

# The Effects of Empowerment and Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) on Organizational Commitment of local administration in Jordan

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## Abstract

The fundamental purpose of Jordanian municipality offices in terms of supporting socioeconomic development within its specific jurisdiction is to provide excellent services to consumers and diverse stakeholders. However, in the Jordanian context, municipalities have been recognized as having huge debts, indicating that self-generated money is insufficient for municipalities to embrace their statutory duties as engines of community progress. Furthermore, numerous municipalities are associated with bad governance, waste, corruption, and maladministration, as indicated by an increase in the magnitude of debts. As a result, this study analyzes the impacts of leader–member exchange (LMX) and empowerment on organizational commitment in Jordanian municipal offices. In Jordan, very little empirical research has been undertaken on this topic employing these variables in a single model. As a consequence, a structured survey was undertaken, and 359 government employees were chosen using cluster random sample. Based on social exchange theory, the hypotheses were investigated using the SEM-AMOS program 22.0. According to the statistical findings, empowerment and LMX have a considerable influence on organizational commitment. As a result of the findings, it was determined that there is an urgent need to focus on empowerment and leader–member interchange in order to obtain improved commitment from Jordan's municipal offices.

*Keywords: Empowerment, Commitment, local administration*

## 1. Introduction

According to Gronroos (2016) around the world service industry has generate more than 50 percent of GDP and total employment in the developed countries. Whereas, the service sector in this region of the world, particularly in Jordan, has risen significantly in response to the world's expanding growth. However, services provided by the municipality offices to the local community is not in a good shape though service industry is growing in Jordan. Basically, local government is under the dominion of the central government in Jordan and the power of decision taking is kept in the hand of the local government to manage within its locality (Henson & Beehr 2018, Abdulrab, M.,2018, Almaamari,Q.,2021).

Moreover, the massive urbanization of local zones which connect considerably with the nation's economic progress causes of complications concerning city governance and thus, municipality is feeling incredible pressure to provide quality services to the locality in Jordan (Zohar & Polachek, 2017). Furthermore, numerous municipalities are associated with bad governance, waste, corruption, and maladministration, as indicated by an increase in the magnitude of debt (Agyapong 2017, World Bank, 2017). As a result, enhancing the municipality and conversion its valuable human resources to give exceptional and improved best service to stakeholders and customers in Jordan in the twenty-first century is needed (Rose-Ackerman 2017, Abdulrab, M.,2017, Al-Tahitah, A.,2017). As a result, at this point, it is vital to study how to improve municipal service quality, determine what interventions are required, and identify the basic challenges in overcoming Jordan's existing municipal problems (Al-Ababneh, 2017,ALmaamari, 2020). Hence, this study examines leader–member exchange and empowerment which can effect on the organizational commitment of Jordanian municipal authorities.

## 2. Background of Jordanian Municipalities

According to World Bank (2017) Jordanian Municipality is a historical component of the local government in Jordan. Since the establishment there was six municipalities in Jordan. The first municipality is municipality Irbid was established

in 1881, followed by the Municipality of El-Salt was established in 1887, Karak municipality in 1893, Ma'an Municipality in 1898, Amman Municipality 1909, and Jerash Municipality in 1910. Then the number of municipal councils in Jordan has increased significantly, in 1994, there were 279 municipal councils, 358 village councils and 33 joint service councils, totaling 670 councils (Ministry of Municipalities, 2010). The article 121 of the Jordanian Constitution provides as follows: "Municipal affairs and local councils run by local or municipal councils in accordance with special laws". Since the early years of the establishment of the Emirate of Jordan, Jordan has recognized the importance of the role of the municipal councils which they play in providing and the development of various services and facilities for the inhabitants of these councils. The first law regulating the affairs of the municipal councils was promulgated in March 1925. This law continued until the promulgation of the Municipalities Law No. 9 of 1938 and the Municipalities Law No. 29 of 1955. In accordance with this law, the municipal council gave the personal personality of financial independence, the right of ownership and prosecution. A set of laws, regulations and instructions were also issued clarifying the tasks entrusted to the local councils and their chairman. In 2007, the Municipalities Law No. 14 of 2007 was issued, which added the developmental role of municipal councils.

