The Relationship between Empowerment and Organizational Commitment

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ABSTRACT: This study aimed to investigate the relationship between empowerment and organizational commitment of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht branch staffs, Iran. The study was a type of correlation studies and has been implemented as field study in spring 2012. The population included all employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht branch staffs (N=973) that by simple randomly method and using Morgan and Krejciea Table, 276 subjects were selected as sample. The data collecting tool was a questionnaire and data using descriptive and inferential statistical indexes (t-test and Pearson correlation analysis) were analyzed. Results showed that the correlation amount between empowerment and organizational commitment is equal to 0.195 that shows that, in general, empowering can be explaining about 19.5% of organizational commitment variable. Also, determination coefficient between sense of competence and organizational commitment variables, sense of significance and organizational commitment, sense of efficacy and organizational commitment and sense of choice and organizational commitment is equal to 0.334, 0.185, 0.09 and 0.303, respectively which represents a direct and significant relationship of the mentioned component with organizational commitment. Given the significant and direct relationship between the components of empowerment and organizational commitment of Guilan University and Rasht Branch, Islamic Azad University staffs, with the increasing empowerment of the staffs their organizational commitment will also increases.

Keyword: Employee empowerment, Employee organizational commitment, University personnel

INTRODUCTION

Today's organizations are continuously developing technologies and operational processes for excellence in the field of competition (Preeti, 2011). In today's competitive world, one of the important tools for change, to survive organization and to achieve the goals and the concerned missions is human element.

Among this, what gives life to change and also ensures the survival of the organization are human resources. Organizational success is depends on the effective combination of money, materials, machines and human resources to achieve short-term and long-term goals and due to the complexity, variety and uniqueness of organizations have created many specialized fields so as to maximize the potential benefits of each of the components.

The reality is that if there are not creative, knowledgeable, opportunist and explainer people in the organization, we will miss many opportunity and positions. For the purpose of global or even stay at this level, training and placement of new forces to continue the growth and development is required and the future belongs to those who have plan and goal for it (Robbins et al., 2002). Therefore, nowadays the most important source of competitive advantage in organizations is committed, motivated and conscientious employees. Unfortunately, its potential talent often does not use in the organization. Therefore, empowerment is remembered the main challenge of managers in the current era. As a result of these challenges, managers must prepare organizations condition so that each person can be stronger, as a committed and competent workforce is one of the conditions necessary for the effective functioning in the modern organization. Empowerment is a tool for keeping open the staff hand so that can for what they think is the best have the freedom to action without fear of being approved by their managers(Mogheli el al., 2009).
One result of empowerment is to create organizational commitment that is where the employee has found its identity in a particular organization and apply their maximum involvement and participation to optimal perform of their duties (Steers al el., 2003).

Since higher education is one system that is responsible for the development of any country, and on the other hand, University staff is as permanent forces that are affecting in the stability and harmony of this role. Thus, the researcher is seeking to investigate the relationship between them and organizational commitment of Guilan University and Rasht Branch, Islamic Azad University employees by underlying factors such as feelings of competence, meaningfulness, impact and choice as a component of empowerment.

Theoretical Research

Conceptual framework of research variables can be introduced to various aspects of the research variables (psychological empowerment and organizational commitment) and to examine the foundations of hypothesis formation. Mandrus and Wilson (1994) and Ros and Milam (1995) claim that these words are rarely clearly defined and essentially used literally. It could be due to the absence of a historical and empirical context for this concept among the organizational concept. This means that lack of empirical support and theoretical background and being young the issue cause to diversity in the field of scientific opinions and is an obstacle in the formation of scientific infrastructure. Briefly, it can be said that a field that empowerment scientists involved in the study have direct relationship on the type of definition and to their perception of empowerment. It itself creates diversity and complexity in understanding the concepts and provided definitions. In addition, multiple dimensions of this term have become it as a difficult concept to define. As these differences are show, some are focus on people's ability and their willingness to empowerment. On the other hand, some researchers defined team performance, job enrichment, personal job control, independence in performing tasks, work teams, performance related pay systems, and employee stock ownership as empowerment process (Wilson, 1995).

