

# Harmony in the Workplace and Job Autonomy: An Empirical Study

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## Abstract

This paper aims to determine the degree to which harmony in the workplace affects job independence at the National Bank of Iraq (NBI). The study used random sample method by distributing (173) questionnaire forms electronically to the target community represented by NBI employees. The findings of the study showed a direct impact between the dimensions of harmony in the workplace and the job independence. The dimension of self-harmony in functional independence, which provides a positive work environment, can provide a strong incentive to perform tasks and complete them in the required manner. This commitment reinforces the empowerment of management for working individuals and grants them the freedom to make decisions and determine their methods of work on their own. Harmony with the administration contributes to enhancing functional independence, because of the freedom and confidence it can provide, affecting the way work is arranged, tasks are scheduled, and the style and methods of their achievement. It can also affect the dimension of harmony at the level of the organization by following the ethical rules and ensuring the openness and transparency of operations, which ensures the generation of trust that leads to independence. Therefore, the study made some recommendations and proposals to be taken in the future studies in this field.

**Keywords:** organizational behavior, Harmony in the Workplace, Job Autonomy, National Bank of Iraq.

## 1. Introduction

Business organizations are usually established according to predetermined objectives, and all efforts and resources are directed to achieve those goals. Human resources and manpower are the main and most influential players in this process. Harmony is playing a major role in balancing relations within the organization. It is an effective way to prevent any form of conflict or organizational instability and assist in improving performance by enhancing work productivity and creating a high level of job satisfaction (Babson and Lebura, 2018). Therefore, as part of efforts to enhance organizational efficiency, employee behaviors

have become a modern academic area of interest aimed at creating a business environment in which individuals are part of the work procedures and decisions. The concept of harmony in general is a theory that permeates all aspects of human activity and nature as a whole, it can be found in mathematics, Astrophysics and Cultural studies. Researches often focused on conflict between groups, but few have focused on the subject of harmony in the context of work and organizations as a whole. Studies were only arguing issues related to and surrounding the motives and objectives of harmony, but not

focusing on the quality of relationships that lead to harmony (Corbin, 2017)

According to (Abdul Zahra, 2020), researches and theories dealing with harmony in the workplace are still in their early stages, so the study addressed it as a value, a goal or a catalyst and a general situation without addressing the specific characteristics of it and defining it as a high degree of reciprocity and mutual respect that creates a sense of belonging in the long term can be referred to harmony. As a state of peace and relative stability in the organization that involves trust between individuals and the community based on previous literature, the current challenge posed by modern business organizations is to increase employees' awareness of their rights and privileges. More importantly, according to (Nkiinebari et al., 2014) the lack of harmony in an organization can generate disagreement and resistance to the organization's orientations. Treating each other as partners in a way that is mutually beneficial does not assume that there are no conflicts at all, but instead assumes collective and proactive agreements and effective procedures that limit and prevent differences from turning into conflicts from being with those who exercise control and pressure (Fernt et al., 2014).

## 2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

### 2.1 Harmony in the Workplace

Organizations now face many challenges to ensure satisfaction. The commitment and loyalty of employees leads to an increased level of productivity, and most importantly, maintaining the highest level of harmony and mutual trust between individuals working in the workplace (A. R. & Xie, J. L., 2000). Organizations can consist of high levels of harmony in workplaces where there are no unwanted negative behaviors that violate dignity or create a substance to intimidate and insult employees, One of the best ways to promote relationships and harmony within the workplace is by promoting dialogue and effective communication not only between colleagues but also between employees and their management, as well as encouraging the workforce to express their ideas, opinions and proposals. It can also promote successful application of work-life balance practices in the

organization and the application of flexible working practices and a fair vacation system.

(Akum & Abdullahi, 2013) believes that harmony in the workplace is the result of the absorption of interests by the parties concerned in a way that is understanding and leveling in determining appropriate working conditions that achieve workers' satisfaction and thus achieve high levels of productivity.

(Puttapalli & Vuram, 2012) pointed out that harmony in the workplace is concerned with the nature of the relationship between management and employees with regard to the conditions and provisions of employment in the workplace. It produces a state of cooperation between the employee and management willingly aimed at achieving the objectives of the organization, and considers harmony in the workplace important and necessary for organizations because it is considered an encouraging factor for teamwork and leads to happiness in the workplace for working members and thus achieve high levels of organizational performance.

