicate that while demographic characteristics such as gender may still influence workplace behavior, structural and psychological variables like role clarity, leadership style, organizational support, and job autonomy are increasingly salient (Zhou & Zhang, 2021; Khan et al., 2023). In private tea gardens, where roles are hierarchical and tasks are often physically and emotionally demanding, examining differences in job involvement and motivation based on gender and designation can yield important insights. Executives typically exercise greater autonomy and decision-making power, which can enhance their sense of self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation (Mehta & Das, 2024). Non-executives, in contrast, may be more concerned with job security and emotional regulation, often operating under rigid supervision with limited agency (Rahman & Lahiri, 2022). Such dynamics may manifest in differing psychological coping strategies and levels of engagement.Human resources are widely acknowledged as the most vital assets in today's competitive, resource-constrained business environments (Bakr et al., 2023; Zhao & Liu, 2022). Psychological constructs like job involvement—the degree to which individuals identify with their work—and employee motivation, encompassing intrinsic and extrinsic drivers, are pivotal in determining productivity, organizational commitment, retention, and overall performance. This holds especially true in labor-intensive sectors like tea plantations, where sustainable workforce engagement is key to operational resilience.India's Assam region, contributing roughly 50% of the country's tea output, is characterized by rigid hierarchical structures, a workforce composed of both executives (supervisory/managerial roles) and non-executives (operational/manual roles), and a significant representation of tea-tribe communities—a multi-ethnic group with deep colonial roots (Kar, 2016; Behal, 2006; Duara, 2016). These demographics, combined with historically paternalistic management and fluctuating labor protections, make examining motivational dynamics within the region particularly crucial (Behal, 2006; Duara, 2016)..

How to improve Job involvement in the organization:

Empowering employees to make decisions and take ownership of their work tasks enhances engagement, accountability, and confidence. Research shows that autonomy is a critical job characteristic that positively affects intrinsic motivation and involvement (Deci et al., 2020; Humphrey et al., 2023). Autonomy encourages employees to internalize their goals, leading to greater psychological commitment to their roles. Offering structured training,

mentoring, and growth pathways significantly contributes to job involvement. When employees perceive opportunities for advancement and skill development, their emotional connection to the organization strengthens (Saks, 2021). Career development also fosters a sense of purpose and long-term goal alignment. Recognition programs, when implemented fairly and transparently, reinforce desired behaviors and build a sense of achievement. Acknowledgment through promotions, awards, or verbal appreciation improves job satisfaction and engagement (Anitha & Begum, 2020; Kim & Beehr, 2021). Transparent recognition reduces perceptions of bias and strengthens the psychological contract between employees and the organization. Matching employees with roles that align with their individual strengths, interests, and long-term aspirations enhances motivation and task ownership. Role alignment increases intrinsic satisfaction and drives proactive behavior at work (Schaufeli, 2022). Employees who find meaning in their work demonstrate higher levels of organizational commitment and reduced turnover intention Contemporary research has reaffirmed this linkage in light of evolving work environments. Jyoti et al. (2021) noted that job involvement serves as a key mechanism to foster employee engagement and long-term commitment, particularly in the context of knowledge-based industries. Alshaabani et al. (2023) demonstrated that higher job involvement leads to increased organizational resilience, mediated by stronger affective commitment. Likewise, Gupta and Sharma (2024) highlighted that job involvement improves retention and performance outcomes by enhancing employees' psychological ownership and alignment with the organization's mission. In hybrid and post-pandemic workplaces, Pathak and Batra (2022) observed that job-involved employees were more adaptable and loyal, contributing to both individual performance and organizational cohesion. Recent findings by Narmatha and Amutha (2023) also show that job involvement positively predicts organizational commitment among banking sector employees in India

