

The Mediating Role of Entrepreneurial Orientation in the Relationship between Employee Empowerment and Organizational Commitment

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Abstract. The business environment is becoming increasingly competitive, compelling companies to constantly innovate and adapt to stay ahead and preserve their competitive advantage in the global market. This research investigates the mediating role of entrepreneurial orientation in the relationship between employee empowerment (including job meaningfulness, ambiguity, and conflict) and organizational commitment within SMEs in Saudi Arabia. Given the critical role of SMEs in economic growth, understanding the factors influencing employee commitment is essential for fostering organizational success. The study employs a quantitative approach with convenience sampling, utilizing survey data from 75 managers of SMEs. The findings reveal that the dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation—autonomy, innovativeness, and risk-taking—significantly influence organizational commitment. Additionally, entrepreneurial orientation partially mediates the relationship between employee empowerment and organizational commitment. This study highlights the importance of entrepreneurial orientation as a key factor in enhancing employee commitment, particularly in the context of SMEs. The implications suggest that organizations should focus on promoting entrepreneurial behaviors to strengthen the link between employee empowerment and organizational commitment, thereby improving overall organizational performance.

Keywords: employee empowerment; job meaningfulness; ambiguity; conflict; organization commitment; entrepreneurial orientation.

INTRODUCTION

The business world is growing more competitive by the day, forcing companies to continually innovate and adapt to stay ahead and maintain a competitive edge in the global market (Mohamed et al., 2019). Employee empowerment is a flexible and effective management approach that can be tailored to suit any organization, helping them navigate the complexities and demands of modern global business (Kaur, Reddy, Reddy, & Hanafiah, 2025; Rachmad, 2022; Yadav, n.d.; Zhao, 2024). Employee empowerment can boost organizational commitment in a variety of ways—from giving employees a greater sense of control over their work to increasing collaboration and problem-solving (Alshemmari, 2023). Given the emerging challenges, a new management approach is necessary—one that emphasizes empowerment and participative management (Rachmad, 2021; Tallman, 2017). This involves engaging employees who are directly responsible for their work, fostering a culture that enhances their competence and boosts organizational performance (Zaraket, 2018). Examples of employee empowerment include job meaning, ambiguity, and conflict between management and employees, along with their organizational implications. However, the concept of employee empowerment is often underutilized by managers, and few implement it because they believe the process will diminish their authority (Bott & Tourish, 2016; Mone, London, & Mone, 2018; Rachmad, 2021). In addition, researchers have discovered through studies that many managers do not realize the importance of employee empowerment and its impact on

organizational commitment (Han, Seo, Li, & Yoon, 2016; Pasanda, 2016; Zaraket, Garios, & Malek, 2018).

Employee commitment to the organization is one of the key factors in business success. It has a positive impact on employees' attitudes toward achieving the company's goals. In developing countries, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are a vital instrument for job creation and economic growth (Gherghina, Botezatu, Hosszu, & Simionescu, 2020; Ndiaye, Razak, Nagayev, & Ng, 2018). Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, SMEs account for more than 99% of businesses and hold a significant market share. A report issued by the General Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises revealed that the number of establishments operating in the Saudi market increased from about 753 thousand in the first quarter of 2022 to more than 1.19 million by the end of the first quarter of 2023—an increase of 37%. These establishments contribute more than 6.5 million jobs to the Saudi market by the end of Q1 2023. Thus, we observe the importance of studying the relationship between employee empowerment and organizational commitment in the presence of entrepreneurial orientation as a mediating variable in Saudi SMEs (Abdulrab et al., 2021; Ali, Hilman, & Gorondutse, 2020; Rachmad, 2022).

