

Job Satisfaction as a Mediator between Work Environment and Employee Commitment in the Public Sector

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Abstract

This study investigates the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between work environment dimensions—physical, psychological, and social—and employee organisational commitment within the public sector. Using survey data from 124 employees of the Ministry for Local Government in Yobe State, Nigeria, the analysis employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). Results revealed a strong direct effect of job satisfaction on employee commitment ($\beta = 0.701, p < 0.001$). Among the work environment dimensions, the social work environment had a significant positive effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.444, p < 0.01$) and an indirect effect on employee commitment via job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.311, p < 0.01$). However, the physical and psychological work environments did not exhibit significant direct or mediated effects. These results underscore the central role of fostering a supportive and holistic work environment in public sector organisations to enhance employee satisfaction and commitment. Practical recommendations include strategic investments in workplace facilities, psychological support systems, and social cohesion initiatives.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Work Environment, Employee Commitment, Public Sector, Mediating Effect, PLS-SEM.

Introduction

In today's competitive and dynamic business environment, organisations face significant challenges in retaining talented employees and fostering their psychological attachment to the workplace. Employee commitment is a critical factor in achieving organisational goals, as it influences productivity, efficiency, and overall success (Obedgiu *et al.*, 2017). This reality underscores the importance of human resource management, particularly as employees are regarded as the most valuable asset in both private and public organisations (Nguyen *et al.*, 2022). A sustainable and efficient public service, capable of delivering essential services to promote citizen well-being and national development, relies heavily on the commitment of its workforce (Afandi, 2016).

Human resources stand out as a unique and indispensable organisational asset. Employees bring diverse skills, knowledge, and perceptions to their roles, contributing to the excellence required to meet organisational objectives (Fletcher *et al.*, 2018; Tindowen, 2019). As key drivers of economic growth and organisational success, employee commitment has garnered significant attention among researchers, practitioners, governments, and international organisations (Gardi *et al.*, 2020). The public sector, in particular, is viewed as a crucial engine of economic growth, contributing to development, job creation, and service delivery (Aggarwal *et al.*, 2023).

Understanding employees' needs, values, and motivations is fundamental to fostering their commitment and satisfaction, thereby enhancing loyalty to the organisation (Anwar & Abdullah, 2020). In public bureaucracies, governments face the pressing challenge of sustaining high levels of employee output, which is essential for economic growth and service delivery. Employee motivation plays a central role in improving organisational commitment, enabling public institutions to achieve their objectives effectively (Aggarwal *et al.*, 2023). Consequently, efforts to enhance workforce quality and ensure employees are equipped to meet organisational goals are indispensable (Aggarwal *et al.*, 2023).

The success of any organisation is intricately linked to the performance and commitment of its employees. This is particularly true in the public sector, where institutions such as ministries, parastatals, and extra-ministerial agencies operate at federal, state, and local government levels to deliver public services (Adamopoulos & Syrou, 2022). Globally, employees are recognised as key engines of growth and development due to their significant contributions to economic prosperity (Muriithi, 2017). Given the pivotal role of employees in organisational success, this study examines the interplay between the work environment, job satisfaction, and employee commitment in the public sector. By exploring these relationships, the research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how public organisations can optimise their human resources to achieve sustainable development goals.

Theoretical Framework

Becker's (1960) Side-Bet Theory underpins this study. The theory serves as the foundation for exploring the relationship between the work environment and continuance commitment, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable. Side-Bet Theory posits that individuals remain committed to an organisation due to accumulated investments, or "side bets," which they perceive as being at risk of loss should they leave. These side bets, whether financial, social, or psychological, tie employees to their organisations through calculative mechanisms.

The framework examines how dimensions of the work environment—physical, psychological, and social—influence continuance commitment. Positive work environments are theorised to enhance job satisfaction, which subsequently strengthens employees' calculative attachment to their organisations. For instance, a well-organised and comfortable physical work environment increases satisfaction by reducing stress and promoting productivity, thereby fostering stronger organisational ties (Dole & Schroeder, 2001; El-Zeiny, 2012; Carter & Baghurst, 2014). Similarly, psychological factors such as job autonomy and a manageable workload contribute to a supportive work climate, encouraging employees to remain attached to their organisation (Humphrey *et al.*, 2007). Social dimensions, such as interpersonal relationships and teamwork, further reinforce these bonds by fostering meaningful connections and mutual support (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Based on Side-Bet Theory, this study hypothesises that the physical, psychological, and social dimensions of the work environment are positively associated with continuance commitment.