Empowerment means points to give authority and power (Tulloch, 1993). Use of the word power is reflected in all definitions of empowerment. For example, log (1995) states that empowerment should be seen as a redistribution model which thereby strengthen the balance of power in order to cooperation and trust. Conger and Kanengu are focus on power as the central point of empowerment, so that employees have the authority to take decisions and implement them. Lee and Koh (2001) stated that empowerment is a combination of psychological states of subordinate in which subordinates affected by empowering behaviors taken by supervisors (Zahedi al el., 2009).

Empowerment

Empowerment is a new topic to develop human resource. However, due to the diversity of research and studies in the field favor vast literature (Littrell, 2007). In particular, different approaches have been studied (Robbins al el., 2002); although variation in empowerment literature strengthens its content, but caused to the lack of access to integration and to provide a comprehensive model of empowerment (Littrell, 2007).

In summary, these studies can be divided into two parts (Roy, Yong & Lyenger, 2005 ). At first, those research in which scientists are concerned to study the structural approach of empowerment.

In this section, empowerment is studied as a consequence of a process. In terms, this section is called "structural approach" (Peterson et al., 2004).

Studies of the structural approach is more concerned with this subject that what tools and equipment managers provide thereby with the necessary context in the physical environment of work can empower employees. Asinberger (1986), Burke (1986), Block (1987), DiCi (1989), Rayan (1989), Carson (1991), Parker (1994) and ... are including experts in this field (Spreitzer & Doneson , 2005). But the second group of scientists in their research pays more to psychological and cognitive dimension of empowerment. They considered empowerment as an underlyng factor in the recovery and development of organization activities (Unlike the first group who knew it as the result of other factors). According to these scholars, empowerment is an individual's internal factor in the individual and has direct relationship with attitude style, feeling or perception of him from the working environment. They believe that create or strengthen a sense of empowerment in the individual mind he causes to his/her empowerment (Robbins et al., 2002). In fact, this attitude goes far that this new approach will be remembered as a new motivational factor to stimulate and create jobs desire in the employees. Conger and Kanengu (1988), Thomas and Velhouse (1990), Zimmerman (1990), Spreitzer (1994-1996) and ... are some researchers in this area (Littrell, 2007).

In history and antiquity, the first approach attracted the attention of scientists of this area until 1980. But after Thomas and Velhouse studies and Spreitzer research, attitudes toward psychological empowerment were changed. So that, in less than past twenty years, more than hundreds of scientific and research work on the
There are different opinions about the factors influencing and forming psychological empowerment. In most recent decades. And behavioral scientists studying organizational commitment have been offered various definitions about it. Mavdi, Peter and Astirz (1992) consider commitment as identification with the organization which include a strong belief in and acceptance of the goals and values of an organization, tend to spend considerable effort for organizations and intense desire to remain a member of the organization (Kaneshiro, 2008 ). Becker and Kanter (1997) defined organizational commitment as the dependence to organization due to investments that individual do in organization and fringe benefits that the organization will gain through continue to work in the organization (Wilson, 1998 ). Porter et al. know organizational commitment a sort of support from the goals of the organization, striving to achieve the organization's goals and desire to continue membership in the organization (Brown, 2003). Buchanan (19974) knows organizational commitment as a sort of emotional and prejudice attachment to a particular organization that has been determined by three basic parameters in individual attitude toward the organization: 1 - Internalization of goals and values 2 - activity undertaken as part of its role 3 - a sense of belonging to the organization (Michael & Petal, 2009).

Popper (1984) argues that organizational commitment reflects the unique relationship between individual and organization and this relationship is important in explaining individual behavior in organizations (Ibid, 2009). Chalabi (1996) said that commitment is one of the central elements of any community and there is need in each...
case of commitment, conceptually; need for someone to do the work. Operational definition of organizational variable is defined as the extent to which employees are willing to stay in the organization and thanks to its organization and are loyal to it (Tulloch, 1993).

Resources available to organizational commitment knows both attitudinal and emotional perspective for organizational commitment. According to this view, organizational commitment is a strong interest and attachment to the organization and the individual's identification with the organization. The second perspective is viewed organizational commitment as a behavioral issue. This commitment that is called accountable commitment is based on theoretical work of Becker and Hommez. In this view, individuals due to the advantages and benefits that they have and have investment in organizations, attached to the organization and to continue their membership in the organization (Tulloch, 1993).