According to World Bank (2017), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs is pursuing its new strategic plan for the years (2015-2020) approved by the Council of Ministers focused on three reformist approaches: Legislative reform, reform of financial, administrative reform. Each of the three axes included a set of measures. In the legislative aspect, the ministry prepared a project the new Municipal Law No. (41) for the year 2015, which has been adopted in all its constitutional stages and is being amended, a wide range of laws and regulations are in line with new requirements and international standards following the amendment of the Municipalities Law, as for financial reform, the Ministry and the Council of Ministers have multiplied the share of financial municipalities of the revenues of hydrocarbons from (100) million to reach (220) million USD annually, and municipalities were also provided with provisions (75) million for the implementation of asphalt mixes for municipal streets in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Works and Housing.

Moreover, it is essential to search for new methods to acquire the competitive advantages to be stabilized municipality. Since, it is clear statuesque of breaking through new accelerating and changing challenges at work environment that occurred as result of the impact of globalization made the whole world as a small village in terms of increasingly competitions, liberating the world exchanges, eruption of knowledge and telecommunications, and technology. It is therefore a need for inventing organizations as well as administrative methods to dace those challenges so that it may achieve the target goals and satisfy the receivers' needs from municipality offices as services.

### **3. Literature Review**

#### *3.1. Organizational Commitment (OC)*

Gao - Urhahn (2016) claimed that Organizational commitment is a person's emotional link with an organization that helps to achieve good organizational productivity. Whereas, Gonzalez-Morales and Steiger-Mueller (2010), mentioned that OC is an identification sense, involvement, and loyalty displayed by a person towards the organization when an individual aligns extremely closely with the program, goals, objectives, and system of the institute. Furthermore, OC is traditionally tied to the qualities, vocations, and performance of employees, as well as the social and environmental aspects of an organization (Porter & Riesenmy, 2016). Mendes and Jesus (2018), were stated that commitment is the link between individual and individual conduct, in which members must rely on each other and accept responsibility for their acts and attitude with the organization. The ideas of organizational commitment frequently tie the employee's action to his or her mind set (Mueller & Lee 2002). Mathieu and Zajac (1990) confirms that OC is the interpersonal attachment between employees and the organization's aims, further describe the traits of committed employees as the ones willing to stay with the institution in times of need, and express their commitment by showing up to work on a regular basis, completing a full day, and being prepared to go above and beyond, looks after company assets, and feels being a component of the institution's vision and mission. Hence, organizational commitment indicates the employee and organization relationship on which employee belongs to organization and organization also belongs to employee for better and superior performance (Naji et al.,2022).

#### *3.2. Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)*

Several studies have provided evidence regarding to the relationship between organizational commitment and LMX quality and claimed that organizational and managerial support is critical in boosting OC (Allen and Meyer 1990). A variety of modern leadership theories investigate the influence of leaders' activities on the results of the individuals or teams they manage, LMX theory, on the other hand, was established to examine the leader-member dyadic connection in order to explain outcomes at the member, team, and organizational levels (Sarbin and Allen,1954). According to Graen and Cashman, (1975) LMX indicates those models which is developed on relationship between leader's different qualities and their subordinates. LMX is a theoretical approach to build a relationship with leaders and his juniors to know the leadership at work (Martin, 2018). The assistances of high quality LMX associations are many, together with superior treatment, improved differential provision of official and casual rewards, sufficient access to supervisors, and more

performance related comment (Beshr et al., 2023; Henson & Beehr, 2018). On the contrary, juniors in less quality LMX associations frequently feel the particularly different; supervisors provide minimal emotional trust and support, while followers get few, if any, advantages outside of the work contract (Doden, and Grote, 2018, Henson & Beehr 2018).

