

Decoding the Power of Employee Competencies in Shaping Organizational Commitment in India's IT Industry

Ashlin Maria Joseph¹ and Dr. Tessy Thomas²

¹Research Scholar, PG Department of Commerce and Research Centre, Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakara, Ernakulam- 682021

²Assistant Professor, PG Department of Commerce and Research Centre, Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakara, Ernakulam- 682021

Abstract

This research aims to explore the competencies required for IT professionals in Kerala and assess their impact on organizational commitment. A quantitative and descriptive approach was used, with 525 participants selected through purposive sampling. Structured questionnaires yielded 410 usable responses. Reliability and validity were verified using “confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling” via “SPSS and SmartPLS 4”. The findings indicated that individual, team-based, and communicative abilities did not significantly influence organizational commitment. However, social competence emerged as a critical determinant. Social competence positively influences commitment, highlighting the importance of interpersonal skills and social interactions in fostering IT workforce dedication. These results highlight the importance for a nuanced understanding of how various competencies affect organizational commitment. While technical and individual competencies are vital for job performance, their direct influence on commitment is less significant compared to social competencies. Thus, organizations should prioritize not just technical expertise but also the enhancement of social and interpersonal competencies to cultivate a committed and cohesive workforce.

Keywords: Communication Competence, IT Professionals, Organizational Commitment, Self-Competence, Social Competence, Team Competence

1. Introduction

Human resources management has shifted to a strategic approach, emphasizing the importance of human resources in achieving organizational success and competitive advantage (B. E. Becker & Huselid, 2006). This evolution is particularly notable in the knowledge-based IT sector, where companies prioritize human resources over technology and infrastructure (Rao & Varghese, 2009). Indian software companies face challenges such as talent scarcity, employee turnover, and the need for skill development. Consequently, organizations invest in fostering high-performance work cultures, creating appealing workplaces, and offering training and career opportunities. These efforts aim to establish a dynamic environment that promotes continuous learning and the application of the latest technological advancements (Garavan et al., 2002). The IT industry, with an anticipated revenue of \$283 billion for the fiscal year 2025 and a growth rate of 5.1%, significantly contributes to the country's economic development, reflecting an increase of over \$14 billion from the previous year (NASSCOM, 2025).

Hiring competent employees and enhancing their skills to meet job requirements are vital for sustainable growth and performance in the Indian IT industry (Salman et al., 2020). A new cohort with technological proficiency, adaptability, and comprehensive operational competencies is essential for delivering exceptional products and services and building customer trust (Mishra & Singhal, 2022). Organizations focus on skill enhancement to address the shortage of skilled human resources and ensure efficient operations (Uraon, 2018). Committed employees tend to stay with the organization, maximize their efforts, and align with its principles and objectives (Dixit & Bhati, 2012; Arifin et al., 2019). Trust and support from the organization are critical, as low employee commitment can adversely affect both individual and organizational performance (Zen et al., 2024). Consequently, Indian IT companies treat attrition and employee commitment as business issues rather than merely HR concerns (Sue Cantrell, 2024). Although the influence of employee competence on organizational commitment has been extensively studied, the relationship within India's IT sector has been largely neglected. This research employs a theoretical framework to examine the effect of employee competencies on

organizational commitment in Indian IT firms. Hypotheses are formulated within this framework and tested using SmartPLS 4 (Figure 1). The findings are compared with previous studies, and the implications and conclusions are discussed.

2. Theoretical Framework

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000) have been applied to explain the relationship. Social Exchange theory suggests that developing positive social connections will enhance both organizational commitment and employee performance due to their abilities and job characteristics (Cook, 2015). According to the AMO model, sustaining employees' discretionary effort necessitates three primary components. First, individuals must possess the necessary skills and have adequate motivation. Second, employees must be given the chance to participate (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Two constructs selected here are ability and motivation which indicate competencies and commitment respectively.

a. Employee Competencies

Employee competencies, which encompass personality traits, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and self-concept, are widely recognized as the primary determinant of performance (Boyatzis, 1982; Sanghi, 2007). The concept of competencies, first introduced by White (1959) and further developed by McClelland (1973) and Klemp (1980), emphasizes their role in success within specific contexts. The globally acknowledged Iceberg Model of Competence (Spencer L. & Spencer S., 1993) and strategic alignment of employees based on competencies enhance job satisfaction, performance, and organizational commitment (Rantesalu et al., 2016). Research has investigated the relationships between employee competencies, HRD interventions, and organizational performance across various sectors (Osei & Ackah, 2015; Otoo & Mishra, 2018; Potnuru & Sahoo, 2016), highlighting that competent employee exhibit creativity and innovation in surmounting work challenges to achieve exceptional performance (Tan, 2018).