Hunt and Morgan had been considered organizational commitment at both the micro and macro levels. Commitment in the micro level is commitment to specific organizational groups that including work groups, supervisors and top management and commitment in the macro level is commitment to the organization as a collection and system. Based on this, commitment at the micro level is not necessarily equal to commitment in the macro level. And perhaps there is a strong commitment at the micro level leads to lower commitment to the macro level (Tulloch, 1993).

In this study, Allen and Meyer organizational commitment dimensions have been considered to measure organizational commitment which includes the following aspects:

**Affective commitment**

Allen and Meyer know affective commitment as an emotional attachment of individual to the organization and identification by it. If we define organizational commitment this way, affective commitment is comprised of three aspects:

- A state of emotional attachment to the organization
- The desire of the individual to be identified by the organization
- Desire to continue in the organization

Mueller (1992) related affective commitment to a sense of belonging, attachment and loyalty of the employees to the organization (Michael & Petal, 2009).

**Continuous commitment**

The second organizational dimensions of Allen and Meyer (1990) are a lifelong commitment that is based on the Baker theory of investments (1960). According this theory, over time a person will accumulate capital in organizations that the more experience a person has in the organization, the capital is also more accumulated and more costly to lose it to someone. These investments include time; acquire the special skills of the organization that are not transferable, working camaraderie, political factors and other costs that would discourage people from looking for alternative work.

Continuous commitment refers to the propensity to stay in the organization that increases as a result of the costs of leaving the organization (Labatmediene & Gustainiene, 2007).

**Normative commitment**

The third dimension of organizational commitment is normative commitment that reflects a sense of duty to continue to work with organizations. People who have a high level of normative commitment feel that they are forced to remain in the current organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Allen and Meyer (1997) stated that normative commitment causes workers because of feelings of loyalty or duty to remain in the organization and feel that their work is doing a good job. Normative commitment increases from an inner pressure rising from norms and cause to create a long-term commitment to the organization (Tulloch, 1993).

Zendal and Kothen (1990) are seen normative commitment from the perspective of a moral duty that person felt responsible for the investment that organization has done for him. They believe that when individual feels that organization spent high cost or time preparing for it to do better job, he felt an obligation to stay in the organization (Tulloch, 1993).

Stung and colleagues in 2009 during a research study titled "Special environment with its technology on employee's empowerment", using structural equation modeling analysis concluded that both redesign and employee's empowerment has a direct effect on employee commitment (Tsung et al, 2009).

Souk et al, in 2009 during a research study titled 'empowerment, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, comparison of nurse's reception during the interim period ", using structural equation modeling
analysis concluded that, in general, the high pay to nurses as temporary will cause to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and empowerment (Speritzer, 1995).

Anita and Chiu in 2007 during a research study entitled "Increased organizational commitment through empowerment" concluded that organizational commitment should be continuous that for this, high understanding of employee empowerment will increase organizational commitment. As well as in their findings identified that empowerment at work has a significant relationship with an effective commitment and continuous commitment. Having professional competence has a positive relationship with both dimensions of organizational commitment. The staff also shows greater commitment to the organization (Anita & Chiu, 2007).

Banter In 2005 during a research study entitled "Evaluation and measurement of psychological empowerment and organizational commitment among managers of public organizations in India" concluded that there was a significant positive relationship between employee empowerment and organizational commitment (Bhatnagar, 2005).

Another research is the study of Johnson (2004) that has been done in the Netherlands. The purpose of this study is that whether conflicts with senior managers act as a barrier in the positive relationship between employee empowerment and organizational commitment or not? It is expected that senior managers can determine the goals of the organization and then communicated that objectives to the lower levels of the organization. In a conflict between the empowered employees and senior managers, employees may refuse to accept the goals. However, this research has confirmed the positive relationship between empowerment and organizational commitment, but indicated that there is not a strong positive relationship between empowerment and organizational commitment when there is a conflict with senior management (McArthur, 2002).