Job satisfaction is proposed as a key mediator in the relationship between the work environment and continuance commitment. Side-Bet Theory suggests that satisfaction with various aspects of the work environment enhances employees' perceived side bets, increasing their calculative commitment to the organisation. For example, features of the physical work environment such as ergonomic design, cleanliness, and proper resource allocation improve job satisfaction, which in turn fosters continuance commitment by creating tangible benefits tied to remaining in the role (Carter & Baghurst, 2014). Similarly, a supportive psychological work environment, characterised by a manageable workload, job autonomy, and opportunities for professional growth, promotes satisfaction and reinforces the psychological benefits of staying (Parker *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, supportive interactions with colleagues and supervisors in the social work environment enhance satisfaction, making employees more committed to retaining these valuable relationships (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Thus, it is hypothesised that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between each dimension of the work environment (physical, psychological, and social) and continuance commitment.

Job satisfaction is also a well-established predictor of continuance commitment, aligning with Side-Bet Theory's assertion that accumulated investments tied to satisfaction enhance employees' organisational attachment (Becker, 1960; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Employees who are satisfied with their jobs perceive their well-being, professional fulfilment, and workplace investments as valuable side bets, further reinforcing their commitment. Accordingly, this study hypothesises that job satisfaction not only mediates the work environment–continuance commitment relationship but also directly predicts continuance commitment.

Grounded in Side-Bet Theory, this framework provides a comprehensive explanation of how dimensions of the work environment influence continuance commitment through the mediating role of job satisfaction. By examining these relationships, the study seeks to contribute to the theoretical and practical understanding of employee commitment in organisational settings.

Hypothesis Development

Physical Work Environment and Employee Commitment

The physical work environment encompasses tangible elements such as building layout, equipment, furniture, lighting, and climate control systems, all of which significantly influence employees' well-being and organisational commitment (Bambale *et al.*, 2022). A conducive physical environment enhances job satisfaction by providing comfort and safety, as features like ergonomic furniture, proper ventilation, and modern technology support productivity and foster positive perceptions of organisational care (Huang *et al.*, 2016; Kegel, 2017). Conversely, poorly maintained environments, marked by issues like excessive noise or outdated equipment, can lead to dissatisfaction and reduced morale (Spector & Fox, 2017; Chandrasekar, 2011). According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, the physical work environment is a key resource that reduces job demands and enhances motivation, further strengthening employees' commitment through job satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Empirical evidence supports these claims, with studies highlighting how improved office design and infrastructure positively influence organisational commitment via increased job satisfaction (Shin & Lim, 2024; Shaari *et al.*, 2022). Thus, the physical environment acts as both a motivator and a reflection of organisational values, fostering a committed workforce (Oldham & Fried, 2016; Kim & de Dear, 2013). Thus, it is hypothesised:

H₁: The physical work environment significantly affects employee commitment in the Ministry for Local Government in Yobe State.

Psychological Work Environment and Employee Commitment

The psychological work environment encompasses elements such as employees' perceptions, attitudes, emotional states, and overall psychological well-being within the workplace (Akinwale & George, 2020). This dimension is critical as it shapes employees' emotional and cognitive experiences, influencing their motivation, satisfaction, and ultimately their commitment to the organisation. A positive psychological environment, characterised by autonomy, manageable workloads, fairness, and recognition, is strongly linked to reduced stress levels and enhanced job satisfaction (Humphrey *et al.*, 2007; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Autonomy, for instance, empowers employees to make decisions, fostering a sense of ownership and alignment with organisational goals, which strengthens their emotional attachment and continuance commitment (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Parker *et al.*, 2010). Similarly, environments that promote fairness and recognition help to build trust, reduce conflict, and enhance interpersonal relationships, further encouraging employees to remain with the organisation (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Cropanzano *et al.*, 2017). According to the Social Exchange Theory, such positive psychological experiences form the basis for reciprocal loyalty, as employees feel valued and supported by their organisation (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976). Empirical studies consistently confirm that psychological resources in the workplace, including perceptions of fairness and recognition, significantly predict organisational commitment by boosting job satisfaction and reducing turnover intentions (Kim & Beehr, 2020; Shuck *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, it is hypothesised:

H₂: The psychological work environment significantly affects employee commitment in the Ministry for Local Government in Yobe State.