### 2.2 Job Autonomy

Job Autonomy refers to the amount of freedom and independence within the job and enabling the employee to schedule his work and determine the procedures. Job Autonomy (Yucel, 2019) is defined as an informal appreciation of how a job is being performed. Job Autonomy reveals the extent to which the job allows freedom, Independence, and discretion to schedule work, make decisions, and choose methods used to perform tasks (Spagnoli & Molinaro, 2020). According to (Haar et al. al., 2019), they indicate that Job Autonomy is the degree of flexibility granted to the employee in managing his tasks. (Badri & Panatik, 2020) has shown that Job Autonomy is the freedom granted to workers to take control of matters effectively throughout the completion of their work and the degree to which employees can make independent decisions. While all (Shah & Haseeb, 2019) agreed that Job Autonomy is the degree to which the job provides great freedom, independence and discretion to the individual in scheduling work and determining the procedures that should be used in its implementation, while Job Autonomy represents the degree to which employees can

determine the way in which they carry out tasks themselves (Arnold & Posch, 2020). The autonomy gives employees the opportunity to allocate their time and attention in a way that matches their personal needs and schedules (Shehzad et al, 2012).

H1: There is a positive and significant influential relationship of workplace harmony on Job Autonomy. Eight sub-hypotheses emerge from this hypothesis:

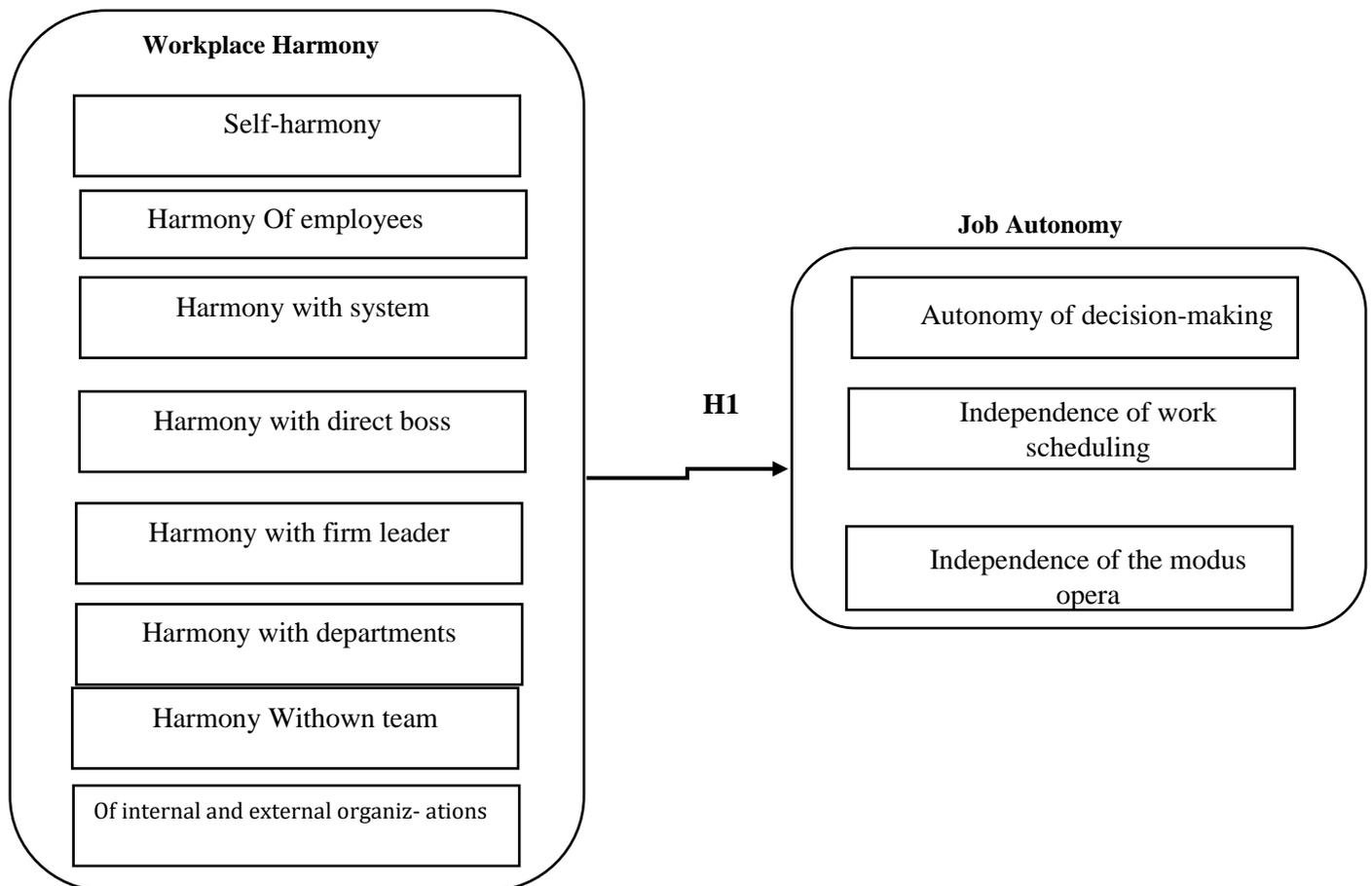


Figure 1. Research model

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Sampling and Data Collection Method

The sample study community included the 358 employees of the National Bank of Iraq, and a specific sample selected "Target Population" consisting of workers directly related to the study variables and objectives, and accordingly the questionnaire was distributed to working individuals receiving their instructions remotely as the most suitable personnel for the study variables, and the number of (140) employees, and to determine the appropriate sample size (Krejci & Moran, 1970). It is the most reliable and famous way to determine the sample size, and according to the schedule it

requires (113) status to represent a community. The demographic characteristics of the participants collected from the questionnaire are displayed in Table 2. Accordingly, the largest proportion of male respondents were 59%, while the proportion of females was 41%, while respondents in the 20-29 age group (the largest proportion of respondents) were 53.2 percent of all respondents. The results showed a discrepancy in the experience of the respondents, with experienced employees (1-5 years) representing the largest proportion of respondents and 51.8% relatively small with the experienced group 5-10 years old who were 46%.

Table1: Demographical Characteristics of the Participants

%	f		
59.0	82	<b>Male</b>	<b>sex</b>
41.0	57	<b>Female</b>	
53.2	74	<b>29 – 20year</b>	<b>Age</b>
38.1	53	<b>39 – 30year</b>	
7.9	11	<b>49 – 40year</b>	
.7	1	<b>More than 50 years</b>	
51.8	72	<b>5 – 1year</b>	
46.0	64	<b>10 – 5year</b>	
2.2	3	<b>More than 50 years</b>	
<b>%100</b>	<b>139</b>		

3.2 Scales

Functional independence variable: The newly developed (Boog et. al., 2020;3) scale was adopted based on the most reliable scale according to previous studies. Although the (Chin, 2015) scale was adopted to measure harmony in the workplace because it is according to the researcher’s knowledge, the most comprehensive and accurate scale for measuring the variable and it has been adopted in most of the international studies that dealt with harmony in the workplace. It was relied on the five-Point likert scale (Fully Agree - Agreed - Neutral - Not Agree - Totally Not Agree) to measure the variables

of the current study, and ensure harmony in the workplace based on a scale (Chin, 2015). It included eight Dimensions (self-harmony, harmony with work colleagues, harmony with the administrative system of the organization, harmony with the direct supervisor, harmony with the leader of the organization, harmony with the organizational units, harmony with the work team, and harmony at the level of the organization) and it included (32) paragraphs ,

While the functional independence variable according to the (Dorsten-Boog et. al., 2020) scale included three dimensions (independence in decision-making, independence in work schedule, independence in work style) from which (9) your paragraphs are divided.

4. Evaluation of structural models

his part of the study is concerned with conducting the last step of evaluating the measurement model. and the test hypotheses of the study, as well as measuring the explanatory power of the variables through the interpretation coefficient R2.

4.1 Criteria for evaluating the structural model

The structural model is concerned with examining the relationships between the model variables, and the process of evaluating . the structural model in the partial least squares structural model PLS-SEM includes four criteria, which are reviewed in Table ().

Table (2).

<b>acceptable limit</b>	<b>Standard</b>
VIF contrast amplification factor < 5	Linear Correlation Assessment VIF
t value > 1.96; p value < 0.05	Significance of path coefficients
0.75 ,0.50 ,0.25indicate small, medium, large effect	The coefficient of determination R <sup>2</sup>
0.35 ,0.15 ,0.02refer to small, medium, large effect	Effect size f <sup>2</sup>

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on(Hair et al., 2017).