Saudi Arabia's SMEs face ongoing challenges related to weak organizational performance and low levels of employee commitment, even though they have invested in strong human resource (HR) practices (Alanzy, 2021). One major issue is the lack of alignment between employees and organizational goals, which signals a disconnect that undermines long-term success. This research highlights employee empowerment as a potential driver to improve organizational commitment, with entrepreneurial orientation playing a mediating role (Zaraket et al., 2018). Based on this framework, the central research question asks: What can employee empowerment contribute to organizational commitment in the presence of entrepreneurial orientation as a mediating variable? From this, four research questions were developed to explore the extent of empowerment's influence, its relationship with entrepreneurial orientation, and the combined effect on organizational commitment.

Previous research has explored various aspects of employee empowerment and its impact on organizational commitment. For example, Lashley emphasized the flexibility of employee empowerment as a management approach that can be tailored to any organization, promoting collaboration and problem-solving. However, this study primarily focused on theoretical aspects and did not delve into the mediating factors that might enhance the effectiveness of empowerment in driving organizational commitment. Similarly, Alshemmari (2023) discussed how employee empowerment can boost organizational commitment by giving employees a sense of control, but the study lacked a comprehensive examination of how other variables, such as entrepreneurial orientation, mediate this relationship. Both studies contribute valuable insights into the relationship between empowerment and commitment, but they overlook the moderating role of entrepreneurial orientation and its specific impact within the context of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly in Saudi Arabia.

This study fills that gap by introducing entrepreneurial orientation as a mediating variable, exploring how empowerment influences organizational commitment through the lens of entrepreneurial behaviors such as autonomy, innovativeness, and risk-taking. By investigating this mediating role in the context of Saudi SMEs, this research offers a more nuanced understanding of how empowerment can be strategically implemented to align

employees with organizational goals, ultimately enhancing performance and commitment. This approach not only extends the existing literature on employee empowerment but also provides practical insights for SMEs, which are critical to economic growth in developing countries like Saudi Arabia.

To answer these questions, this study pursues four specific objectives. First, it seeks to examine the direct relationship between employee empowerment and organizational commitment. Second, it investigates the link between employee empowerment and entrepreneurial orientation, assessing whether empowerment encourages a more entrepreneurial mindset among employees. Third, it explores how entrepreneurial orientation affects organizational commitment, potentially strengthening employees' alignment with organizational goals. Finally, it aims to determine whether entrepreneurial orientation acts as a mediator between empowerment and commitment, thereby clarifying its role in bridging HR practices with improved employee dedication and organizational outcomes.

By exploring how entrepreneurial orientation mediates the effects of empowerment on commitment, this study offers new insights into enhancing employee engagement and aligning organizational goals. The findings will be beneficial for business leaders and HR practitioners, offering actionable strategies to improve employee commitment through empowerment and entrepreneurial leadership, which is crucial for driving organizational success in Saudi SMEs.

METHOD

Consistent with the purpose of this study, the study adopted the philosophy of positivism, the deductive approach to theory development, the quantitative univariate methodological choice survey strategy and cross-sectional time horizon. Data was collected through Questionnaires sent to employees of 75 SMEs operating in Saudi Arabia. and using a self-administered questionnaire. A descriptive cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for the purpose of this study. This cross-sectional design is considered cost- and time-effective because data can be collected only once, perhaps over a period of days, weeks, or months days, weeks, or months in order to answer the research questions (Sekaran, 2003). This design enables the description of the different dimensions of employee empowerment and its role in organizational commitment through entrepreneurial orientation as a mediating variable. The data analysis technique employed statistical tools using SPSS and structural equation modeling (SEM) to assess the relationships between employee empowerment, entrepreneurial orientation, and organizational commitment. This study was conducted in Saudi Arabia, focusing on SMEs due to their significant role in the country's economic growth and job creation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis and Findings