Competencies are divided into personal and organizational, with personal ones derived from employee traits and organizational ones from company systems (D. Turner and M. Crawford, 1994). Siriwaiprapan (2004) proposed a model for developing employee competence across five domains: self, social, team, job, and organizational. Emotional and social competencies influence performance and productivity (Ramo et al., 2009). Don Hellriegel (2011) identified seven key competencies affecting effectiveness: ethical, self, diversity, cross-cultural, communication, team, and change competencies. Puteh (2016) argued that top managers in Malaysian service industries need functional, communicative, cognitive, and leadership competencies, with functional and communicative being the most crucial. Elbaz et al. (2018) explored the relationship between nepotism, employee competencies (self, team, cross-cultural), and organizational performance in Egyptian tourism. Otoo (2019) identified five competence dimensions: self, team, change, communication, and ethical competencies impacting organizational performance. Salman et al. (2020b) classified 16 competencies into hard and soft, influencing stakeholder performance. Critical competencies selected for study are self, team, social, and communication competencies (Hellriegel, 2011; Ramo et al., 2009; Salman et al., 2020).

b. Organizational Commitment

Recent business management and organizational behavior research has emphasized organizational commitment, a concept introduced by H.S. Becker (1960), who proposed that commitment arises from accumulated investments that would be lost if an individual left. Allen & Meyer (1990) developed a three-dimensional model: affective commitment (emotional attachment and identification) (Meyer & Allen, 1984), continuance commitment (dedication due to leaving costs) (Allen & Meyer, 1990), and normative commitment (obligation to stay) (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Indian studies have investigated the effects of HR practices, organizational climate, psychological empowerment (Jha, 2011; Neelam et al., 2015; Pathak & Srivastava, 2017; Purang, 2008), organizational support, employee engagement, and performance on commitment in the automotive (Dixit & Bhati, 2012; Singh, 2007) and higher education sectors (Nazir & Islam, 2017). Uraon and Gupta (2020) found that emotional commitment mediates the relationship between psychological environment and performance. Organizational commitment is crucial in the Indian IT sector (Paul & Anantharaman, 2004), with in-group collectivism and

performance orientation significantly influencing commitment among IT executives and managers (Messner, 2013). Studies have explored the relationship between organizational commitment and employee performance, job satisfaction, psychological contract, intention to stay (Gujral & Singh, 2022; Mohapatra et al., 2019; Pathak & Srivastava, 2017; Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015; Uraon, 2018), emotional intelligence (Bhalerao & Kumar, 2016), and demographic variables like gender (Jena & Jena, 2017; Messner, 2017). However, the precise link between organizational commitment and employee competencies in the software industry remains unclear.

3. Research Gap

Despite extensive research on employee competencies and organizational commitment, critical gaps exist in the Indian IT sector. Most competency studies focus on knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Vijh et al., 2022), overlooking multidimensional frameworks encompassing self, team, communication, and social competencies essential in knowledge-driven environments. While competencies have been studied across sectors (Elbaz et al., 2018; Otoo, 2019; Puteh, 2016; Potnuru & Sahoo, 2016), research on India's software industry remains limited. Studies on organizational commitment in India mainly address HR practices and job satisfaction (Jha, 2011; Pathak & Srivastava, 2017; Nazir & Islam, 2017), with minimal focus on competencies' correlation with commitment. Research lacks insight into how competency dimensions influence affective, normative, and continuance commitment among IT professionals. Despite unique challenges like high attrition and evolving competency demands (Sue Cantrell, 2024; NASSCOM, 2025), limited research exists on using competencies to enhance organizational commitment in this sector.