### *3.3. Empowerment*

Empowerment, is a widely used concept in the world of management and organizational psychology (Fourie 2009) and has been applied in multiple contexts (Greasley et al., 2018). According to Spreitzer, Kizilos, and Nason (2017) empowerment is the activity of allowing employees to make decisions at work by improving their freedom in decision making. From a motivational standpoint, Conger and Kanungo (1988) characterized empowerment and linked it to the idea of self-efficacy. According to Harris, Wheeler, and Kacmar (2015) it is a technique for increasing organizational colleagues' emotions of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, on the other hand, is the confidence in an individual's ability to arrange the motivation, action plans, and cognition resources required to assert power over actions in their existence (Bandura, 1989). As a result, Conger and Kanungo (1988) considered empowerment to be a "motivational construct" that permits and mobilizes self-efficacy. Furthermore, empowerment is diverse and should not be seen as a single idea (Muduli & Pandya, 2018). Riger (1993) described empowerment at the individual level as a process through which a person exerts influence over others and critically evaluates their surroundings. These conceptions of empowerment are intrinsically tied to (Teran 2005) conception of conscientization, as well as the procedures and psychological structures essential for its successful implementation, as well as his purpose of enabling individuals. The connection between the above meanings of empowerment and freedom is when people develop a cognizance of their environment and their work; those who feel intrinsically motivated to accomplish objectives over which they think they are in charge, and their confidence in their capacity to fulfill these objectives increases their sense of empowerment ( Beshr et al., 2023; Alkadash & Aljileedi, 2020).

### *3.4. Empowerment and Organizational Commitment*

Thomas and Velthouse state that (1990) empowerment admirers are expected to have more freedom to take decisions and feel extra responsibility is given, which in line increases the level of commitment of them to their organizations. Hen and Seo (2016) identify both straight and circuitous influences of deformation leadership on organizational commitment via emotional empowerment and they mentioned there is straight significant influences of deformation leadership on organizational commitment. Khanjari (2017) also found direct effect of empowerment on commitment. Whereas, Joo and Shim (2017) claim that emotional empowerment as predictor of organizational commitment. However, emotionally empowered persons have a habit to consider that they are creating a difference in expressive methods, it leads in top-level organizational engagement and performance for the sake of their organization (Han & Seo, 2016). Furthermore, the degree to which empowerment touches supervisors and general staff will differ among organizations to organizations. It will be contingent, in part, on senior administrators' willingness to relinquish power and build work partnerships with their subordinates, and in part, on the training the employees have received to develop the skills necessary for acceptable new tasks (Emam & Jais, 2020; Irawanto & Mu'ammal, 2020, Wazir,2020). According to Conger & Kanungo (1988) Employee empowerment encourages people to work by delegating authority from the top to the bottom levels of an institution. Liden (2000) claimed Workers are encouraged in their job when they are empowered, and the empowering ability may help to generate a strong sense for supported employees, which indicates they are willing to address for the organization. Thus, empowerment is directly allied with organizational commitment . Based on previous research findings, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study:

- H1. There is a significant positive effect of Empowerment on Organizational Commitment.

### *3.5. LMX and Organizational Commitment*

The association between leader-member exchange and commitment has become the foundation of a new era of managing diversified workforce as claimed by Yahaya and Ebrahim (2016). Meyer and Allen (1997) Employees' affective organizational commitment was shown to be significant relates to the quality of the work relationship with their manager. Kurtessis (2017) indicated that supervisory support and perceived leadership ability related positively to affective organizational commitment. It is therefore expected that the leadership behaviors of the supervisor shall be positively correlated to the level of organizational commitment of subordinates. Moreover, leader-member exchange theory clarifies the association in the form of low or high quality among various leaders and subordinates (Ghaleb et al., 2022; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Top quality exchanges specify that subordinates have superior associations with their supervisors (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). That exchanges signify that subordinate tend to practice clearer channels of communication, better support, boosted trust, and encouraged performance. Conversely, according to Gerstner & Day (1997), subordinates in a low-level leader-member exchange association have a different practice as evidenced by voice behaviour.