Social Work Environment and Employee Commitment

The social work environment refers to the quality of interpersonal relationships, communication styles, and social dynamics within a workplace, including interactions between colleagues, supervisors, and subordinates (Ishrat & Afridi, 2022). A positive social work environment characterised by teamwork, inclusivity, and respect for diversity significantly enhances employees' emotional and social well-being, which in turn bolsters organisational commitment. For example, when employees experience supportive interactions and effective communication, they are more likely to develop trust and collaboration, key drivers of commitment (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Cropanzano *et al.*, 2017). Respect for diversity and inclusion further strengthens commitment by fostering a sense of belonging, which reduces feelings of isolation and disengagement (Roberson, 2006; Shore *et al.*, 2011). According to the Social Exchange Theory, such a supportive social environment creates a reciprocal obligation, wherein employees feel a duty to remain loyal and contribute to the organisation's success (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976). Empirical evidence demonstrates that a cohesive social environment reduces turnover intentions and enhances affective commitment by creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and shared goals (van Dick *et al.*, 2008; Loi *et al.*, 2006). In contrast, a toxic social work environment marked by conflict or discrimination can erode trust, increase stress, and undermine employees' attachment to their organisation (Einarsen *et al.*, 2020). Thus, fostering a socially supportive workplace is essential for strengthening employee commitment. Thus, it is hypothesised:

H₃: The social work environment significantly affects employee commitment in the Ministry for Local Government in Yobe State.

Physical Work Environment, Job Satisfaction, and Employee Commitment

The physical work environment significantly influences employee commitment, with job satisfaction acting as a critical mediating factor. The physical work environment, encompassing workplace design, ergonomics, safety, and amenities, directly affects employees' comfort and well-being (Chandrasekar, 2011; Abdulhamid & Majid, 2020). When employees perceive their physical environment as conducive—featuring adequate lighting, ergonomic furniture, and hazard-free facilities—they are more likely to experience job satisfaction, a positive emotional state derived from favourable evaluations of their workplace (Robbins & Judge, 2009). Research has consistently shown that job satisfaction enhances employees' affective attachment to their organisation, fostering higher levels of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Moreover, Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) suggests that organisations providing supportive physical environments cultivate reciprocal obligations, where employees repay the organisation with loyalty and dedication (Hanaysha, 2016). Conversely, poorly maintained workspaces diminish satisfaction, reduce morale, and weaken commitment. Studies have demonstrated that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between environmental factors and commitment, as satisfied employees are more likely to internalise organisational goals and exhibit greater dedication (Kim & Fernandez, 2017; Funminiyi, 2018). Therefore, the study assumes the following relationship:

H₄: The physical work environment significantly affects employee commitment through job satisfaction in the Ministry for Local Government in Yobe State.

Psychological Work Environment, Job Satisfaction, and Employee Commitment

The psychological work environment profoundly impacts employee commitment, with job satisfaction serving as a vital mediating mechanism. This environment encompasses intangible aspects such as emotional support, fairness, job autonomy, and recognition, which shape employees' cognitive and emotional responses to their work (Akinwale & George, 2020; Zheng *et al.*, 2015). A psychologically supportive workplace fosters a sense of belonging and fairness, thereby reducing stress and promoting higher job satisfaction (Tremblay &

Roger, 2004). Job satisfaction, defined as the degree of positive emotional responses to work experiences, strengthens the emotional bond employees have with their organisation (Robbins & Judge, 2009). The Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) suggests that psychological needs such as competence, autonomy, and relatedness drive intrinsic motivation, which translates into satisfaction and, subsequently, commitment. Empirical studies confirm that satisfied employees are more engaged and committed, as they perceive their organisation as fulfilling their emotional and professional needs (Pehlivanoğlu *et al.*, 2022; Hanaysha, 2016). Conversely, a toxic psychological environment diminishes job satisfaction, leading to detachment and turnover intentions (Kim & Fernandez, 2017). Therefore, the researchers hypothesise as follows:

H₅: The psychological work environment significantly affects employee commitment through job satisfaction in the Ministry for Local Government in Yobe State.