Given to the theoretical literature, the conceptual model (Figure 1) derived from Thomas and Velthouse model that thereby the research hypothesis is formed based on it. (Figure 1)

![Figure 1. Analytical model of the study (Tsung et al, 2009)](image)

**Research Objectives**

This study examines the relationship between empowerment and Organizational commitment of Guilan University and Rasht Branch, Islamic Azad University employee. However, this study has other objectives are as follows:

- Measuring the dimensions of empowerment of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch employees.
- Measuring the organizational commitment of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch employees.
- Comparison between empowerment and commitment in Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch employees.

**Research Hypothesis**

There is significant relationship between empowerment and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch.

There is significant relationship between competence and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch.
There is significant relationship between jobs meaningfulness and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch.

There is significant relationship between important and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch.

There is significant relationship between choice and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch.

There is a difference between organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch.

**METHODOLOGY**

This research is used descriptive - analytical method and it is correlation type. In terms of the nature and purpose is an applied research. In this study, questionnaires were used to collect data. The population included all 973 employees of Islamic Azad University, Rasht branch and Guilan University with different age condition, experience, career fields and education who are 656 one in Guilan University and 317 in Islamic Azad University, Rasht branch. As the population of the study is limited, to determine the sample size in this study, Morgan – Krejecia table because of homogeneous of population was used. As a result, due to the population size that was 973 individuals, 276 individuals were selected based on the above table. On the basis of population size compared to each of the universities was determined University of Guilan, with 67 percent including 185 people and Islamic Azad University, Rasht branch with 33% including 91 people, respectively.

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of 37 questions and is composed of two parts. The first section to examine aspects of employee empowerment is composed of 16 questions which are considered as Table 3-2 for each of the components and the following 21 questions deals to assess the level of organizational commitment based on Allen and Meyer view in the studied population. And to answer questions a 5-point Likert scale is used. Validity of the questionnaire was approved by the group of experts and academic experts. Values obtained from the SPSS analysis software shows that the reliability coefficient of Cronbach's alpha was above 0.7 and its reliability was approved. For data analysis, inferential statistics were used.

**FINDINGS**

According to the research methods and the relationships between variables, to determine the level of significance and to confirm or reject hypotheses, the correlation coefficient is used.

There is significant relationship between empowerment and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch. (Table 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient rate</th>
<th>Significance level</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>empowerment and organizational commitment of the employees</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>44/2 %</td>
<td>0/001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 1, it is seen that sig= 0/001<0/05, so assuming H0 rejected and H1 is approved at 95% confidence level. This relationship is significant. According to this table, we can say that the correlation between the two variables of empowerment and organizational commitment is +44/2 %. This suggests a direct relationship between the two variables. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination between the two variables is equal to 0/195. This shows that the independent variable can predict 19/5 % of a dependent variable.

2-There is significant relationship between competence and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch (Table 2).
According to Table 2, it is seen that \( \text{sig} = 0.000 < 0.05 \), so assuming \( H_0 \) rejected and \( H_1 \) is approved at 95% confidence level. This relationship is significant. According to this table, we can say that the correlation between the two variables of competence and organizational commitment is +33.4%. This suggests a direct relationship between the two variables. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination between the two variables is equal to 0.111. This shows that the independent variable can predict 11.1% of a dependent variable.

There is significant relationship between jobs meaningfulness and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch (Table 3).

According to Table 3, it is seen that \( \text{sig} = 0.001 < 0.05 \), so assuming \( H_0 \) rejected and \( H_1 \) is approved at 95% confidence level. This relationship is significant. According to this table, we can say that the correlation between the two variables of meaning and organizational commitment is +43.1%. This suggests a direct relationship between the two variables. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination between the two variables is equal to 0.185. This shows that the independent variable can predict 18.5% of a dependent variable.

There is significant relationship between impact and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch. (Table 4).

According to Table 4, it is seen that \( \text{sig} = 0.001 < 0.05 \), so assuming \( H_0 \) rejected and \( H_1 \) is approved at 95% confidence level. This relationship is significant. According to this table, we can say that the correlation between the two variables of impact and organizational commitment is +31.6%. This suggests a direct relationship between the two variables. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination between the two variables is equal to 0.099. This shows that the independent variable can predict 9.9% of a dependent variable.