The multidimensional nature of job involvement encompasses emotional attachment, task significance, and alignment of personal values with job roles. Contemporary research supports the view that job-involved individuals display stronger commitment and are less likely to disengage or seek alternative employment (Alshaabani et al., 2023; Gupta & Sharma, 2024). Job involvement is understood as a positive state of mind characterized by energy, dedication, and attraction to one's work. Recent studies highlight multiple beneficial effects of job involvement. First, job involvement enhances intrinsic motivation and positive emotional experiences, contributing to job satisfaction and well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2020). Second, it is associated with better health outcomes, reducing burnout and psychological distress, particularly in high-stress settings like healthcare (Zhou et al., 2021). Third, job involvement has been found to buffer the negative impacts of work-related stress, helping employees maintain engagement and productivity (Yousef, 2020). Lastly, consistent evidence confirms a positive correlation between job involvement and organizational commitment, underscoring its role in improving retention and reducing turnover (Alshaabani et al., 2023; Sethi & Mittal, 2023). Pathak and Batra (2022) emphasize that job involvement enhances resilience and adaptability in hybrid work settings. Sethi and Mittal (2023) argue that job involvement contributes to a positive organizational climate, leading to innovation, collaboration, and higher job performance. Moreover, Al-Zu'bi et al. (2021) show that job involvement significantly mitigates burnout by promoting psychological well-being and purpose at work. The positive effects of job involvement continue to be widely documented. Peng et al. (2024) demonstrated that job involvement enhances innovative behavior, particularly when mediated by work-related flow experiences. Akinyemi et al. (2024) found that job involvement is a strong predictor of job satisfaction and is associated with reduced turnover intentions in public sector organizations. Similarly, Alshaikh et al. (2024) confirmed that job involvement serves as a precursor to organizational commitment, supporting earlier research which established that involvement leads to commitment rather than the reverse (Scrima et al., 2014). The positive effects of job involvement continue to be widely documented. Peng et al. (2024) demonstrated that job involvement enhances innovative behavior, particularly when mediated by work-related flow experiences. Akinyemi et al. (2024) found that job involvement is a strong predictor of job satisfaction and is associated with reduced turnover intentions in public sector organizations. Similarly, Alshaikh et al. (2024) confirmed that job involvement serves as a precursor to organizational commitment, supporting earlier research which established that involvement leads to commitment rather than the reverse (Scrima et al., 2014).

Recent research has identified several consistent predictors: In a study by Yong et al. (2023), grit was found to significantly influence job involvement and employability among Chinese employees, highlighting perseverance as a core motivational driver. Alshaikh et al. (2024) found a strong positive correlation between Perceived Organizational Support and job involvement among healthcare workers, confirming that supportive environments enhance identification with one's job. According to Gupta and Sharma (2023), enriching job design (e.g., autonomy, task

significance) contributes to higher job involvement through increased intrinsic motivation. Motivation in organizational settings is multifaceted. It is influenced by internal needs, cognitive evaluations, job design, and both workplace and off-the-job experiences. Effective motivational strategies must thus integrate a holistic understanding of employees' psychological and situational contexts. Employees with high job involvement are passionate and motivated, investing considerable effort and commitment in fulfilling their responsibilities. Research indicates that job involvement is a crucial source of job satisfaction and is positively related to intrinsic motivation, public service motivation, organizational efficiency, and commitment (Gupta & Sharma, 2023; Yong et al., 2023). Motivation remains a central but elusive concept in Industrial and Organizational (I/O) Psychology, as it cannot be observed directly but must be inferred from behavior or measured through validated psychological tools (Latham, 2021). It is widely recognized as a dynamic force that energizes, directs, and sustains goal-oriented behavior in the workplace (Pinder, 2019). Over time, theories of work motivation have evolved from simplistic economic models to more complex psychological frameworks.Organizations aiming to maintain a motivated and productive workforce must pay close attention to fostering job involvement and commitment. Employees who are willing to exert extra effort are generally seen as highly involved, whereas those lacking such motivation may appear disengaged. Ultimately, job involvement centers on a person's internal job motivation and their psychological investment in their work (Blau & Boal, 1987), McElroy et al., 1995; Hackett et al., 2001; Arulsenthilkumar & Punitha, 2024).Recent literature classifies motivational theories into three major categories:

1.Need-based theories, such as Maslow's Hierarchy and Alderfer's ERG Theory, continue to inform contemporary models. These frameworks emphasize that employees are motivated by unmet needs ranging from physiological to self-fulfillment (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

2.Cognitive process theories argue that motivation is a rational calculation involving expectancy, equity, and goal setting. For instance, Vroom's Expectancy Theory posits that individuals are motivated when they believe that their effort will lead to performance and subsequent rewards. Recent studies reinforce the relevance of expectancy and equity models in explaining employee engagement and performance outcomes (Kanfer et al.; Van den Broeck et al., 2021).

3.Job design theories, including Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and the Job Characteristics Model (JCM), focus on how work structure influences motivation. Contemporary research affirms that enriched job characteristics—such as autonomy, task identity, and feedback—are significantly correlated with intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction (Humphrey et al.2023; Hackman & Oldham, 2022).

In addition to theoretical frameworks, environmental factors such as perceived managerial fairness, quality of supervision, and working conditions profoundly affect motivation. These elements shape employee attitudes and psychological states that contribute to motivational patterns (Colquitt et al., 2021). Moreover, experiences from non-work domains—such as family life, social identity, and emotional well-being—also interplay with work-related motivation (Greenhaus & Powell, 2022). Sharma (2022) found that job involvement significantly predicts organizational commitment across banking and financial sectors in South Asia. Similarly, Nair and Thomas (2023) identified that intrinsic motivation, job alignment, and leadership support enhance both constructs among millennial employees in Indian fintech companies. Aleinein (2016) describes job involvement as the satisfaction of cognitive and emotional needs through work, which in turn motivates greater performance. Newer research confirms this idea. For instance, Bhatia & Tyagi (2023) found that job involvement mediates the relationship between meaningful work and employee well-being in knowledge-based industries. Similarly, Iqbal & Dhir (2024) reported that job involvement enhances innovation and collaboration in tech-driven firms by promoting psychological ownership.

Objectives of the Study:

The present study aims to investigate the following:

1. To examine gender-based differences in job involvement and employee motivation among executives in private tea gardens of Dibrugarh district, Assam.
2. To assess gender-based differences in job involvement and employee motivation among non-executives in private tea gardens of Dibrugarh district, Assam.
3. To determine whether significant differences exist among four groups—male executives, female executives, male non-executives, and female non-executives—in terms of job involvement and employee motivation within private tea gardens in Dibrugarh district, Assam.

Hypotheses
Based on the above objectives, the following null hypotheses were proposed:
- $H_0 1$: There is no significant difference in job involvement and employee motivation between male and female executives.
- $H_0 2$: There is no significant difference in job involvement and employee motivation between male and female non-executives.
- $H_0 3$: There is no significant difference among the four groups (male executives, female executives, male non-executives, female non-executives) with regard to job involvement and employee motivation.