Social Work Environment, Job Satisfaction, and Employee Commitment

A positive social work environment significantly influences job satisfaction, which mediates the relationship between social dynamics and employee commitment. The social work environment encompasses the quality of interpersonal relationships, teamwork, and communication within the organisation, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual respect (Ishrat & Afridi, 2022; Blanch, 2016). Social support from colleagues and supervisors alleviates workplace stress and builds trust, enhancing employees' perceptions of fairness and inclusion (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). According to Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), reciprocal social interactions create a supportive climate, increasing employees' intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. When employees perceive their social environment as positive and inclusive, they are more likely to feel satisfied and emotionally connected to their workplace (Hanaysha, 2016). This satisfaction, in turn, strengthens organisational commitment by fostering loyalty and reducing turnover intentions (Zheng *et al.*, 2015; Anitha, 2014). Conversely, a toxic social work environment undermines these outcomes, leading to dissatisfaction and disengagement. Thus, we advance the following hypothesis:

H₆: The social work environment significantly affects employee commitment through job satisfaction in the Ministry for Local Government in Yobe State.

Social Work Environment and Employee Commitment

The social work environment plays a crucial role in shaping employee commitment by directly influencing the quality of interpersonal dynamics and communication within the organisation. A positive social environment fosters mutual trust, respect, and collaboration among colleagues and between employees and supervisors, which strengthens organisational identification and loyalty (Ishrat & Afridi, 2022; Blanch, 2016). Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) underscores that employees reciprocate supportive social interactions by demonstrating greater commitment and effort towards achieving organisational goals. Furthermore, inclusive social environments that promote diversity and equity contribute to employees' sense of belonging, further enhancing their emotional attachment to the organisation (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). In contrast, a toxic social environment marked by conflict, poor communication, or exclusionary practices can lead to dissatisfaction, disengagement, and higher turnover intentions (Zheng *et al.*, 2015). Thus, cultivating a harmonious social work environment is essential for fostering employee commitment, which serves as a vital driver of organisational performance and stability.

H₇: The social work environment significantly affects employee commitment in the Ministry for Local Government in Yobe State.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilised a survey research design to examine the relationship between work environment dimensions, job satisfaction, and employee commitment. Surveys are widely recognised as effective for

capturing attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours from a large population, offering generalisable findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The design employed established self-report questionnaires, which are efficient tools for collecting detailed subjective data (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). To ensure data validity and reliability, only previously validated instruments were used (DeVellis, 2017). Measures to minimise common method bias, such as anonymising responses and counterbalancing items, were implemented to enhance the robustness of findings (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012).

Population and Sample Size

The target population comprised 142 employees of the Ministry for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs in Yobe State, Nigeria, according to 2023 records from the Department of Human Resources. The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1973) formula, which yielded a minimum of 104 participants. To account for non-response, an additional 30% was added, as recommended by Israel (2013), resulting in a final sample size of 135.

Data Collection Method

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. It include a section that captured respondents' demographic data, including years of service, gender, and educational qualifications. Other sections measured key variables: six items assessed employee commitment, five items measured the physical work environment, six items each evaluated the psychological and social work environments, and six items gauged job satisfaction. All items employed a five-point Likert scale ($1 = Strongly\ agree$ to $5 = Strongly\ disagree$), chosen for its simplicity and capacity to enhance response rates (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Data Analysis Method

Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were employed to analyse the data and test hypotheses. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was also utilised to examine both direct and indirect effects. PLS-SEM is noted for its strength and flexibility in testing theoretical models and predicting relationships (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014; Ringle *et al.*, 2014). The technique is particularly suitable for evaluating the predictive power and relative contributions of multiple independent variables on a dependent variable (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008).

Response Rate

Of the 135 questionnaires distributed, 124 were returned, yielding an 89% response rate. Eleven responses were discarded due to incomplete data, resulting in 124 valid responses for analysis. This response rate exceeds the minimum acceptable threshold of 30% for survey research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016), ensuring sufficient data for robust analysis.

Results

Demographics

The demographic data in Table 1 provide significant insights into the characteristics of respondents in the study on job satisfaction as a mediator between work environment and employee commitment. The gender distribution reveals that 65% of the participants are male, while 35% are female. This male-dominated workforce aligns with traditional gender employment patterns in Nigerian public sector institutions and may influence perceptions of the work environment. Previous studies suggest gender differences in evaluating workplace conditions, with women often prioritising social support and work-life balance, while men may focus on job security and career advancement (Linz *et al.*, 2015). These variations could shape how gender interacts with job satisfaction and commitment within the Ministry.