Employees are hesitant to confront if they do not have a solid relationship with their bosses (Irawanto & Mu'ammal, 2020). The social exchange theory (SET) discusses high-quality interactions between managers and juniors that promote

improved employee performance and organizational commitment (Al-Zoriqi, 2019; Sparrowe & Liden, 2005). Scientific research has looked into how leadership practices are conveyed in order to gain organizational commitment (Mueller & Lee, 2002) discovered a substantial positive association. Kauppila (2016) claimed that quality of LMX has been found to clearly connect with organizational commitment. When subordinates in high leader-member exchange associations are given additional responsibility, support, and influence they will frequently show more loyalty to the organization. Gerstner & Day (1997) found that top quality leader-member exchange relationships lead to employees being extra committed to both task completion as well as assisting the leader in achieving organizational goals. Grounded on the previous research findings, this research proposes also the following hypothesis:

- H2. There is a significant positive effect of Empowerment on Organizational Commitment.

### 3.6. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 depicts the research framework, have two independent variables or exogenous constructs that are empowerment and leader-member exchange. Both of them are higher order constructs having four dimensions (i.e., meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact) in Empowerment construct and having three dimensions (i.e. component1, component2 and component3) in Leader-Member Exchange construct. On the model's right side Organizational Commitment is employed as an endogenous construct or as a dependent variable, while is also having three dimensions (i.e. affective, continuance, and normative). Because the social exchange theory postulates that relationships begin and evolve by one party doing a favor for the other, this study endeavor employed it as an underlying hypothesis, with the other side responding in kind There is an underlying notion that empowerment and exchanges are founded on an individual's first effort, which is then reciprocated through a series of subsequent exchanges (Liao and Chen 2018).

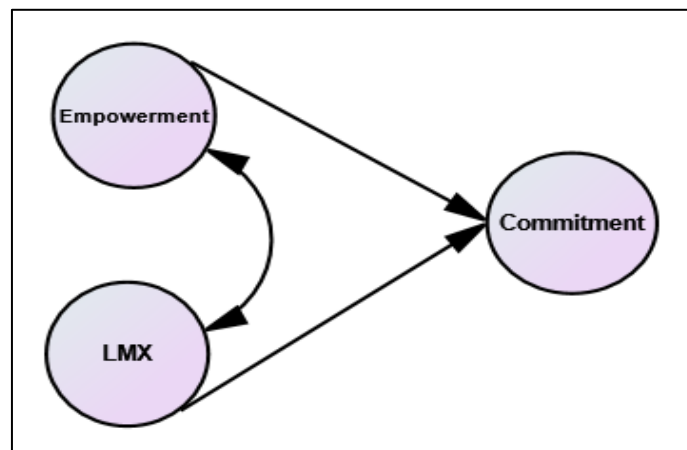


Fig 1. Research Framework

## 4. Research Methodology

Jordan's municipal offices have been targeted. Inside this sense, a structured survey was undertaken and participants were chosen 359 employees using cluster simple random. The hypotheses were investigated using IBM-SEM-AMOS package 22.0. Because SEM is a second-generation multivariate analytic methodology, it is applied in this study (Awang, 2015).

### 4.1. Instrumentation

This study modified and adjusted items from Spreitzer's research for the Empowerment construct (1995). As a result, this study used a total of fifteen (15) items to assess Empowerment as a construct, with the items divided into four dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. For Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) construct this study modified and customized ten (10) items that were divided into three categories for measuring from the research done by Ibrahim (2014). Whereas, based on the work of Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993), this study has been modified and customized eighteen (18) items were classified as three dimensions, namely affective, continuance, and normative for measuring organizational commitment construct. For all three constructs, a 5-point interval scale with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree was utilized in this study.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Measurement Model