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) has been utilized to estimate measurement adequacy (Hair et al., 1998). In the context of scale development and validation, recent literature (e.g. Rentz et al. , 2002) affirms the superiority of CFA over Exploratory Factor Analysis. To assess the fit between theory and reality, CFA rather concentrating on a single index, often rely upon numerous fit indices like: Normed Chi-square index, Goodness-of-fit

index (GFI), Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), Root mean square residual (RMR) and Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) – as indicators of absolute fit indices (Hu and Bentler, 1995; MacCallum et al., 1996; Steiger, 2007); Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker- Lewis index (TLI), and Normed fit index (NFI) – as indicators of incremental fit indices (Bentler and Bonnet, 1980; Mulaik et al, 1989; Bentler, 1990; Hu and Bentler, 1995; Kline, 2005; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007); Parsimony goodness-of-fit index (PGFI) and Parsimony Normed fit index (PNFI) – as indicators of parsimony fit indices. In contrast, these fit statistics are generally not available in standard methods of Exploratory Factor Analysis. A careful consideration is that assessing a measurement model through numerous fit indices is more parsimony approach than one with absolute or single criteria (Hair et al., 1998).

In the context of present study, following criteria (58) has been adopted for the measurement and validation of various constructs.

Table 1. Criteria

S. No.	Parameter	Criteria
1	Normed Chi-square (ratio of Chi-square to degrees of freedom)	Less than 3
2	Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	At least .90
3	Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	At least .90
4	Normed Fit Index (NFI)	At least .90
5	Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	At least .90
6	Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	Less than .10
7	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	Less than .08

Measurement and Validation for study variable

To assess the degree of correspondence between the manifest variables and latent construct of (SE) a multidimensional CFA model (Figure 1) has been conceptualized and tested for its psychometric properties. The result of CFA show in figure (1) CFA OF.

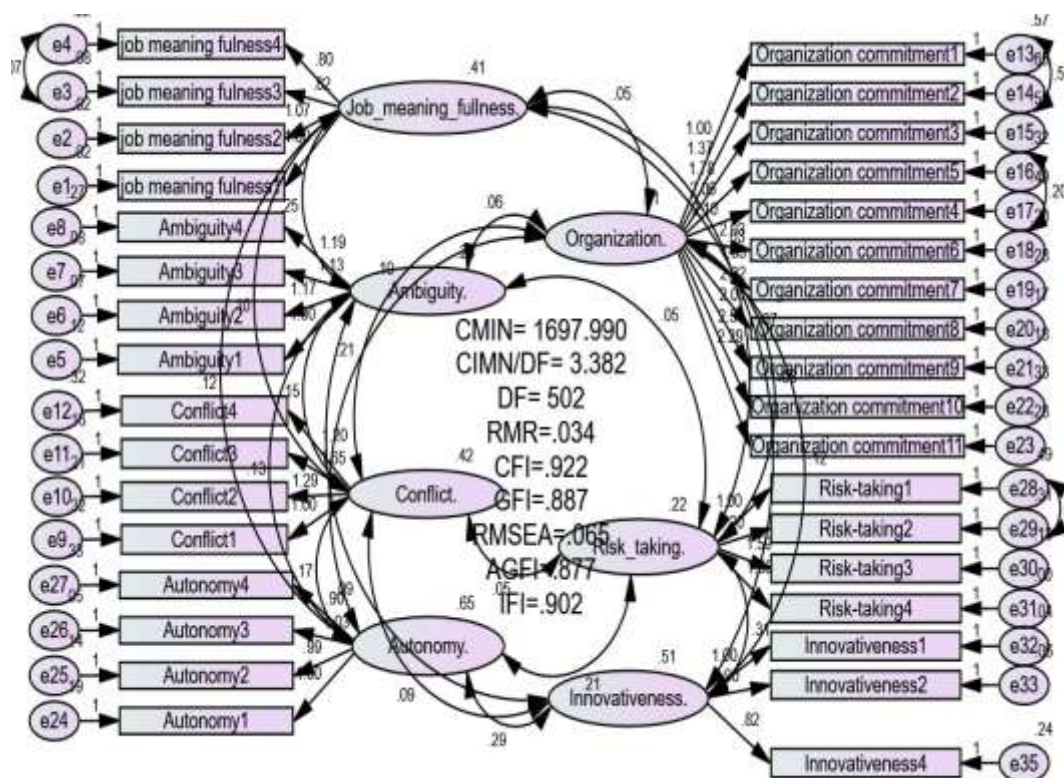


Figure 1. CFA

Table 2. model fit for study variables

CMIN	CMIN/DF	DF	RMR	CFI	GFI	RMSEA	AGFI	IFI
1697.990	3.382	502	.034	.922	.887	.065	.877	.902

Source: from data analysis (2025)