There is significant relationship between choice and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch (Table 5).
Table 5. The correlation coefficient between Choice and organizational commitment of the employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient rate</th>
<th>Significance level</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choice and organizational commitment of the employees</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>30/3 %</td>
<td>0/000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 5, it is seen that sig= 0/000<0/05, so assuming H0 rejected and H1 is approved at 95% confidence level. This relationship is significant. According to this table, we can say that the correlation between the two variables of choice and organizational commitment is +30/3 %. This suggests a direct relationship between the two variables. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination between the two variables is equal to 0/091. This shows that the independent variable can predict 9/1 % of a dependent variable.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The Pearson correlation coefficient test was used to test the research hypotheses. The results associated with the research hypothesis are as follows:

In the first hypothesis that study the relationship between empowerment and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch, intensity of the relationship was equal to +0/442 that due to the significant result that is less than 0/05 was significant. This is illustrated that with increasing employee empowerment would be expected to increase the individual organizational commitment. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination between the two variables is equal to 0/190 that empowering generally can explain about 19/5% of organizational commitment variable.

In the second hypothesis that study the relationship between competence and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch, intensity of the relationship was equal to +0/334 that due to the significant result that is less than 0/05 was significant. This is illustrated that with increasing employee competence would be expected to increase the individual organizational commitment. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination between the two variables is equal to 0/334 that competence generally can explain about 33/4% of organizational commitment variable.

In the third hypothesis that study the relationship between meaning and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch, intensity of the relationship was equal to +0/431 that due to the significant result that is less than 0/05 was significant. This is illustrated that with increasing employee competence would be expected to increase the individual organizational commitment. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination between the two variables is equal to 0/185 that meaning generally can explain about 33/4% of organizational commitment variable.

In the fourth hypothesis that study the relationship between impact and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch, intensity of the relationship was equal to +0/361 that due to the significant result that is less than 0/05 was significant. This is illustrated that with increasing employee impact would be expected to increase the individual organizational commitment. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination between the two variables is equal to 0/099 that impact generally can explain about 9/9% of organizational commitment variable.

In the fifth hypothesis that study the relationship between choice and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch, intensity of the relationship was equal to +0/361 that due to the significant result that is less than 0/05 was significant. This is illustrated that with increasing employee impact would be expected to increase the individual organizational commitment. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination between the two variables is equal to 0/303 that choice generally can explain about 30/3% of organizational commitment variable.

In the sixth hypothesis, the difference between organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch was studied. According to the test results, no difference was observed between the two samples. So we can say that there is no difference between the employees of the two universities in organizational commitment.

Recommendations based on the results of testing research hypothesis:

In line with the results of the hypothesis testing, the following suggestion is offered:
In relation to the first hypothesis and according to the results of the Pearson correlation test that indicating a significant relationship between the employee's empowerment and organizational commitment of Islamic Azad University, Rasht and Guilan University, it is suggested that to increase organizational commitment, employee empowerment variables should be considered. Create a sense of competence in staff, job meaningful by employees, sense of impact in staff and choice in employees are factors that should be considered by the directors to increase employee empowerment.

In relation to the second hypothesis, significant relationship between competence and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch was observed and according to the separated study of the questions, it is suggested that staff mastery and skill can be improved with training periods.

In relation to the third hypothesis that there is significant relationship between job meaningfulness and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch and according to the separated study of the questions, it is suggested that this sense may inspire the employees that they are valued. Using methods such as giving more authority to employees caused directly engaging of them in work and understanding it's more importance.

In relation to the fourth hypothesis that there is significant relationship between impact and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch and according to the separated study of the questions, it is suggested that organization space be so that employees have the opportunity to learn skills to others.

In relation to the fifth hypothesis that there is significant relationship between choice and organizational commitment of the employees of Guilan University and Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch and according to the separated study of the questions, it is suggested that managers provide a space where employees can make use of their skills.

In relation to the sixth hypothesis that there was no difference between the two studied systems, that is Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch and Guilan University in organizational commitment, it is suggested to both systems that consider empowerment variables as variables affecting the organizational commitment to benefit from the results to improve organizational commitment.

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