To begin, the study's measuring model must be valid, reliable, and unidimensional (Awang 2015). If all of the factor loading values are positive and have a minimum value of 0.6, then unidimensionality is attained (Hair et al. 2010). Construct validity, on the other hand, will be realized when the measurement model's fitness indices obtain three model fit categories (Awang, 2015). To achieve discriminant validity, the model constructs must not be substantially linked. Additionally, Convergent validity will be established if the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value is 0.5 or above. (Hair et al., 2010). In contrast, if the minimal values for Composite Reliability (CR) and AVE are 0.6 and 0.5, respectively, build reliability will be obtained (Awang, 2015, Hair et al., 2010). When the Cronbach Alpha value is 0.7 or above, internal reliability among the items is attained (Nunnally, 1978). The measuring model of empowerment, leader-member exchange, and organizational commitment constructs satisfied the criteria for unidimensionality as well as construct validity, as shown in Figure 2.

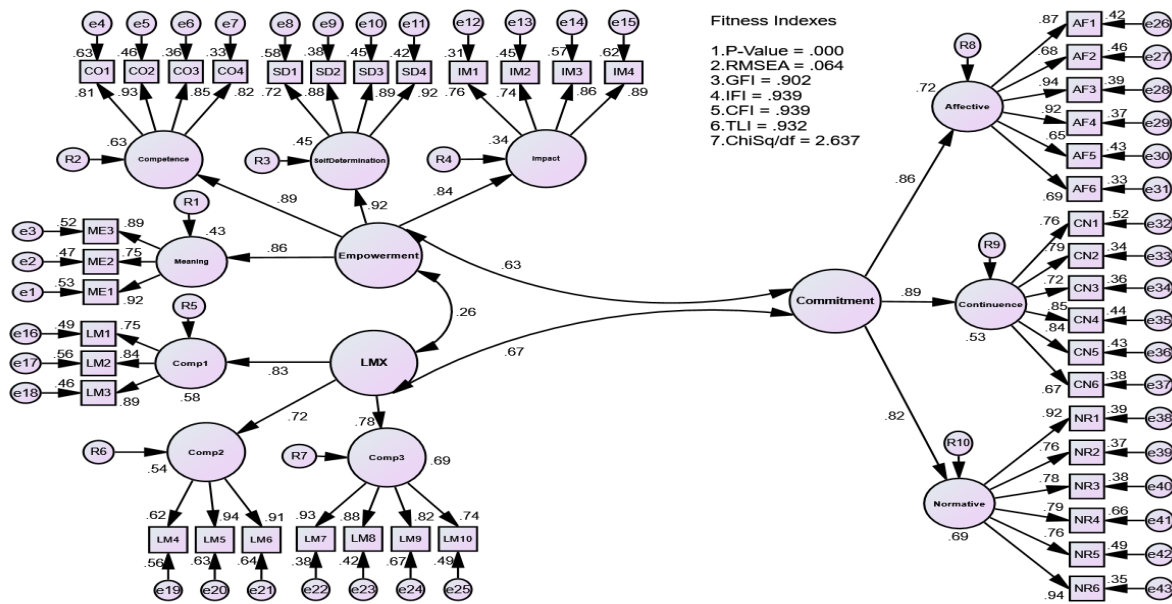


Fig 2. Pooled CFA Output

The factor loading value for each item as well as the Cronbach Alpha, CR, and AVE for each construct; the constructs of leader-member exchange, empowerment, and organizational commitment have attained internal reliability, Convergent validity, and Construct reliability as shown in table 1.

Table 1. The CFA Result for the Measurement Model

Variable	Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR (above 0.6)	AVE (above 0.5)
Empowerment	Meaning	.86	.876	.931	.771
	Competence	.89			
	Self Determination	.92			
	Impact	.84			
Meaning	ME1	.92	.914	.891	.734
	ME2	.75			
	ME3	.89			
Competence	CO1	.81	.854	.915	.729
	CO2	.93			
	CO3	.85			
	CO4	.82			
Self Determination	SD1	.72	.769	.916	.733
	SD2	.88			
	SD3	.89			
	SD4	.92			