The structural model of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) reveals the same measures that can be calculated to determine goodness of fit show in table 5.9) the result of the one-dimensional CFA to customer-to customer interaction.

Reliability

This study used Cronbach's alpha as diagnostic tool to assess the degree of internal consistency between multiple measurements of variables. (Grant, R. M., 1996). Stated that the lower limit for Cronbach's alpha is 0.70, although it may decrease to 0.60 in exploratory research. While (Nunnally, J, C, 1978) considered Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.60 are taken as reliable, given that Cronbach's alpha has being the most Widely used. "Table 1", presents the summary of the results for reliability analysis. Confirmed that all the scales display the satisfactory level of reliability (Cronbach's alpha exceed the minimum value of 0.60). Therefore it can be concluded that the measures have acceptable level of reliability reliability.

Table 3. Cranach's Alpha for Study Variables

Construct	Variable	Number of items	Cranach's alpha
Employee empowerment	Job meaning fullness	4	.95
	Ambiguity	4	.89

	Conflict	4	.90
Organization commitment			
		11	.92
Entrepreneurial orientation	Autonomy	4	.93
	Risk-taking	4	.91
	Innovativeness	4	.93

Source: from data analysis (2025)

Descriptive Statistics

In this section descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation was used to describe the characteristics of all variables (Independent, dependent and moderators and mediator) under study.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

	Order	Percentage	Mean	Std. Deviation
Meaning_fulness	1	111.25	4.45	.619
Ambiguity	2	110.5	4.42	.574
Conflict	6	102.25	4.09	.874
Organization_commitment	7	37.27	4.10	.678
Autonomy	4	103	4.12	.823
Risk_taking	5	102.75	4.11	.718
Innovativeness	3	103.75	4.15	.706
Valid N (listwise)				

Source: from data analysis (2025)

Table 4 shows the means and standard deviations that the scale used a 5-point scale (5=strongly agree, 1=strongly disagree).

Correlation Analysis

Table 3. presents the results of the inter correlation among the variables. The correlation analysis was conducted to see the initial picture of the interrelationships among the variables under the study. Therefore, the importance of conducting correlation analysis is to identify any potential problems associated with multi collinearity (Sekaran, 2000). Table 3 represents the correlation matrix for the construct's operational zed in this study. These bivariate correlations allow for preliminary inspection and information regarding hypothesized relationships. In addition to that, correlation matrix gives information regarding test for the presence of multicollinearity. The table shows that no correlations near 1.0 (or approaching 0.8 or 0.9) were detected, which indicate that multicollinearity is not a significant problem in this particular data set.

Table 5. Correlations: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate
Risk_taking	<-->	Innovativeness	.781
Innovativeness	<-->	Autonomy	.544
Innovativeness	<-->	Organization_commitment	.501

Innovativeness	<-->	Conflict	.197
Innovativeness	<-->	Ambiguity	.237
Innovativeness	<-->	Meaning_fulness	.203
Risk_taking	<-->	Autonomy	.724
Risk_taking	<-->	Organization_commitment	.567
Risk_taking	<-->	Conflict	.211
Risk_taking	<-->	Ambiguity	.212
Risk_taking	<-->	Meaning_fulness	.164
Autonomy	<-->	Organization_commitment	.677
Autonomy	<-->	Conflict	.298
Autonomy	<-->	Ambiguity	.290
Autonomy	<-->	Meaning_fulness	.234
Organization_commitment	<-->	Conflict	.534
Organization_commitment	<-->	Ambiguity	.412
Organization_commitment	<-->	Meaning_fulness	.354
Conflict	<-->	Ambiguity	.525
Conflict	<-->	Meaning_fulness	.310
Ambiguity	<-->	Meaning_fulness	.825