4. Research Objectives

1. To explore the employee competencies required for IT professionals in Kerala.
2. To analyze the effect of employee competencies on organizational commitment among IT professionals.

5. Hypothesis Development

5.1. Employee Competence and Organizational Commitment

Employee competence, encompassing knowledge, skills, experience, and attitude, is essential for job performance and significantly impacts organizational commitment (Rantesalu et al., 2016; Izzati et al., 2015). However, Srikaningsih & Setyadi (2015) found that lecturers' competence, motivation, and organizational culture only partially influence commitment.

Career identity, involvement, and investment enhance job competence and professional commitment (Noor et al., 2020; Wilson et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2018). A positive link exists between employee competence, organizational commitment, and its dimensions (affective, normative, and continuance), affecting productivity (Lotunani et al., 2014; Ayu et al., 2018; Anwar & Aima, 2019; Hasanah & Mujanah, 2020; Rachman, 2021; Maming, 2022; Kurniawan, 2022; Sutarman, 2022). Nonetheless, Nila Sari et al. (2023) found that HR competences did not enhance emotional, normative, or continuous commitment, possibly because employees perceive these competencies as less critical for their commitment.

Khoreva et al. (2017) and Haryanti et al. (2022) emphasized talent and competency management's crucial role in enhancing individual performance and organizational commitment. Stamouli & Gerbeth (2021) found that emotional competence moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and commitment among German healthcare professionals. Katawneh & Osman (2014) identified that core competencies significantly influence organizational commitment at Mutah University, Jordan. However, Nabila & Ambad (2012) argued that expertise alone does not affect commitment; instead, employee flexibility and decision-making involvement foster commitment. In India, Sonia et al. (2016) discovered that behavioral and managerial competencies significantly impact school teachers' organizational commitment, unlike academic competencies. Naim and Lenka (2018) underscored the importance of competency development in enhancing affective commitment and retention intentions among Generation Y employees. Research on the link between competencies and organizational commitment among IT professionals is limited, often focusing solely on knowledge, skills, and work attitudes (Vijh et al., 2022). This study addresses this gap by examining the link between IT professionals' competencies and their organizational commitment.

5.1.1. Self- Competence and Organizational Commitment

Self-competence involves assessing one's strengths and weaknesses, setting and pursuing both professional and personal goals, balancing work and personal life, and engaging in lifelong learning (Don Hellriegel, 2011). Research on nursing staff in Italian hospitals found that organizational support positively correlates with self-competence, while normative and continuance commitment do not. This indicates that suitable care measures and well-being promotion can enhance nurses' self-competence and commitment. (Battistelli et al., 2016).

Additionally, research indicates that universities with academically confident staff exhibit higher commitment levels, establishing a positive link between self-efficacy and organizational commitment (Opolot et al., 2023). However, Mainardes et al. (2024) found that rigidity and stability more significantly impact the commitment of Brazilian public servants than self- competence. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Self Competence has a direct and significant effect on Organizational Commitment

5.1.2. Team Competence and Organizational Commitment

Team competence is defined as "the collective knowledge, abilities, and skills necessary for developing, fostering, and guiding a group towards accomplishing objectives"(Potnuru & Sahoo, 2016). Research among retail industry employees indicates that team competence positively affects company performance, mediated by organizational commitment (Von Bonsdorff et al., 2015). Additionally, another study found that team reflexivity enhances innovativeness, strengthens employees' organizational commitment, and promotes a team climate supportive of innovation (Farnese & Livi, 2016). Conversely, Mainardes et al. (2024) argued that team competency does not positively influence organizational commitment, reasoning that public servants are strictly guided by legislation, leaving little room for fostering teamwork. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Team Competence has a direct and significant effect on Organizational Commitment

5.1.3. Communication Competence and Organizational Commitment

Communication competence is defined as "the capacity to select appropriate communicative actions to achieve personal objectives during an interaction while preserving dignity and position of fellow participants within the specific scenario" (Wiemann, 1977). There is a positive correlation between organizational commitment and communication competence, underscoring the need for programs to enhance nurses' communication skills (Hahm et al., 2024; Kyung et al., 2010). A cross-sectional study of IT professionals in the USA found that internal communication adequacy significantly mediated the relationship between employee work participation and commitment, indicating that sufficient information is vital to organizational functioning and achieving both employee and organizational goals (Atouba, 2021). Conversely, Mainardes et al. (2024) argued that communication competence does not affect commitment to the public organization where they work. Thus, the proposed hypothesis is shown as:

H3: Communication Competence has a direct and significant effect on Organizational Commitment

5.1.4. Social Competence and Organizational Commitment

Social competence is defined as the ability to effectively handle social interactions (Orpinas, 2010). Muring (2022) identified a significant link between social competence and work commitment among school administrators. Another study in the education sector found that social intelligence correlates with organizational commitment and can predict changes in its various dimensions. A related study in India, focusing on IT and banking professionals, discovered that management commitment moderated the relationship between social intelligence and openness to change (Goswami, 2022). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4: Social Competence has a direct and significant effect on Organizational Commitment

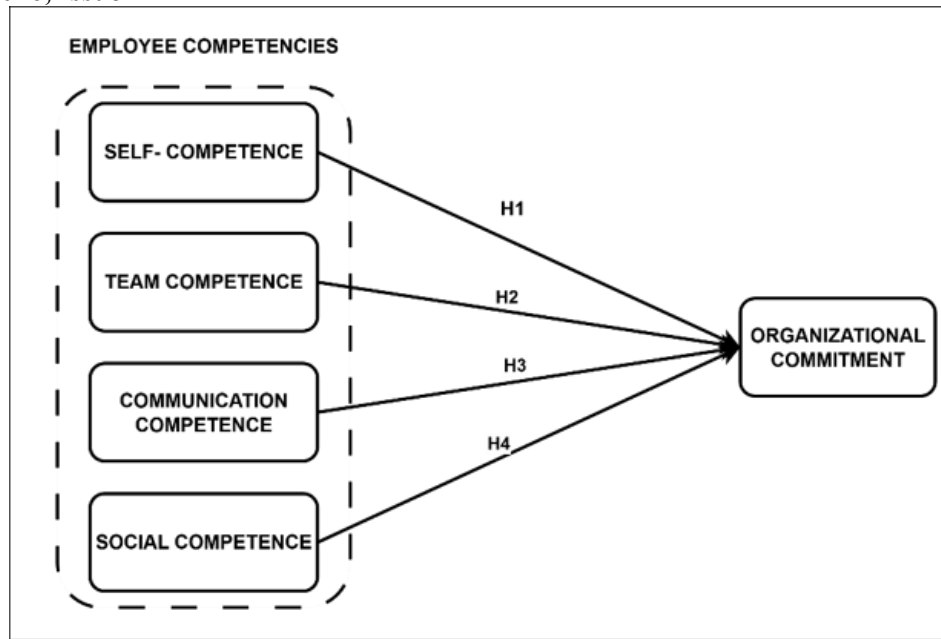


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's Own Compilation

6. Research Methodology

6.1. Research Design, Sampling and Data Collection

The study employed descriptive and quantitative design to investigate relationships between constructs among IT professionals working in Kerala's IT hub, Infopark, Kochi due to the highest concentration of IT companies in the particular area (Kerala State Planning Board, 2023). A structured questionnaire was given to 525 IT professionals with qualifications in computer science, engineering, or related professions, including software programmers, developers, engineers, team leaders, and project managers. Slovin's formula (E. Slovin, 1960) was used to determine the sample size, and purposive sampling was applied (Chand & Mishra, 2024). Out of the 410 usable responses, structural equation modeling (J. Hair et al., 2022) was conducted using secondary data sources such as reports, magazines, journals, and organization files. The study comprised 229 male participants (55.9%) and 181 female participants (44.1%), as shown in Table 1. Most employees are within the age group of 26 to 30 years (45.1%), while 23.9% of participants were aged 20 to 25 years. Regarding their educational qualifications, most respondents held a graduate degree (39%), followed by post-graduation (38.3%). Additionally, majority (51.4%) of the respondents earned a reasonable income of above Rs 40,000, while 20.4% earned between Rs 30,000 and Rs 40,000. Furthermore, approximately 46% of the respondents had been working with their current organization for 1 to 3 years, and 23.2% had been working for 3 to 5 years.