4.2 Linear Correlation Assessment

Collinearity Assessment occurs when there is a high level of correlation between two independent variables, and according to the rule of (Hair et al., 2017), the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) should not be more than (5).

4.3path parameters The Path Coefficients

represent the direct effects between the model variables, whose value is between ±1, so the effect relationship is positive when the path

coefficient is more than zero, and the effect relationship is negative when the effect coefficient is less than zero. For the purpose of verifying the significance of the path coefficient, the bootstrapping process must be performed, which results in calculating the value of  $t$ , which must be equal to or more than 1.96, in addition to calculating the value of  $P$ , which must be equal to or less than 0.05 (Hair et al., 2017, p. 195).

#### 4.4 The coefficient of determination

The coefficient of Determination  $R^2$ , or what is also called the interpretation coefficient, works to find the extent to which the independent variable can explain the dependent variable. Its value ranges between 0 and 1, as the closer the value of the coefficient of determination is to one, the greater the ability of the independent variable to explain the dependent variable.

##### 4.4.1 The coefficient of determination The effect

size measures the extent to which the variable contributes to the formation of the value of the coefficient of determination, so the effect size will be very important in measuring the extent to which each dimension contributes to the formation of the value of the coefficient of determination. p. 201) indicates that the values 0.02, 0.15, 0.35 indicate a small, medium and large effect of the effect size.

Table (3) The results of the evaluation of the main hypothesis model

$R^2$ the average	coefficient of determination $R^2$	Effect size $f^2$	Results	p Value	t Value	Path parameter	VIF	path
0.352	0.347	0.543	Accept	0	12.723	0.593	1	WPH→JOA

Table (2) presents the results of the evaluation of the structural model for the third main hypothesis, which showed that the path coefficient (influence) reached (0.773), and to verify the significance of the effect, the values of  $t$  and  $p$  meet the required limits and thus accept this hypothesis.

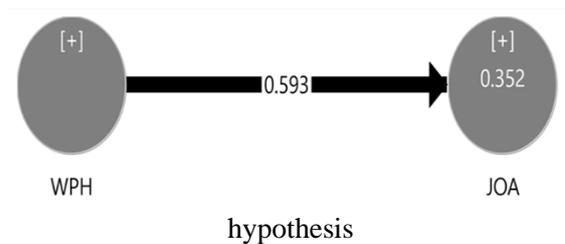
##### 5.1 Test the sub-hypothesis of the main hypothesis

The sub-hypothesis of the main hypothesis states the following:

## 5. Results

The main hypothesis (H1) states: "There is a positive relationship of morally significant impact of workplace harmony in career independence" and for the purpose of testing this hypothesis, the structural model was built in figure (1) Table (3) also reviews the results of the evaluation of the structural model of this hypothesis.

Figure (2) Structural model to test the main hypothesis



Note: The values on the arrows indicate the path coefficient, while the values on the circles represent the modified determination coefficient, and the symbol  $[+]$  indicates that the paragraphs are hidden because they are no longer needed when evaluating the structural model.

Source: SmartPLS output.

- H1a: There is a positive, significant effect relationship for the subjective consistency in Job Autonomy.
- H1b: There is a positive, significant effect relationship of harmony with co-workers in Job Autonomy.
- H1c: There is a positive and significant influence relationship with the administrative system in terms of Job Autonomy.
- H1d: There is a positive and significant influence relationship with the direct officials in terms of Job Autonomy.

- H1e: There is a positive and significant influence relationship of harmony with the organization's leader in Job Autonomy.
- H1f: There is a positive, morally significant impact relationship with the organizational units in terms of Job Autonomy.
- H1f: There is a positive and significant influence relationship with the work team in terms of Job Autonomy. •
- H1g: There is a positive, significant influence relationship of consistency at the level of the organization in Job Autonomy. For the purpose of testing these hypotheses, the structural model was built in Figure (2), and Table (3) shows the results of the evaluation of the structural model for these hypotheses.