Source: from data analysis (2025)

Hypotheses Testing

This section discusses the results of the hypotheses of the study. The hypotheses were tested using path analysis, which reveals the effect of independent variables on dependent variables and the effect of mediators and moderators in the relationships between variables through structural equation modelling (SEM). SEM grows out of and serves purposes similar to multiple regression, but in a more powerful way that takes into account the modelling of interactions between variables, nonlinearities, correlated independents, measurement error, correlated error terms, multiple latent independents each measured by multiple indicators, and one or more latent dependents, each with multiple indicators (Gaskin, 2016). SEM may be used as a more powerful alternative to multiple regression, path analysis, factor analysis, time series analysis, and analysis of covariance (Gaskin, 2016). In other words, these procedures can be viewed as special cases of SEM, or, to put it another way, SEM is an extension of the general linear model (GLM), of which multiple regression is a part.

Given that the variables appearing in the confirmatory factor analysis encompass 35 hypotheses in this study, the main effects as well as the mediating effect were examined using path analysis. The statistical procedures for this analysis had been explained in Chapter 3.

To perform path analysis, it is generally agreed that at least the assumptions of model fit should be met. Although the model fit was already conducted in the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), it remains important to perform it again in the structural model to demonstrate sufficient exploration of alternative models (Gaskin, 2016). Every time the model changes and a hypothesis is tested, model fit must be reassessed. Thus, the Absolute Fit Indices and Incremental Fit Indices assumptions are provided below.

HY1/ The relationship between Employee empowerment and Organization commitment

To assess the relationship between customer-to-customer interaction and Perceived

experience value, structural equation modelling has been employed and a measurement model of these constructs has been assessed. Figure 2. Reveals that reflective indicators have been used for the measurement of latent constructs and non-causal relationship has been studied among different constructs, by drawing path.

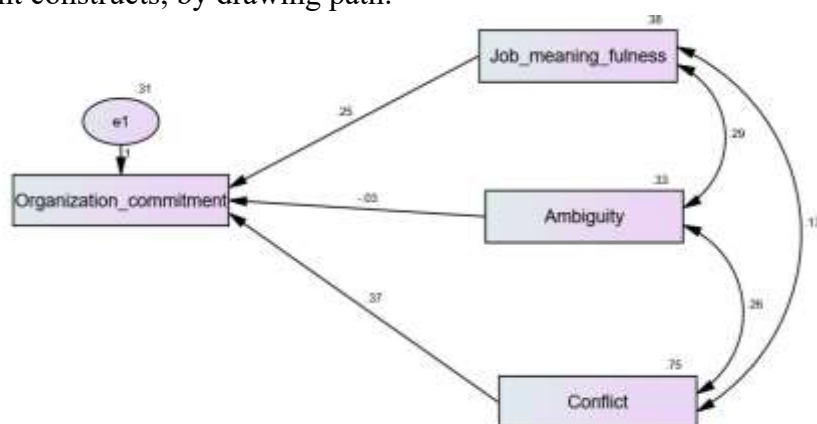


Figure 2. path analysis for customer-to-customer interaction and Perceived experience value

Table 5. Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Organization_commitment	<---	Job_meaning_fulness	.251	.191	1.309	***	Supported
Organization_commitment	<---	Ambiguity	-.032	.231	-.138	***	Supported
Organization_commitment	<---	Conflict	.370	.090	4.104	***	Supported

Source: from data analysis (2025)

HY2 / the relationship between Employee empowerment and Entrepreneurial Orientation

To assess the relationship between customer-to-customer interaction and Customer Role clarity, structural equation modelling has been employed and a measurement model of these constructs has been assessed. Figure 3 reveals that reflective indicators have been used for the measurement of latent constructs and non-causal relationship has been studied among different constructs, by drawing path.