Table 1. Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20 to 25 years	98	23.9
	26 to 30 years	185	45.1
	31 to 35 years	60	14.6
	36 to 40 years	53	12.9

	Above 40	14	3.4
Gender	Male	225	54.9
	Female	185	45.1
Educational Qualification	Graduate	160	39
	Postgraduate	157	38.3
	Professional	90	22
	Others	3	0.7
Monthly Income	Up to Rs 20,000	17	4.1
	Rs 20,000-Rs 30,000	68	16.6
	Rs 30,000-Rs 40,000	87	21.2
	Above Rs 40,000	238	58
Present Job Experience	Less than 1 year	48	11.7
	1-3 years	189	46.1
	3-5 years	94	22.9
	5-7 years	33	8
	7-10 years	23	5.6
	Above 10 years	23	5.6

Source: Author's Own Compilation

6.2. Measures

This research utilized established scales derived from academic literature to measure the constructs using a questionnaire comprising three sections. Section one focused on demographic characteristics. Section two examined employee competence along four criteria. Multiple approaches have been used to evaluate employee competence, indicating the absence of a universally accepted scale (Elbaz et al., 2018; Kaur & Kaur, 2020; Otoo, 2024; Potnuru et al., 2019; Potnuru & Sahoo, 2016; Salman et al., 2020a, 2023; van Esch et al., 2018). The self-competence dimension was measured using a scale developed by Tafarodi & Swann (1995), while the team competence dimension was measured using a scale developed by Eby & Dobbins (1997). The communication competence dimension was measured using a scale developed by Wiemann (1977), and the social competence dimension was adapted from Anderson-Butcher et al. (2008) and Anderson-Butcher et al. (2016). Section three included a measurement of the three aspects of organizational commitment. The items on the scale were evaluated using a Likert scale with five points. The affective, normative, and continuance commitment dimensions were measured using a scale developed by Allen & Meyer (1990) and Meyer & Allen (1991).

7. Data Analysis

“IBM SPSS” was utilized to measure demographic variables. “Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)” is a widely used technique for graphically illustrating and validating statistical relationships. It can be employed for both experimental and non-experimental data (Dash & Paul, 2021; Schuberth et al., 2023). The study utilized “Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)” to test hypotheses using the SmartPLS 4 (J. Hair et al., 2022).

The two-step method included measurement modeling to evaluate Composite Reliability (CR) and Convergent Validity (CV) and a structural model to assess path coefficients, coefficients of determination, and effect sizes (Joseph Franklin Hair, 2017; C. M. Ringle et al., 2020).

7.1. Measurement Model

To assess the appropriateness of the latent variables, it is crucial to evaluate the measurement model, which examines the reliability and validity of the constructs (Hair et al., 2011). The “Cronbach's α and Composite Reliability (CR)” values indicate that each construct and component exceeds the threshold of 0.70, ranging from 0.795 to 0.921 and from 0.8 to 0.925 respectively, indicating high reliability (F. Hair Jr. et al., 2014; J. F. Hair et al., 2011; Joseph Franklin Hair, 2017). Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each construct range from 0.515 to 0.762, which is greater than the recommended threshold of 0.50 (J. Hair et al., 2021). Table 2 demonstrates that indicators within each construct have outer loadings surpassing 0.70. Although some items showed values above 0.6, they were retained in the study due to the higher overall Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which indicate strong reliability (Vinzi et al., 2022).

Table 2: Reliability and Convergent Validity of Constructs

Constructs	Indicator	Loadings	α	CR	AVE	VIF
Self-Competence	SC1	0.838	0.795	0.8	0.619	2.383
	SC2	0.808				2.076
	SC3	0.764				1.699
	SC4	0.734				1.372
Team Competence	TC1	0.82	0.877	0.887	0.671	2.131
	TC2	0.816				2.329
	TC3	0.824				2.474
	TC4	0.874				2.625
	TC5	0.758				1.918
Social Competence	SoC1	0.897	0.921	0.927	0.762	3.163
	SoC2	0.83				2.438
	SoC3	0.894				3.24