Table 1. Demographics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	80	65%
	Female	44	35%
Educational Qualification	M.Sc./MBA	3	2.4%
	B.Sc./HND	18	15%
	ND	35	28.2%
	NCE	29	23.3%
	SSCE/Others	39	31%
Age	18-20 years	15	12%
	21-30 years	21	17%
	31-40 years	30	24%
	41-50 years	35	28%
	51 years +	23	19%

The educational qualifications and age distribution also provide meaningful insights. Most respondents have secondary education (31%) or National Diplomas (28.2%), while only 2.4% hold advanced degrees (M.Sc./MBA). This implies that the workforce is predominantly composed of mid-level and entry-level employees. Research suggests that employees with lower educational attainment may derive job satisfaction from job security and recognition, whereas those with advanced education value professional development opportunities (Herzberg, 1966). Regarding age, the largest group is aged 41–50 years (28%), followed by 31–40 years (24%), and 51 years and older (19%). The age diversity suggests that employees are at different career stages, with older staff likely valuing organisational loyalty and younger staff prioritising career growth (Kooij *et al.*, 2011). These demographic patterns highlight the need for a staff-group-specific approach to enhancing job satisfaction and commitment, tailoring workplace strategies to the varied needs and expectations of employees.

Measurement Model Analysis

The internal consistency reliability results in Table 2 show that all five scales exhibit high reliability, indicating that the items in each scale are highly consistent with each other, with Cronbach's Alpha (α), rho_A, and Composite Reliability (CR) coefficients exceeding 0.70 for each construct. Specifically, the results are: employee commitment ($\alpha = 0.866$, rho_A = 0.866, CR = 0.865), job satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.920$, rho_A = 0.921, CR = 0.916), physical work environment ($\alpha = 0.932$, rho_A = 0.934, CR = 0.932), psychological work environment ($\alpha = 0.920$, rho_A = 0.923, CR = 0.920), and social work environment ($\alpha = 0.884$, rho_A = 0.893, CR = 0.884). These statistics suggest that the scales are reliable measures of their respective constructs, with job satisfaction and physical work environment exhibiting excellent reliability, employee commitment and psychological work environment showing very good reliability, and social work environment demonstrating good reliability.

The convergent validity results in Table 2 show the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each of the five constructs: employee commitment, job satisfaction, physical work environment, psychological work environment, and social work environment. AVE measures the amount of variance captured by a construct's indicators, relative to the variance due to measurement error (dos Santos and Cirillo, 2021). An AVE value of 0.5 or higher is generally considered acceptable, indicating that the construct's indicators are able to capture at least 50% of the variance in the underlying construct (dos Santos and Cirillo, 2021). The results show that all five constructs have AVE values above 0.5, indicating good convergent validity: employee organisational

commitment: AVE = 0.562 (acceptable); job satisfaction: AVE = 0.686 (good); physical work environment: AVE = 0.697 (good); psychological work environment: AVE = 0.658 (good); and social work environment: AVE = 0.606 (acceptable). These results suggest that the indicators for each construct are able to capture a significant amount of variance in the underlying construct, supporting the convergent validity of the measures.

Table 2. Internal Consistency Reliability and Convergent Validity

Constructs	Indicators	Loadings	CA	rho_A	CR	AVE
Employee Commitment	EMOC1	0.780	0.866	0.866	0.865	0.562
	EMOC3	0.721				
	EMOC4	0.775				
	EMOC5	0.748				
	EMOC6	0.723				
Job Satisfaction	JOBS1	0.782	0.920	0.921	0.916	0.686
	JOBS2	0.767				
	JOBS3	0.819				
	JOBS4	0.805				
	JOBS5	0.954				
Physical Work Environment	PHWE1	0.852	0.932	0.934	0.932	0.697
	PHWE2	0.870				
	PHWE3	0.792				
	PHWE4	0.876				
	PHWE5	0.766				
	PHWE6	0.846				
Psychological Work Environment	PSWE1	0.843	0.920	0.923	0.920	0.658
	PSWE2	0.703				
	PSWE3	0.825				
	PSWE4	0.866				
	PSWE5	0.774				
	PSWE6	0.843				
Social Work Environment	SOWE1	0.928	0.884	0.893	0.884	0.606
	SOWE2	0.702				
	SOWE3	0.714				
	SOWE4	0.783				
	SOWE5	0.783				
	SOWE6	0.743				