Impact	IM1	.76	.758	.887	.664
	IM2	.74			
	IM3	.86			
	IM4	.89			
Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)	Component1	.83	.847	.881	.605
	Component2	.72			
	Component3	.78			
Component1	LM1	.75	.826	.867	.687
	LM2	.84			
	LM3	.89			
Component2	LM4	.62	.759	.871	.699
	LM5	.94			
	LM6	.91			
Component3	LM7	.93	.785	.909	.715
	LM8	.88			
	LM9	.82			
	LM10	.74			
Commitment	Affective	.86	.922	.892	.735
	Continuance	.89			
	Normative	.82			
Affective	AF1	.87	.772	.913	.641
	AF2	.68			
	AF3	.94			
	AF4	.92			
	AF5	.65			
	AF6	.69			
Continuance	CN1	.76	.729	.899	.600
	CN2	.79			
	CN3	.72			
	CN4	.85			
	CN5	.84			
	CN6	.67			
Normative	NR1	.92	.843	.929	.686
	NR2	.76			
	NR3	.78			
	NR4	.79			
	NR5	.76			
	NR6	.94			

According to Awang (2015) and Fornell & Larcker (1981) the correlation between independent variables must be smaller than 0.85 to achieve discriminant validity. The second requirement of discriminant validity is accomplished when the diagonal values for the respective construct) in the table are greater than any values in their rows and columns, respectively (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). So the value in the diagonal is greater than the values in its row and column in Table 2, this study has attained discriminant validity for the model.

**Table 2.** Discriminant Validity Index Summary

Construct	Empowerment	Leader-Member Exchange	Commitment
Empowerment	0.878		
Leader-Member Exchange	0.264	0.777	
Commitment	0.631	0.673	0.857

## 5.2. Structural Model

The hypotheses H1 and H2 are supported, as illustrated in Figure 3. Empowerment has a substantial positive influence on organizational commitment in H1 ( $=0.405$ ,  $P=.001$ ), and leader-member exchange (LMX) has a significant positive effect on organizational commitment in H2 ( $=0.379$ ,  $P=.001$ ). According to Table 3, in the structural model the predictor (i.e. empowerment and LMX) of organizational commitment explains 76.1% of its diversity.

**Table 3.** Squared Multiple Correlation (R2)

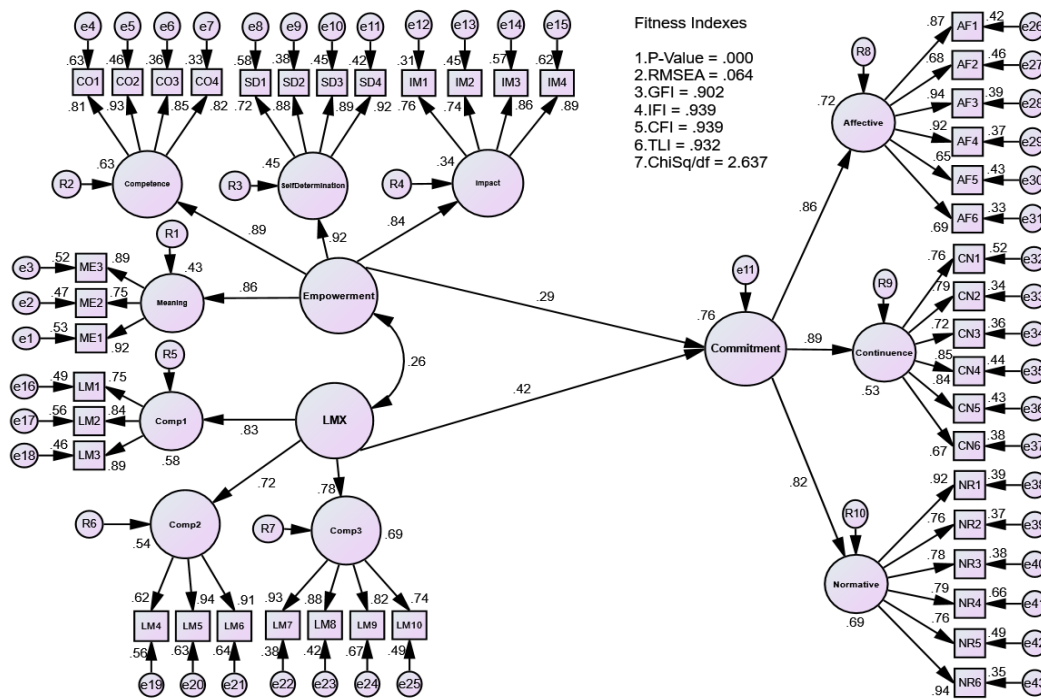
Construct	Estimate (R <sup>2</sup> )
Organizational Commitment	.761