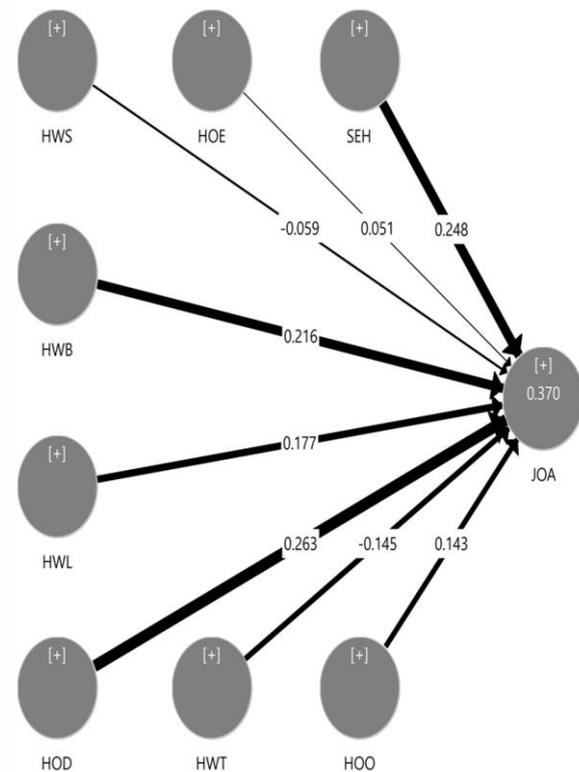


Figure (3) shows the structural model for testing the sub-hypotheses of the main hypothesis. Note: The values on the arrows indicate the path coefficient, while the values on the circles represent the modified determination coefficient, and the symbol [+] indicates that the paragraphs are hidden because they are no longer needed when evaluating the structural model.

Source: SmartPLS output

Table (4) Results of the evaluation of the sub-hypotheses model for the main hypothesis

R <sup>2</sup> the average	coefficient of determination R <sup>2</sup>	Effect size f <sup>2</sup>	Results	P Value	t Value	Path parameter	VIF	path	H1
0.370	0.407	0.083	Accept	0.011	2.56	0.248	1.255	SEH→JOA	H1a
		0.003	reject	0.573	0.564	0.051	1.414	HOE→JOA	H1b
		0.005	reject	0.417	0.811	-0.059	1.214	HWS→JOA	H1c
		0.041	Accept	0.029	2.265	0.216	1.913	HWB→JOA	H1d
		0.033	Accept	0.035	2.115	0.177	1.581	HWL→JOA	H1e
		0.077	Accept	0.025	2.242	0.263	1.507	HOD→JOA	H1f
		0.018	reject	0.187	1.322	-0.145	1.977	HWT→JOA	H1g
		0.026	Accept	0.041	2.012	0.143	1.317	HOO→JOA	H1h

Source: SmartPLS output

Table (3) presents the results of evaluating the structural model for the sub-hypotheses of the third main hypothesis, which showed that the path coefficients for the hypotheses (H1a, H1d, H1e, H1f, H1h) are significant and that they

meet the required limits of the values of t and p. For the purpose of clarifying the explanatory power, the adjusted coefficient of determination R<sup>2</sup> reached (0.370), and this indicates that the dimensions of the consistency variable in the workplace explain the variable of Job Autonomy by 37%, and the rest of the

percentage are other factors that the study did not address.

## 6. Conclusion

The results of the study showed that the dimensions of harmony in the workplace affect the Job Autonomy of providing a positive working environment that contributes to maintaining the commitment in the performance of duties and provides a strong incentive to perform and complete tasks as required. This commitment enhances the empowerment of the administration of working personnel and gives them the freedom to decide and determine their methods of work themselves and that harmony with the direct official and the leader of the organization can provide freedom, consideration and confidence that directly affect the way the business is arranged, scheduling tasks and the method of accomplishing themselves. Harmony with organization's sections as a whole contributes to promoting independence by allocating resources to different departments and encouraging the organization's action policy to cooperate in their own country and delegate tasks. In the light of the review and analysis of the study's findings, a number of recommendations that can in turn be reflected on the bank under the study can be summarized by providing an appropriate psychological environment and by applying ideas and methods that reduce the sense of rejection of workers and promote a spirit of harmony and social support at all levels of the organization. This leads to empower working individuals and give them sufficient space to present self-initiatives and identify and provide support and powers to make decisions about their work to develop their experiences, enhance their sense of responsibility and develop a flexible timetable for the performance of the tasks required of working personnel, and allowing them to plan how to schedule their work within the required period.

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