	SoC4	0.908				2.238
	SoC5	0.831				2.39
Communication Competence	CC1	0.842	0.825	0.85	0.583	2
	CC2	0.704				1.386
	CC3	0.858				2.338
	CC4	0.655				1.878
	CC5	0.737				2.097
Organizational Commitment	ACM1	0.697	0.914	0.925	0.515	2.119
	ACM2	0.725				2.038
	ACM3	0.79				2.914
	ACM4	0.81				3.142
	ACM5	0.825				3.082
	NCM1	0.621				1.485
	NCM2	0.713				2.292
	NCM3	0.614				1.97
	NCM4	0.62				1.671
	CCM1	0.781				2.417
	CCM2	0.702				2.006
	CCM3	0.675				2.043

Notes: “ α = Cronbach's α ; CR= Composite Reliability; AVE= Average Variance Extracted. VIF= Variance Inflation Factor”; “SC= Self Competence; TC= Team Competence; SoC= Social Competence; CC= Communication Competence”; ACM= Affective Commitment; NCM= Normative Commitment; CCM= Continuance Commitment

Source: Author's Own Compilation

Table 3: Discriminant Validity -Fornell-Larcker

	SC	TC	SoC	CC	OCM
SC	0.787				
TC	0.7	0.819			
SoC	0.628	0.657	0.873		
CC	0.593	0.67	0.747	0.763	
OCM	0.327	0.307	0.399	0.312	0.718

Notes: “SC= Self Competence; TC= Team Competence; SoC= Social Competence; CC= Communication Competence”; ACM= Affective

Table 4: Discriminant Validity – Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

		SC	TC	SoC	CC	OCM
Notes:	SC					
“SC=	TC	0.846				
Self	SoC	0.732	0.732			
	CC	0.745	0.805	0.852		
	OCM	0.36	0.323	0.411	0.311	

Competence; TC= Team Competence; SoC= Social Competence; CC= Communication Competence”; ACM= Affective Commitment; NCM= Normative Commitment; CCM= Continuance Commitment

Source: Author's Own Compilation

Discriminant validity is a statistical method that helps assess the uniqueness of each construct, using an empirical benchmark (Hair, 2017). HTMT ratio and Fornell-Larcker criteria are used to determine discriminant validity (Hair Jr, 2020). To examine the relationships between variables, a diagonal matrix was utilized, employing the Fornell-Larcker (1981) criterion. The square roots of AVEs in each construct were greater than those in the corresponding rows, indicating discriminant validity among the variables (Hair et al., 2022) (Table 3). The HTMT value was found to be less than 0.90, confirming the distinctiveness of organizational commitment and employee competence dimensions as separate constructs (Henseler et al., 2015) (Table 4). A good fit is indicated by an SRMR value of less than 0.10, which was 0.064 in this case. Other data such as d_{ULS} , d_G , χ^2 , squared Euclidean distance, and a normalised fit index (NFI) of 0.114, 0.081, 516.192 and 0.874 respectively supported the validity of the measurement model (Hu and Bentler (1998) (Table 5).

Table 5: Model Fit Indicators

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.064	0.064
d_{ULS}	0.114	0.114
d_G	0.081	0.081
Chi-square	516.192	516.192
NFI	0.874	0.874

Source: Author's Own Compilation

7.2. Structural Model

The study used fit indices including R^2 , F^2 , Q^2 , VIF, and others to evaluate the structural model. To eliminate the potential for multicollinearity, the variables in this study's theoretical model underwent a variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis. The VIF values obtained in this research fall between 1.372 and 3.24 (Table 2), and since

they are below the suggested value 3.3, no bias issues are present in this study (Schuberth et al., 2023; Kock, 2015).

