

DOES PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT IMPACT ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: STUDY OF TEACHERS IN JAFFNA DISTRICT SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The concept of psychological empowerment has been a growing interest of researchers all over the world. Even though several studies were carried out on the effect of empowerment on organizational commitment in various contexts, there are inadequate studies which focus on government schools in Jaffna District. Therefore, it is important to establish how psychological empowerment of teachers impacts their commitment. The objective of the current study is to identify the influence of psychological empowerment on organizational commitment among teachers in schools in Jaffna District. A sample of 290 teachers from Jaffna District schools participated in the study. Samples were selected based on convenient sampling method. The results of regression analysis reveal that psychological empowerment significantly influences organizational commitment. In addition, the influence of psychological empowerment on affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment also are significant and positive. Future research can be extended to different sectors and with larger samples. The effect of structural empowerment on commitment also should be explored by the future researchers.

Keywords: *Organizational commitment, psychological empowerment, school teachers.*

Introduction

Over the past few years organizations have been experiencing rapid changes due to unpredictable business atmosphere. Specifically the changes are as a result of the increasing need to improve the quality of human resources. There is a need for organizations to effectively configure their human resources in order to meet the predominant challenges in the business environment (Charkhabi, 2015). Particularly, empowering managers to quickly respond to the rapidly changing environment has obviously become central to organizational success (Ignore, 2009).

Psychological empowerment is an important topic in today's world as it has a remarkable effect on different organizational and individual variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, productivity, etc.

In this contemporary world organizations operate in very competitive business environments. Thus, they face innumerable challenges such as fast pace of changing technology, shortage of skilled employees and quick obsolescence of goods and services. These challenges have led to cut throat competition among most organizations thus changing human resource management practices that are adopted. Organizations are now realizing the significance of being more proactive rather than reactive in order to face the challenge of competition.

Empowerment is derived from diverse perspectives which include education, industrial and organizational psychology, service perspectives etc. From a service perspective, empowerment gives employees the authority to make decisions about customer service. The focus has been on teachers to have more opportunity to participate in school level

decision-making and to utilize greater professional judgment in curriculum and instructional issues. Generally, teacher empowerment is thought to improve student learning by fostering teaching quality. Still, teacher empowerment is affected by factors like the nature of teaching, teacher background knowledge, school administration and so on.

Objective

Empowerment of employees and generating organizational commitment among them is perceived as going a long way in differentiating one organization from the rest. The objective of the current study was to examine the effect of the teachers' psychological empowerment on their organizational commitment in Jaffna District schools. Even though several studies were conducted on the effect of empowerment on organizational commitment in various contexts, there are inadequate empirical evidences to establish how psychological empowerment of teachers impacts their commitment in Jaffna region.

Research Problem

The relationship between teacher empowerment and teacher commitment has been in general way indefinable. In addition, the outcomes from the past research have been contradictory and inconsistent. A number of studies have been done on employee empowerment. For example A study conducted by Bogler and Somech (2004) on the influence of empowerment on teacher's organizational commitment, professional commitment and organizational citizenship behavior in schools found that professional growth, status and self-efficacy are important predictors of organizational and personal commitment. Teachers are responsible to equip their students with knowledge and good manners (Zainudin, et al, 2010). Nowadays, due to increasing job demands for teachers, the traditional day-to-day tasks of teachers have been redefined. Hence, their commitment to the school is very essential to provide better service to the students and to maintain a talented human capital (Teh, Wong and Ngerang, 2011).

Even though several studies carried out on empowerment and commitment, it is very rare to across studies on this aspect in Jaffna

District. Therefore it is important to establish how psychological empowerment of teachers impacts their organizational commitment. In the current study the following research question was formulated.

- Does psychological empowerment impact organizational commitment of teachers in the schools in Jaffna District?

Literature Review

Psychological Empowerment

Employee empowerment relates with social exchange theory regarding reciprocal connections of employees with their employers (Muhammad and Abdullah, 2016). The theory was proposed by Hornmans (1958) to improve an understanding of social human behaviour in financial ventures. This theory states that the employees act more constructively to achieve the goals of the organization when the organization treats them well (Zhao et al., 2020). It describes social connections between employees and employers. When organizations recognize the opinions of employees in decision making, they will be more committed to the organization (Prabawa and Supartha, 2018).

Employee empowerment has become a buzzword in recent management trend in both the public and the private sector. According to Conger and Kanungo (1988) empowerment is the process through which an organization is able to enhance feelings of self-efficacy among its employees. This is usually done through identifying conditions that promote powerlessness and removing them through formal and informal organizational practices. Conger and Kanungo (1988) argue that empowerment promotes the self-efficacy feeling among employees of an organization and motivates them to perform towards achieving the objectives. According to Zainudin and Retnowati (2019), empowerment of teachers positively impact on their loyalty to organization.