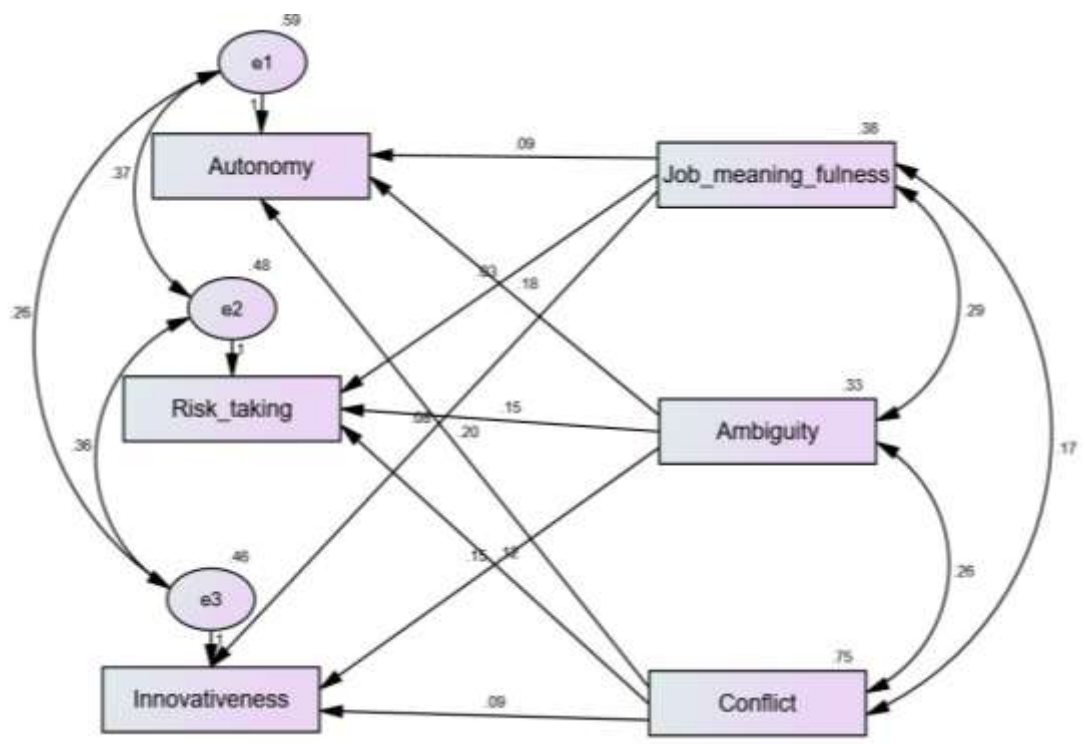


Figure 2. path analysis

Table 6. path analysis from Employee empowerment to Entrepreneurial Orientation

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Results
Autonomy	<---	Job_meaning_fulness	.086	.266	.324	***	supported
Risk_taking	<---	Job_meaning_fulness	.026	.239	.110	***	supported
Innovativeness	<---	Job_meaning_fulness	.077	.234	.328	***	supported
Autonomy	<---	Ambiguity	.179	.321	.557	.577	NOT support
Risk_taking	<---	Ambiguity	.148	.288	.512	***	supported
Innovativeness	<---	Ambiguity	.151	.282	.534	.593	NOT support
Innovativeness	<---	Conflict	.090	.110	.817	***	supported
Risk_taking	<---	Conflict	.117	.113	1.039	***	supported
Autonomy	<---	Conflict	.200	.125	1.599	***	supported

Source: from data analysis (2025)

HY3/ the relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Organization commitment

To assess the relationship between customer role clarity and customer participation, structural equation modelling has been employed and a measurement model of these constructs has been assessed. Figure 4, reveals that reflective indicators have been used for the measurement of latent constructs and non-causal relationship has been studied among different constructs, by drawing path.