Table 6: R^2 and Q^2 Values

	R-square	R-square adjusted	Q^2 predict
Organizational Commitment	0.169	0.161	0.145

Source: Author's Own Compilation

Table 7: F^2 Values

	F-square
Self-Competence -> Organizational Commitment	0.008
Team Competence -> Organizational Commitment	0
Social Competence-> Organizational Commitment	0.046
Communication Competence -> Organizational Commitment	0

Source: Author's Own Compilation

Cohen (1988,1992) suggests that R^2 values can be categorized into three effect sizes: large (above 0.26), moderate (between 0.13 and 0.25), and small (below 0.12). In this study, the observed effect size of 0.169 falls within the moderate range, indicating a moderate effect size. A Q^2 value of 0.145, which is greater than zero, suggests that the predictive relevance of organizational commitment is adequate (Joseph Franklin Hair, 2017) (Table 6). Cohen (1988, 1992) established that f^2 values under 0.02 indicate a minor effect, those between 0.02 and 0.15 suggest a medium effect, and values exceeding

0.15 denote a significant effect. Table 8 reveal that self, team, and communication competencies have a minor influence on organizational commitment, while social competence demonstrates a moderate impact on organizational commitment

The study utilized the Bootstrap resampling method to evaluate the research hypotheses. This approach yielded satisfactory results with 5000 resamples, enabling the estimation of direct paths and standard errors (Ringle, 2005; Henseler Jörgand Hubona, 2017) (Figure 2).

Table 8: Path Coefficients for Direct Effects

Hypothesis	β	T statistics	P value	Conclusion
H1: Self-Competence -> Organizational Commitment	0.118	1.384	0.166	Not Supported
H2: Team Competence -> Organizational Commitment	0.024	0.266	0.79	Not Supported
H3: Communication Competence -> Organizational Commitment	-0.012	0.148	0.883	Not Supported
H4: Social Competence-> Organizational Commitment	0.318	3.773	0.000	Supported

Source: Author's Own Compilation.

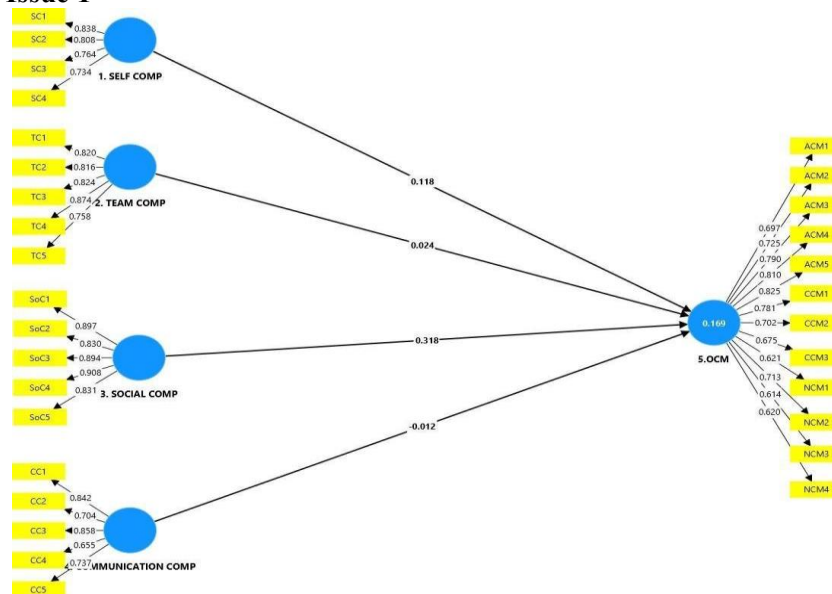


Figure 2: Results of the conceptual model

Source: Author's Own Compilation

8. Results and Discussion

This study uses social science methodologies with a 5% significance level and a 95% confidence interval for hypothesis testing (t -values > 1.96 ; $p < 0.05$) (Ringle et al., 2014) to investigate the impact of employee competencies, including self, team, social, and communication skills, on organizational commitment. The first hypothesis, which posited that self-competence directly affects organizational commitment, was not supported ($\beta = 0.118$, t statistics = 1.384, p value > 0.05). This indicates that IT professionals' organizational commitment is not significantly influenced by individual skills and abilities, corroborating Mainardes et al. (2024), who also found no effect of self-competence on organizational commitment and job satisfaction among public servants. However, this result contrasts with previous studies (Andiani & Jayanagara, 2023; Battistelli et al., 2016; Khalatbari et al., 2013). The second hypothesis investigated whether team competence significantly impacts organizational commitment, but it was also unsupported ($\beta = 0.024$, t statistics = 0.266, p value > 0.05). This finding contradicts studies that show a positive effect of team competence on organizational commitment (Farnese & Livi, 2016; Jaiswal et al., 2022; Khalid, 2022; von Bonsdorff et al., 2015). The discrepancy may be due to the reliance on individual technical expertise over collaborative efforts in many IT roles (Nagy et al., 2023).