METHODS OF STUDY
The study site in Dibrugarh offers a unique socio-economic backdrop where generations of workers have been engaged in the tea plantations, creating deeply embedded cultural patterns. This context makes the findings relevant not only from a managerial or human resource development perspective but also for understanding job involvement and employee motivation in a semi-industrial, rural setting in India.
Sample
A total of 290 respondents were included in the study, comprising 75 executives (50 male and 25 female) and 215 non-executives (190 male and 25 female). The respondents were selected using a random sampling technique to help assure a representative sample of the population. The age of the respondents ranged from 22 to 56 years. Employees with less than five years of work experience were excluded from the study in order to enable a more accurate assessment of their motivational profiles and workplace behaviors.
Tools Used for Data Collection
Two different questionnaires were used for data collection:
Job Involvement Scale (Kanungo, 1982).
Job involvement refers to an individual's psychological identification with their job (Kanungo, 1982). Kanungo's scale has demonstrated a high level of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.81), indicating strong reliability and construct validity. The questionnaire assesses the degree to which individuals perceive their jobs as a central and significant aspect of their lives and identities. The Job Involvement Scale comprises 10 items, rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This scale measures the extent to which an individual's personal life goals are intertwined with their employment, the central role their job plays in their overall existence, and their psychological identification with their work.
Employee Motivation Scale (Srivastava, 1988).
The Employee Motivation Scale, developed by Srivastava (1988), was used to assess the motivation level of tea garden employees. This questionnaire comprises 70 items designed to measure various motivational needs as they manifest in the workplace and influence employees' attitudes and behaviors toward their work. The scale utilizes a 4-point Likert format, ranging from 1 (Never) to 4 (Always). The questionnaire assesses seven key dimensions of employee motivation: the need for personal growth, the need for achievement, the need for self-control, the need for monetary gains, the need for non-financial rewards, the need for social affiliation, and the need for autonomy and self-actualization. Higher scores indicate greater motivational drive and a more positive motivational profile among employees.
Analyses of the Data
The data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26). Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to aid in the interpretation of the results. Descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations, were used to summarize the main characteristics of the respondents and their scores on the respective scales. Inferential statistics, including Student's t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), were subsequently performed to identify significant differences and relationships within the data. The results of the t-test are presented in Table 1 and Table 2, while the ANOVA results are displayed in Table 3.

Table-1 Significance of the mean differences between private Executive male and female in the tea garden in the district Dibrugarh district of Assam on Job involvement and Employee motivation

Name of the variables	Private Tea Garden Male	SD	Private Tea Garden	SD	't' value	Level of Significance

	Executive (N=50)		Female Executive (N=25)			
Job involvement	34.22	1.34	34.00	.845	97	NS
Need for person	34.28	1.59	34.27	1.58	29	NS
Need for Achievement	33.28	2.29	32.60	2.87	48	NS
Need for Self-Control	27.46	5.21	27.87	3.19	86	NS
Need for monetary	34.58	1.39	34.93	3.42	94	NS
Need for non-financial	34.56	.43	34.47	2.42	87	NS
Need for Social	32.92	1.55	33.07	2.46	78	NS
Need for Autonomy	33.14	1.88	33.08	2.60	18	NS

NS-Not Significant, *P<.05 ** P<.01

Table-2 Table-1 Significance of the mean differences between non-Executive male and   female in the tea garden in the district Dibrugarh district of Assam on Job   involvement and Employee motivation

Name of the variables	Private Tea Garden Male Non-Executive (N=50)	SD	Private Tea garden female Non Executive (N=25)	SD	't' value	Level of Significance
Job involvement	30.60	3.45	32.68	1.49	.597	NS
Need for person	32.19	2.79	32.44	1.83	.029	NS
Need for Achievement	33.28	2.29	32.60	2.87	.948	NS
Need for Self-Control	27.46	5.21	27.87	3.18	.286	NS
Need for monetary	34.58	1.39	34.93	3.41	.594	NS
Need for non-financial	34.56	1.43	34.47	2.42	.187	NS
Need for Social	32.92	1.54	33.07	2.46	.278	NS
Need for Autonomy	33.14	1.88	33.06	2.60	.218	NS

NS-Not Significant, *P<.05 ** P<.01

Table-3 presents the result of ANOVA   among private Executive and non-Executive male and female employees in the tea garden in the district Dibrugarh district of Assam on Job involvement and. Employee motivation

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ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
work involvement	Between Groups	306.61	3	102.20	12.46	.000***
	Within Groups	2264.30	276	8.20		
	Total	2570.91	279			
Need for person	Between Groups	211.83	3	70.61	11.42	.000***
	Within Groups	1706.97	276	6.19		
	Total	1918.80	279			
Need for Achievement	Between Groups	21.20	3	7.07	1.13	.336
	Within Groups	1721.99	276	6.24		
	Total	1743.20	279			
Need for Self Control	Between Groups	405.33	3	135.11	11.71	.000***
	Within Groups	3185.58	276	11.54		
	Total	3590.91	279			
Need for Monetary	Between Groups	27.74	3	9.25	1.67	.174
	Within Groups	1529.05	276	5.54		
	Total	1556.79	279			
Need for non-financial	Between Groups	33.87	3	11.29	2.45	.064
	Within Groups	1272.90	276	4.61		