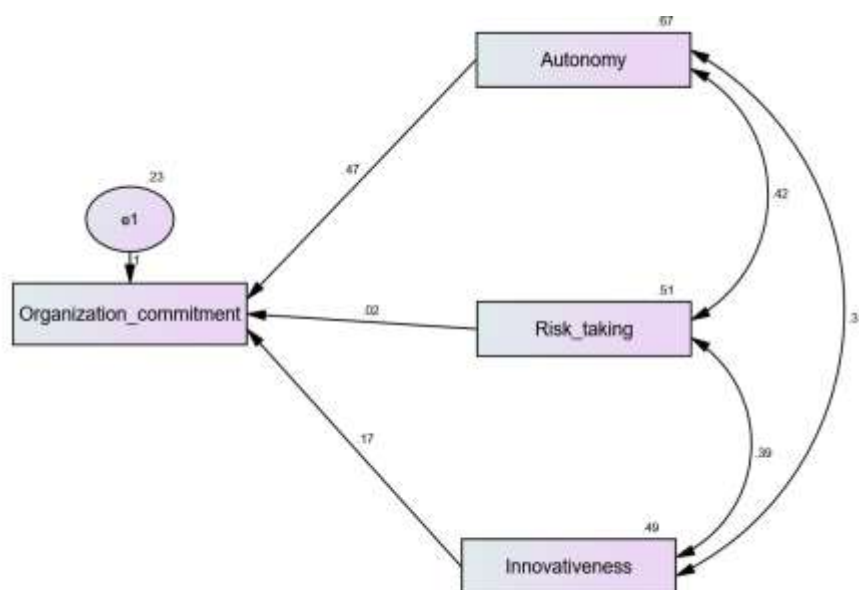


Figure 3. path analysis

Table 7. bath analysis from Entrepreneurial Orientation and Organization commitment

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Results
Organization_commitment	<---	Autonomy	.467	.100	4.670	***	Support
Organization_commitment	<---	Risk_taking	.017	.154	.108	***	support
Organization_commitment	<---	Innovativeness	.171	.129	1.331	***	support

Source: from data analysis (2025)

HY4/ the Mediating role of entrepreneurial orientation between employee empowerment and organization commitment

To assess the mediating role of entrepreneurial orientation between employee empowerment and organization commitment, structural equation modelling has been employed and a measurement model of these constructs has been assessed. Figure 3 reveals that reflective indicators have been used for the measurement of latent constructs and non-causal relationship has been studied among different constructs, by drawing path.

