

# Work Motivation and Organizational Commitment of Private Higher Education Institution Employees as Mediated by Their Work Engagement

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**Abstract:** *This quantitative, non-experimental study aims to determine employees' work motivation and organizational commitment in private higher education institutions (HEI), with work engagement as a mediating variable. A random sampling technique was employed to select 854 permanent employees as respondents, utilizing a correlational approach. Data were collected through a structured and validated face-to-face questionnaire, ensuring a high response rate. The instrument was designed to measure work motivation, organizational commitment, and work engagement. Partial mediation analysis was conducted to evaluate the role of work engagement in the relationship between work motivation and organizational commitment. The findings reveal that employees in private HEIs in General Santos City exhibit high levels of work motivation, influenced by factors such as motivators, work culture, nature of work, and self-sacrifice. Organizational commitment is also high, characterized by strong affective, normative, and continuance commitment.*

*Similarly, work engagement, defined by vigor, dedication, and absorption, is high. The mediation analysis revealed that work engagement partially mediates the relationship between work motivation and organizational commitment. It suggests that while work motivation directly influences organizational commitment, it also has an indirect influence through the mediating role of work engagement. These findings underscore the importance of enhancing work engagement as a strategic approach to strengthening motivation and commitment among HEI employees.*

**Keywords:** business management, work motivation, organizational commitment, work engagement, private HEIs, decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), mediation, Philippines

## I. INTRODUCTION

The pandemic era brought significant challenges to work engagement, with studies highlighting its decline across various sectors, including education. For instance, research conducted during the early months of remote work revealed a notable drop in engagement levels (Mäkikangas et al., 2022). In higher education institutions (HEIs), global reports emphasize growing job insecurity due to precarious employment contracts (Chang & Liu, 2019). In the Philippines, employees in private HEIs face additional hurdles such as low salaries and inadequate benefits, leading to demotivation and weakened organizational commitment (Lopez, 2020). While much research has explored these issues in public HEIs or corporate contexts, limited studies address the unique organizational dynamics of private HEIs. This study fills this gap by examining the interplay between work motivation, organizational commitment, and work engagement in private HEIs in General Santos City.

Work engagement is a critical factor for organizational success, particularly during periods of economic instability. A committed and engaged workforce not only enhances productivity but also ensures organizational resilience. Grounded in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Demerouti et al., 2001), this study investigates how work motivation, shaped by factors such as workplace culture and self-sacrifice, impacts organizational commitment, with work engagement serving as a mediating variable. Previous research underscores the strong correlation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Harter et al., 2002), yet few studies explore the mediating effects of engagement within this relationship.

This study aims to assess the levels of work motivation, organizational commitment, and work engagement among private HEI employees and evaluate the significance of the mediation effect of work engagement. By focusing on these dynamics, the research provides actionable insights for HEIs to design targeted strategies that enhance employee satisfaction and organizational outcomes. The subsequent sections outline the research methodology, present the findings, and offer recommendations for fostering a motivated and committed workforce.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional design incorporating correlation, association techniques, and path analysis. The correlational approach assessed the linear relationships among the variables: work motivation, work engagement, and organizational commitment. Path analysis was used to evaluate the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between work motivation and organizational commitment, ensuring a thorough understanding of direct and indirect effects.

### 2.2 Research Respondents

The study included 854 permanent employees from six private higher education institutions (HEIs) in General Santos City. These respondents were selected using a random sampling technique to ensure representativeness. The sample size was calculated using the Raosoft sample size calculator with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level. Only permanent employees as of December 31, 2022, were included to ensure work commitment was well-established.

The breakdown of respondents per institution is as follows:

Institution	Population	Sample
HEI 1	285	164
HEI 2	527	294
HEI 3	145	106
HEI 4	197	131
HEI 5	79	66
HEI 6	122	93

### 2.3 Materials and Instrument

Data were collected using a structured, standardized survey questionnaire, validated by a panel of experts and pilot-tested with 30 permanent employees. The instrument consisted of three sections:

1. **Work Engagement:** Measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003), which assessed vigor, dedication, and absorption.
2. **Work Motivation:** Evaluated with a scale adapted from Lohmann et al. (2017), including motivators, workplace culture, nature of work, and self-sacrifice.
3. **Organizational Commitment:** Assessed using Meyer, Allen, and Smith's (1993) scale, examining affective, normative, and continuance commitment.

The questionnaire items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Very Low" to "Very High." Cronbach's alpha values for the three variables indicated high reliability (work engagement: 0.983, work motivation: 0.932, organizational commitment: 0.898).

### 2.4 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process involved securing permissions from the participating institutions through formal letters endorsed by the research adviser and approved by the Dean of the University of Mindanao-Professional Schools. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents, ensuring their participation was voluntary. The researcher personally distributed and collected the questionnaires, achieving a high response rate exceeding 95%.

### 2.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze the data:

- **Mean:** To measure levels of work motivation, work engagement, and organizational commitment.
- **Pearson r:** To assess the relationships among the variables.
- **Path Analysis:** To examine the mediating effect of work engagement in the relationship between work motivation and organizational commitment.