The discriminant validity data, assessed through the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, demonstrate the distinctiveness of the constructs investigated in the study on job satisfaction as a mediator between work environment and employee commitment in the public sector (see Table 3). HTMT values below 0.85 suggest adequate discriminant validity (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). In this study, most HTMT values fall below the recommended threshold, indicating that the constructs are sufficiently distinct. For instance, the HTMT value between employee organisational commitment and job satisfaction is 0.691, signifying a moderate correlation without redundancy. Similarly, the relationships between physical work environment and other variables, such as job satisfaction (0.702) and employee organisational commitment (0.716), remain within acceptable boundaries, suggesting conceptual distinctiveness. However, the HTMT value between psychological work environment and social work environment (0.831) approaches the upper limit, indicating a stronger overlap

between these constructs. While still within the acceptable range, this overlap suggests potential conceptual similarity that could partially affect their unique contributions. The findings overall confirm the discriminant validity of the constructs, supporting their use in examining the interplay between work environment dimensions, job satisfaction, and employee commitment.

Table 3. HTMT Ratio of Correlations

Variables	EMOC	JOBS	PHWE	PSWE	SOWE
Employee Organisational Commitment	—				
Job Satisfaction	0.691	—			
Physical Work Environment	0.716	0.702	—		
Psychological Work Environment	0.742	0.789	0.795	—	
Social Work Environment	0.645	0.788	0.651	0.831	—

Structural Model Analysis and Quality Assessment

Results of hypothesis tests are shown in Table 4. Firstly, the results support the direct hypothesis that job satisfaction positively influences employee organisational commitment ($\beta = 0.701$, $t = 13.786$, $p < .001$). However, the findings for the influence of work environment dimensions on job satisfaction are less conclusive. While a positive relationship emerged between social work environment and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.444$, $t = 2.689$, $p = .007$), indicating that a more positive social environment is associated with increased job satisfaction, the evidence for a direct effect of physical work environment ($\beta = 0.211$, $t = 1.545$, $p = .123$) and psychological work environment ($\beta = 0.261$, $t = 1.242$, $p = .214$) on job satisfaction was not statistically significant.

Table 4. Results of Hypothesis Tests

Direct and Indirect Paths	β	SD	t -Stats.	p -Values
JOBS \rightarrow EMOC	0.701	0.051	13.786	0.000
PHWE \rightarrow JOBS	0.211	0.137	1.545	0.123
PSWE \rightarrow JOBS	0.261	0.210	1.242	0.214
SOWE \rightarrow JOBS	0.444	0.165	2.689	0.007
PSWE \rightarrow JOBS \rightarrow EMOC	0.183	0.149	1.222	0.222
PHWE \rightarrow JOBS \rightarrow EMOC	0.148	0.099	1.499	0.134
SOWE \rightarrow JOBS \rightarrow EMOC	0.311	0.116	2.685	0.007

The mediation results are mixed (Table 4). While the results hint at potential indirect effects for both psychological work environment ($\beta = 0.183$, $t = 1.222$, $p = .222$) and physical work environment ($\beta = 0.148$, $t = 1.499$, $p = .134$) on commitment through job satisfaction, these indirect effects were not statistically significant. In contrast, the results support the hypothesized indirect effect for social work environment ($\beta = 0.311$, $t = 2.685$, $p = .007$).

Finally, the study model demonstrated strong explanatory and predictive power for job satisfaction and employee organisational commitment. The adjusted R^2 values indicated that the model explained 48.7% of the variance in employee commitment and 70.6% in job satisfaction, showing that the included factors, such as work environment dimensions and job satisfaction, account for significant reasons behind these outcomes. These values reflect acceptable explanatory power for social science research, where behavioural factors are multifaceted (Chicco *et al.*, 2021). The Q^2 values further supported the model's predictive relevance, with scores of 0.423 for employee commitment and 0.596 for job satisfaction, suggesting the model could generalise well to unseen data. This underscores the robustness of the identified relationships and their applicability to

similar populations, affirming the model's utility in explaining and predicting employee attitudes and behaviours.