Need for social	Total	1306.77	279			
	Between Groups	3.96	3	1.32	.12	.946
	Within Groups	2951.81	276	10.70		
	Total	2955.77	279			
Need for autonomy	Between Groups	139.06	3	46.35	5.08	.002**
	Within Groups	2520.02	276	9.13		
	Total	2659.09	279			

NS-Not Significant, *P<.05 ** P<.01 ***P<.001

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Table 1 indicates that there is no significant difference between male and female executives in the private tea gardens of Dibrugarh district, Assam. This indicates that both groups view their job engagement and Employee motivation. Table 2 also shows no significant difference between male and female non-executives. This indicates that non-executive employees, regardless of gender, exhibit similar levels of job involvement and Employee motivation. Table- 3, derived from ANOVA, indicates significant differences among the four groups—male executives, female executives, male non-executives, and female non-executives—regarding work involvement, need for personal growth, need for self-control, and need for autonomy.

Data from Tables 1 and 2 indicate that executives, regardless of gender, demonstrate higher mean values compared to non-executives, suggesting enhanced job engagement and a greater inclination towards personal development. Non-executives exhibit elevated scores in the dimension of self-control. This may be due to the characteristics of employment in private-sector tea gardens, where job security is frequently uncertain. In these environments, non-executives may be required to regulate their emotions and behavior more rigorously, as any lapse in control could lead to job termination. Emotional restraint is thus an essential coping strategy in the context of job uncertainty.

Results (Table-1 & Table-2) indicate no significant gender difference in job involvement and employee motivation among both executive and non-executive employees in private tea gardens. Hypotheses 1 and 2 are accepted based on the statistical analysis This aligns with multiple studies: This finding is consistent with several recent studies indicating that gender is not a consistent predictor of work engagement or intrinsic motivation, particularly when employees perform similar roles within a comparable organizational context. Nair and Joseph (2022) found that gender did not significantly impact employee engagement levels in Indian manufacturing firms, where job roles and expectations were similar across genders. Similarly, Khan et al. (2023) in a study on Pakistani private-sector employees concluded that motivational factors and job involvement were more influenced by job autonomy and role clarity than by gender differences. Zhou and Zhang (2021) also emphasized that organizational culture, leadership support, and personal values matter more than demographic factors like gender in predicting work motivation. Cohen (2006) in Human Relations noted that gender alone does not significantly predict organizational commitment, especially in similar job contexts and cultures. The influence of job roles, expectations, and organizational support are stronger predictors. A study conducted by Chaudhary & Bhaskar (2016) found no significant gender difference in job involvement among Indian service sector employees, citing similar job expectations and organizational climates as equalizing factors. Singh et al. (2023) investigated gender's impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the manufacturing sector and found no significant differences between men and women. Similarly, Hafeez et al. (2023) studied university teachers in Pakistan and reported no significant difference in organizational commitment across genders, despite differences in emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. These findings reinforce the idea that in structured environments like tea estates, where tasks are standardized, job engagement is governed more by job design and less by gender.The ANOVA results from Table 3 indicate significant differences among male/female executives and male/female non-executives in terms of Job involvement, Need for personal growth, Need for self-control, and need for autonomy. Hypothesis 3 is partially accepted. Executive employees (both male and female) showed higher mean scores for job involvement and a stronger need for personal growth. This is supported by Bakr et al. (2023), who found that managerial employees in Indian service sectors demonstrated higher intrinsic motivation and self-driven learning needs due to exposure to leadership roles and decision-making autonomy. Zhao & Liu (2022) explained through Self-Determination Theory that higher-level employees often engage more deeply with their work because they experience greater autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Additionally, Nguyen et al. (2021) showed that growth-oriented individuals are often placed in higher-responsibility roles, which reinforces a cycle of involvement and development.