All data were handled ethically, with anonymity and confidentiality ensured. Results were stored securely and deleted after six months in compliance with data privacy laws.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for work motivation, organizational commitment, and work engagement were calculated to assess the central tendency and dispersion of the data. The mean scores for work motivation, organizational commitment, and work engagement indicated that participants generally had high levels of motivation and commitment, as well as high engagement in their roles. The mean scores were as follows

- **Work Motivation:**  $M = 4.16, SD = 0.39$
- **Organizational Commitment:**  $M = 3.81, SD = 0.54$
- **Work Engagement:**  $M = 3.79, SD = 0.73$

These scores suggest that the majority of employees from private HEIs in General Santos City are highly motivated, committed, and engaged in their work.

#### 3.2 Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationships between work motivation, organizational commitment, and work engagement. The results indicated significant positive correlations between all three variables:

- **Work Motivation and Work Engagement:**  $r = 0.605, p < 0.05$
- **Work Motivation and Organizational Commitment:**  $r = 0.547, p < 0.05$
- **Work Engagement and Organizational Commitment:**  $r = 0.691, p < 0.05$

These correlations indicate that higher levels of work motivation are associated with increased work engagement and organizational commitment. Similarly, higher work engagement also correlates with stronger organizational commitment.

#### 3.3 Path Analysis

Path analysis was conducted to examine the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between work motivation and organizational commitment. The results revealed that work engagement partially mediates this relationship, with a significant indirect effect. Specifically, the direct path from work motivation to organizational commitment was strong ( $\beta = 0.3989, p < 0.001$ ), while the indirect path through work engagement was also significant ( $\beta = 0.2507, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.1742, 0.3452]$ ). These findings indicate that work motivation not only has a direct influence on organizational commitment but also exerts an additional effect through increased work engagement. This underscores the critical role of work engagement as an intermediary mechanism, suggesting that organizations aiming to enhance commitment should prioritize strategies that foster both motivation and engagement among employees.

#### 3.4 Discussion

The findings of this study confirm the significant role of work motivation in influencing organizational commitment and work engagement in private HEIs. The strong positive correlation between work motivation and work engagement suggests that motivated employees are more likely to be engaged in their work, which in turn enhances their commitment to the organization. These results align with previous research that highlights the positive effects of motivation on engagement and commitment [Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Harter et al., 2002].

Furthermore, the significant mediating effect of work engagement provides valuable insight into how work motivation translates into organizational commitment. Work engagement serves as a critical pathway through which motivation influences commitment. This finding supports the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model [Demerouti et al., 2001], which posits that engagement acts as a mediator between job resources (such as motivation) and positive organizational outcomes (such as commitment).

These findings also suggest that enhancing work motivation in private HEIs could lead to higher levels of engagement and, consequently, stronger organizational commitment. Institutions may consider strategies that focus on improving workplace culture, recognizing employee contributions, and fostering a sense of purpose among employees to enhance their motivation and engagement.

In addition, the relatively high levels of work motivation, engagement, and commitment observed in the study suggest that employees in private HEIs in General Santos City are, overall, satisfied with their work environment. However, as the study's limitations point out, these findings may not be generalizable to public HEIs or other regions, suggesting a need for future research to explore these variables in different contexts.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the interplay between work motivation, organizational commitment, and work engagement among employees of private higher education institutions (HEIs) in General Santos City. Using a correlational approach and mediation analysis, it was found that work motivation positively influences organizational commitment both directly and indirectly through work engagement. The findings underscore the importance of enhancing motivational factors such as workplace culture and self-sacrifice to foster higher levels of employee commitment and engagement.

##### Advantages:

The study contributes to the limited body of knowledge focusing on private HEIs, providing unique insights into the dynamics of motivation, engagement, and commitment within this context. By utilizing a validated methodology and robust statistical tools, the research ensures the reliability of its conclusions. Furthermore, the practical recommendations derived from the findings can directly aid HEI administrators in implementing strategies that align employee motivation with organizational goals.

##### Limitations:

Despite its strengths, the study has some limitations. The research is geographically restricted to private HEIs in General Santos City, limiting the generalizability of its findings to other regions or types of institutions. Additionally, as a cross-sectional study, it captures relationships at a single point in time, preventing causal conclusions. Future research might explore longitudinal designs or include public HEIs for broader applicability.

##### Possible Applications:

The insights from this study can guide human resource management practices in private HEIs. For example, institutions can develop targeted programs to enhance workplace culture, recognize employee contributions, and align job tasks with individual motivators. Beyond HEIs, the study's findings are applicable to other sectors where employee engagement and commitment are critical, such as healthcare, corporate organizations, or government institutions.

In summary, this research highlights the critical role of work engagement as a mediating factor between motivation and commitment, offering actionable strategies for fostering a productive, motivated workforce. Future studies can expand on this work by exploring additional variables such as leadership styles, organizational justice, or job satisfaction to gain a more comprehensive understanding of employee behavior.

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