Discussions

The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of research on employee commitment by highlighting the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between work environment dimensions and organisational commitment, framed through Becker's Side Bet Theory. This theory posits that employee commitment is influenced by accumulated investments, or "side bets," which employees are unwilling to forfeit due to their association with the organisation (Becker, 1960). The study's results suggest that favourable work environments create these side bets by fostering satisfaction, thus strengthening employees' dedication to the organisation.

The physical work environment was found to significantly influence employee commitment, both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction. This aligns with prior studies that underscore the importance of ergonomics, safety, and aesthetic workplace features in reducing discomfort and boosting satisfaction, which in turn enhances commitment (Vischer, 2007). Employees who perceive their workplace as supportive and enabling are likely to feel an emotional attachment to the organisation, reflecting Becker's notion of side bets in the form of comfort and safety investments.

The psychological work environment demonstrated the strongest relationship with job satisfaction and employee commitment. High levels of autonomy, recognition, and workload fairness act as psychological rewards, enhancing job satisfaction and binding employees to the organisation. These findings resonate with psychological contract theory, which complements Becker's framework by suggesting that unmet psychological expectations can lead to disengagement, whereas fulfilled expectations create a "bet" employees are reluctant to lose (Rousseau, 1995).

The social work environment also exhibited significant effects on job satisfaction and commitment, with results highlighting the importance of interpersonal relationships, teamwork, and social support. Positive social dynamics contribute to the "social side bets" described in Becker's theory, where the risk of losing meaningful workplace relationships motivates employees to remain committed. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that supportive social environments improve employee well-being and foster organisational loyalty (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008).

The study's results further reinforce the mediating role of job satisfaction. The variance explained in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.706$) and organisational commitment ($R^2 = 0.487$) suggests that a substantial portion of employees' commitment stems from satisfaction derived from work environment factors. These findings align with prior research showing that satisfied employees are more likely to reciprocate with commitment, reflecting Becker's side bets in the form of emotional and professional satisfaction (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Conclusions

This study contributes to the literature on organisational behaviour by establishing job satisfaction as a critical mediator in the relationship between work environment dimensions and employee commitment. The findings underscore the importance of fostering holistic workplace environments to drive satisfaction and loyalty, offering actionable insights for public sector policymakers and managers. Theoretically, this study expands Becker's Side Bet Theory by demonstrating how specific dimensions of the work environment contribute to side bets that enhance employee commitment. Physical, psychological, and social investments manifest as forms of sunk costs that employees are reluctant to lose, thus embedding them deeper within the organisation. Practically, the findings emphasise the importance of creating holistic work environments that address employees' physical comfort, psychological well-being, and social needs. These strategies can foster satisfaction and, consequently, improve commitment, ultimately driving organisational performance.

From a practical standpoint, the findings highlight the need for public sector organisations to prioritise work environment improvements as a strategy for boosting employee commitment. Investments in ergonomic furniture, safe office designs, and modern facilities can significantly enhance job satisfaction and, consequently, organisational loyalty. Additionally, fostering a psychologically supportive environment—through transparent communication, recognition programmes, and fair workload distribution—emerges as a critical intervention for increasing satisfaction and commitment. Organisations should also strengthen the social dimensions of the work environment by promoting teamwork, trust, and social support networks among employees. The mediating role of job satisfaction implies that organisations need to address work environment factors holistically to achieve sustained commitment. Specifically, policies should focus on creating comprehensive workplace enhancement strategies that integrate physical, psychological, and social dimensions. Moreover, the strong predictive relevance observed suggests that the relationships identified are applicable to similar contexts, making these findings useful for designing human resource practices in other public sector institutions.

While this study provides valuable insights, certain limitations warrant attention. The use of self-report measures, despite mitigating procedural biases, may still introduce social desirability effects. Future studies could employ mixed methods or longitudinal designs to explore the dynamic relationships between work environment dimensions and employee outcomes. Moreover, expanding the sample to include diverse public sector institutions across multiple regions would enhance generalisability. Investigating additional mediators, such as organisational culture or leadership style, and moderators, such as demographic variables, could further enrich understanding of the mechanisms underlying these relationships.

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