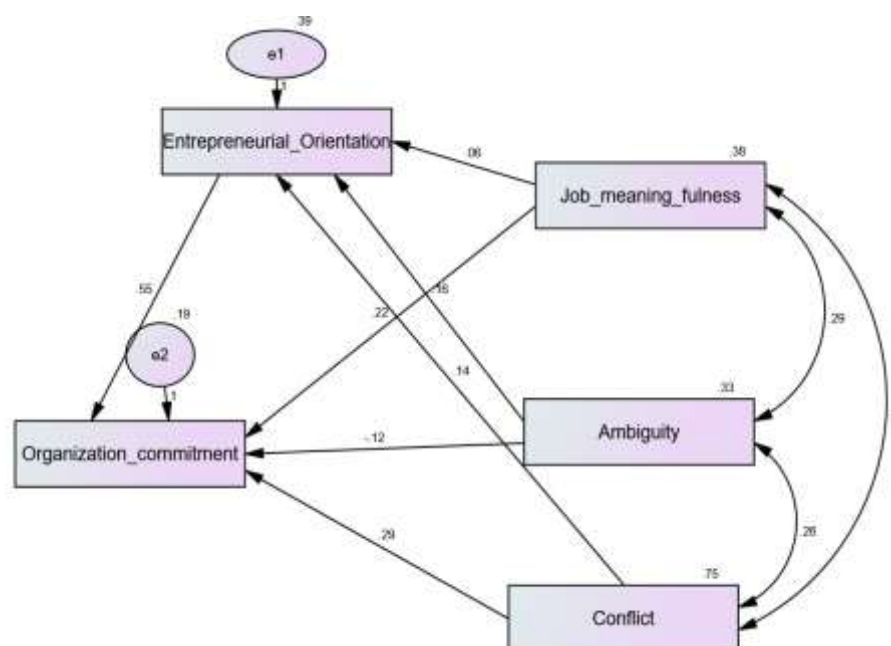


Figure 4. path analysis

Table 8. Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Entrepreneurial Orientation	<---	Job meaning fulness	.063	.216	.292	.771
Entrepreneurial Orientation	<---	Ambiguity	.159	.261	.610	.542
Entrepreneurial Orientation	<---	Conflict	.136	.102	1.333	.183
Organization commitment	<---	Job meaning fulness	.216	.149	1.445	.149
Organization commitment	<---	Ambiguity	-.120	.180	-.666	.506
Organization commitment	<---	Conflict	.295	.071	4.144	***
Organization commitment	<---	Entrepreneurial Orientation	.554	.080	6.912	***

Source: from data analysis (2025)

Table 9. Direct Effects (Group number 1 - Default model)

	Conflict	Job_meaning_fulness	Ambiguity	Entrepreneurial Orientation
Entrepreneurial Orientation	.136	.063	.159	.000
Organization commitment	.295	.216	-.120	.554

Source: from data analysis (2025)

Table 10. Indirect Effects (Group number 1 - Default model)

	Conflict	Job_meaning_fulness	Ambiguity	Entrepreneurial Orientation
Entrepreneurial Orientation	.000	.000	.000	.000
Organization commitment	.075	.035	.088	.000

Source: from data analysis (2025)

Type for mediation: Entrepreneurial Orientation partial mediate between employee empowerment and organization commitment.

Discussion

The aim of this study was investigating the mediating Role of Entrepreneurial orientation in the relationship between employee Empowerment and organization Commitment, the case of research (SMEs) in Saudi Arabia.

The finding of the study indicate that the employee Empowerment (Job meaningfulness, Ambiguity, Conflict) has significant effect on Organization commitment the finding support with previous studies manufacturing (SMEs) have employee Empowerment which can be implementation of employee Empowerment positively impacts regarded as a competitive advantage, Job meaningfulness positively impacts Organization commitment. (Mohamed, et al., 2019)

The findings reveal that Employee empowerment has a positive influence on Entrepreneurial Orientation, Job meaningfulness positively impacts Autonomy. These findings are typically consistent with the result of (Nawaiseh, et al.,2023) who indicated that of the influence of empowering employees on their entrepreneurial attitudes within the domain of the banking sector. The results showed that ambiguity has a negative impact on autonomy and Innovativeness.

shows that significant positive relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Organization commitment, The results of the study revealed that there is significant positive relationship between Risk-taking and organization commitment. These findings are typically consistent with the result of (Iqbal, et al., 2021) who indicated that of the influence of transformational leadership among entrepreneurship orientation and organizational commitment

The findings reveal that entrepreneurial orientation partially mediates the relationship between employee empowerment and organization commitment Although Entrepreneurial _Orientation mediates the relationship between Conflict and organization commitment; however, it does not mediate the relationship between Ambiguity and organization commitment.

CONCLUSION

This study empirically justifies a framework that identifies three dimensions of employee empowerment and explains the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational commitment within Saudi Arabian SMEs. By developing the *Job_meaning_fulness* dimension through a holistic synthesis perspective and drawing on survey data from 75 industrial companies, the research strengthens the generalizability of findings beyond the limits of prior quantitative and deductive studies. Its main implication lies in guiding decision-makers to understand how managerial empowerment can foster stronger organizational commitment through entrepreneurial orientation. Future research could expand this framework across different sectors or cultural contexts to test its broader applicability and explore additional factors influencing empowerment and commitment.

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