Hackman & Oldham's Job Characteristics Model (1976) proposes that higher-level jobs (like those held by executives) have greater autonomy, task identity, and skill variety, which leads to higher job involvement and motivation. Deci & Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (2000) suggests that people in roles with more autonomy (often executives) are more driven by intrinsic motivations, including the need for personal growth.Non-Executives show higher scores on self-control. The elevated self-control scores among non-executives could be attributed to job insecurity and the need for emotional labor, particularly in low-autonomy roles. According to Mehta & Chopra (2023), Indian low-income service workers often report higher self-regulation as a coping mechanism due to precarious job conditions and high supervisor surveillance. Rahman and Das (2022) explored emotional regulation in Indian industrial settings and found that lower-tier workers use more surface acting and emotional suppression, leading to increased perceived self-control. Hochwarter et al. (2007) noted that in less autonomous, high-demand roles (common among non-executives), employees develop greater self-regulation skills as a coping mechanism. Brotheridge & Lee (2003) discussed the concept of emotional labor, especially in private sector jobs, where employees must regulate their emotions (e.g., show patience, suppress frustration). Non-executives in high-pressure jobs may practice more surface acting, which requires greater self-control. Grandey (2000) also indicated that lower-status roles require more emotional regulation, leading to increased levels of perceived self-control, especially in private-sector roles with job insecurity. These findings indicate that while executives are driven by self-growth and involvement, non-executives adapt by honing emotional regulation and restraint—often out of necessity, not preference.

Executives and non-executives differed significantly on need for autonomy.

Geng et al. (2023) found that autonomous motivation mediates the link between self-leadership and proactive job crafting, highlighting how autonomy-driven internal motivation fosters adaptive work behaviors. Meng et al. (2023) used a daily-diary design with nurses and showed that daily autonomy support increases perceived meaningfulness, which boosts work engagement. Gürbüz et al. (2024) found that when HR practices promote autonomy, the positive effect on creativity via work engagement is amplified—autonomy acts as a boundary enhancer. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) identifies autonomy as a foundational psychological need essential for fostering intrinsic motivation, meaningful work, and psychological engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

CONCLUSION:

Gender is not a significant differentiator in job involvement or organizational commitment among similar-level employees (Cohen, 2006; Chaudhary & Bhaskar, 2016). Executives show higher job involvement and need for personal growth due to job enrichment and autonomy (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Non-executives display higher self-control, likely because of job insecurity and emotional labor demands (Grandey, 2000; Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). Organizations aiming to enhance job involvement may adopt multi-level, strategic interventions. Empowering employees to make decisions and take initiative fosters accountability and emotional connection to work (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Choudhury & Ghosh, 2023). Open dialogue, feedback mechanisms, and inclusive decision-making increase trust and participation (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Jyoti et al., 2021). Continuous learning opportunities improve employee capabilities and foster commitment (Noe, 2010; Kundu & Tripathy, 2022). Regular acknowledgment through tangible and intangible rewards boosts morale and deepens involvement (Kahn, 1990; Sharma & Bhatnagar, 2023). Initiatives like flexible hours, wellness programs, and remote work options help balance life demands, enhancing job involvement (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Pathak & Batra, 2022). A culture of inclusivity, collaboration, and mutual respect enhances emotional security and social belonging—both vital to job involvement. Inclusive leadership and psychological safety enable employees to bring their full selves to work, which boosts engagement and performance (Javed et al., 2022; Shore et al., 2021). Gürbüz et al. (2024) found that when HR practices promote autonomy, the positive effect on creativity via work engagement is amplified—autonomy acts as a boundary enhancer. Chang et al. (2021) demonstrated that job autonomy positively affects job crafting, which in turn strengthens career commitment, grounding this in Self-Determination Theory (SDT). By implementing these strategies, organizations can foster a workforce that is not only productive but also emotionally and cognitively invested in its success.

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