According to Table 3, the determinants of organizational commitment explain 76.1 percent of its variation. In other words, the error variation of organizational commitment accounts for about 23.9 percent of the variation of organizational commitment.

**Table 4.** Standardized Regression Weights

Construct	Path	Construct	Estimate
Organizational Commitment	←	Empowerment	.292
Organizational Commitment	←	LMX	.423

Table 4 depicts the impact of empowerment on Organizational Commitment was 29.2% while 70.8% does not have an impact organizational commitment. Moreover, LMX influence on organizational commitment was 42.3% while 57.7% does not influence.



**Fig 3.** Standardized Regression Weights for Every Path in the Model

**Table 5.** Regression Weight for Path Estimate

Variable	Path	Variable	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
Organizational Commitment	←	Empowerment	.405	0.058	6.790	***	Significant
Organizational Commitment	←	LMX	.379	0.058	6.673	***	Significant

Note: \*\*\* P<0.05

This study's hypothesis was stated as follows: H1, there is a significant positive effect of empowerment on organizational commitment ( $\beta=0.405$ ,  $P=.001$ ) and in H2, there is a significant positive effect of LMX on organizational commitment ( $\beta=0.379$ ,  $P=.001$ ). Table 5 shows that the level of significance for regression weight implies that the possibility of obtaining a CR as high as 6.790 is high and 6.673 respectively. To put it another way, the results of two constructions (i.e., empowerment and LMX) on organizational commitment Construct is extremely significant. As a result, this study concluded that there is a clear need to focus more on empowerment and LMX for getting better organizational commitment and which will ensure better performance of municipality offices in Jordan.

## 6. Implications of the Study

This research has broadened our knowledge of social exchange theory by emphasizing the critical role of empowerment and LMX in improving organizational commitment. Furthermore, this study builds on previous research on the impacts of empowerment and LMX on organizational commitment. According to the findings of this study, empowerment is important for predicting organizational commitment, and LXM is also important for predicting organizational commitment. Thus, this study can serve as a compass for management scholars to determine what other empirical linkages they may be able to offer to the organizational commitment. This project has made significant progress in demonstrating that empowerment and LMX have a significant impact on organizational commitment in Jordanian municipal offices.

## 7. Limitations and Scope for Future Studies

Although the substantial findings and consequences, this study has certain limitations. Initially, the study utilized a cross-sectional research approach, which limits the ability to draw causal explanations. In this light, longitudinal research studies on the framework might be a key arena for future academics on the framework. Additionally, it is critical to recognize that there is a need for extensive prospect highlighting that might assist to boost empowerment and LMX, leading in higher organizational commitment. As a consequence, while the current study only looked at empowerment and LMX, future researchers may try to investigate the influence of additional variables on better organizational commitment.

## 8. Conclusion

The current study has presented empirical support for the idea of organizational commitment by describing how empowerment and LMX might impact it. This study found empowerment and LMX has significant effect on organizational commitment. Hence, the empowerment and LMX is connected with better performance of employees which generates superior organizational commitment. The findings corroborate the explanations of social exchange theory and how empowerment and LMX might be crucial issues in attaining improved organizational commitment. The survey also has major implications for scholars and practitioners to assist them grasp and comprehend empowerment, leader-member exchange, and organizational commitment views. The results have actually attempted to help Jordanian policymakers as well as future academics in seeing the significance of empowerment and LMX in gaining stronger organizational commitment, particularly in developing countries.

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