The hypothesis H3, suggesting a significant effect of communication competence on organizational commitment, was not supported by the results ($\beta = -0.012$, $t = 0.148$, $p > 0.05$). This indicates that IT professionals' organizational commitment is unaffected by their communication skills. Thus, an employee's organizational dedication is not influenced by their communication abilities. These results align with prior research showing that interpersonal communication does not impact organizational commitment (Mainardes et al., 2024). However, they contradict several studies that found a significant relationship between communication competence and organizational commitment (Awad & Alhashemi, 2012; Bambacas & Patrickson, 2008; Brown et al., 2019; Hahm et al., 2024; Luo et al., 2016; Van Vuuren et al., 2007; Kyung et al., 2010). Hypothesis H4 posited that "Social Competence has a direct and significant effect on Organizational Commitment." Analysis revealed a positive path coefficient, statistically significant p -value, and t -statistics above 1.96, supporting the hypothesis ($\beta = 0.318$, t statistics = 3.773, p value $< .005$). Consequently, H4 is accepted, indicating a direct and significant effect of social competence on organizational commitment. This finding aligns with social exchange theory, which suggests that positive interactions within an organization enhance employees' emotional connection (Blau, 1964; Isaac Delali et al., 2024). IT Professionals who excel in social skills often develop strong bonds with their coworkers and supervisors, creating a workplace environment characterized by connection and dedication. These findings align with other studies (Bufquin et al., 2017; Mohadesi, 2021, 2022; Muring, 2022;

Saud & Jamal, 2024; Yekanizad et al., 2023; Yozgat & Güngörmez, 2015) that demonstrate the positive impact of social competence on employee commitment.

9. Conclusion

The research investigated the connection between various employee competencies (self, team, communication, and social) and organizational commitment among IT professionals in Kerala. Results indicated that while self, team, and communication competencies did not significantly impact organizational commitment directly, social competence emerged as a crucial factor. Studies indicate that IT professionals' commitment is enhanced by their social competence, emphasizing the importance of interpersonal skills and social interactions in cultivating a dedicated IT workforce. These findings highlight the necessity for a deeper understanding of how different competencies affect organizational commitment. Although technical and individual competencies are crucial for job performance, their direct influence on organizational commitment may be less significant compared to social competencies. Consequently, organizations should not only concentrate on improving technical skills but also emphasize the development of social and interpersonal competencies to foster a more committed and unified workforce.

10. Implications and Future Scope

This research enhances understanding by providing evidence on how various competencies affect organizational commitment, supporting the social exchange theory that positive interactions within a company boost employees' emotional attachment. By focusing on the IT sector in Kerala, an underexplored area, it fills a gap in literature. Findings suggest IT firms in Kerala should prioritize developing employees' social competencies through targeted training, seminars, and team-building exercises to improve interpersonal skills. Creating a workplace that promotes teamwork, and transparent communication can further enhance social skills and increase employee loyalty. Companies should also conduct regular competency evaluations to identify areas for development. Focusing on comprehensive workforce development can improve job performance and strengthen employee dedication and commitment.

This research opens avenues for future studies. Subsequent research could explore how additional competencies, like emotional intelligence, cultural awareness, and leadership abilities, influence organizational commitment. Researchers could also explore how factors like organizational culture, job satisfaction, and leadership styles moderate the competency-commitment relationship. Expanding the geographic scope to include IT professionals in other regions or countries could enable comparative analyses, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the competencies-commitment link. Longitudinal studies could assess how changes in competencies over time affect organizational commitment, offering deeper insights into employee development and retention. Additionally, qualitative methods like interviews or case studies could provide a nuanced understanding of how specific competencies impact commitment in various organizational contexts, complementing quantitative findings with richer insights into how competencies contribute to organizational commitment.

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