Psychological empowerment is defined as a motivational construct consists of four cognitions named meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. These four cognitions reflect an active orientation to a

work role. Lack of any single dimension will reduce the overall degree of felt empowerment. Thus, the four dimensions specify almost a sufficient set of cognitions for understanding psychological empowerment (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990).

Despite several benefits of empowerment, true empowerment will not be seen unless people perceive themselves as being empowered. Even though a person has been given authority to act autonomously, if he or she doesn't perceive the capability of acting autonomously, then empowerment will not result in improved benefits for either the organization or the person. Previous studies have indicated that leadership exerts effects on employees' attitudes and behavior through empowering employee (e.g., Behling and McFillen, 1996; Bass, 1999). Employee empowerment is thereby examined in the present study as a potential mediator for the effect of leadership styles on employees' performance. Psychological empowerment refers to 'intrinsic task motivation manifested in a set of four cognitions reflecting an individual's orientation to his or her work role: competence, impact, meaning, and self-determination' (Spreitzer, 1995). These four cognitions reflect an active orientation to a work role. Lack of any single dimension will reduce the overall degree of felt empowerment. Thus, the four dimensions specify almost a sufficient set of cognitions for understanding psychological empowerment (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990).

Organizational Commitment

Employee commitment reflects the quality of the leadership in an organization. Organizations are always looking for the committed employees in order to achieve its strategic objectives. Specifically, leaders have the responsibility to emphasize to their subordinates about their contribution to the success of the organization. Miller and Lee (2001) postulate that organisational commitment is characterised by an employee's acceptance of organisational goals and their willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organisation. Brown (2003) stated that organisational commitment is the individual's participation rate or the behaviour of personnel, which ties the attitude of an individual to an organisation. Organizational commitment is a

multi-dimensional construct that comprises three components: affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Allen and Meyer (1997) define affective commitment as the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Members who are high in affective commitment stay with the organization because they view their employment relationship as congruent to the organization's goals and values. continuance component is defined as commitment that is based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1997). This component of commitment is calculative in nature because of the individual's perception of costs and risks associated with leaving the current organization. The third dimension of the organizational commitment is normative commitment. Meyer and Allen (1997) define normative commitment as a feeling of obligation to continue employment. According to Meyer and Allen (1991) employees with normative commitment feel that they ought to remain with the organization. In terms of the normative dimension, the employees stay because they should do so or it is the proper thing to do.

Psychological Empowerment and Organizational Commitment

The relationship between perceived empowerment and their organizational commitment has been extensively explored in the past. Perceived empowerment is important factor which contribute to foster organizational commitment. Many studies on employee empowerment have concluded that empowerment can provide many benefits to organizations including enhanced organizational performance and greater well-being for employees (Wall, Wood & Leach, 2004). Moreover, the findings of some studies highlighted the importance of structural empowerment in providing employees access to information, support, opportunity, and resources that make it easier for them to carry out. Celik and Servet (2020) reported that Psychological empowerment predicts teachers' cognitive, emotional and intentional readiness to change. Several studies found that teachers' organizational commitment is vital for the good

rapport with students and for students' achievement (for example, Hulpia, Devos and Vankeer, 2011; Firestone and Pennell, 1993). Thus, it is evident that teachers' commitment is essential for school effectiveness which leads students' outcomes.

Numerous researchers have reported a relationship between empowerment and commitment claiming that employees who feel more empowered are more likely to reciprocate by being more committed to their organisation (Honold, 1997; Spreitzer, 1995; Chan, 2003; Hamid, Nordin, Adnan and Sirun, 2013; Kebriaei, Rakhshaninejad and Mohseni, 2014; Ibrahim, 2020). According to Janssen (2004), psychological empowerment can be seen as a way to stimulate an individual's commitment to the organization, as it leads to a fit between work roles and a personal value system. Previous studies have pointed out that when organizations support employee empowerment, it will help to increase their trust and commitment towards organizations (Kariuki and Kiambati, 2017; Zaraket et al., 2018). Empowered workers are committed to the organizations because organizations are giving them jobs, empowering and treating them fairly (Norbu et al., 2020; Andika and Darmanto, 2020). Organizational commitment can be specified as a bond and loyalty of the employee with the organization and job.

Bogler and Somech (2004) carried out a study on the Influence of teachers' empowerment on their organizational commitment, professional commitment and organizational citizenship behavior in schools in Israel. The results of multiple regression analysis indicated that teachers' perception of their level of empowerment is significantly related to their feelings of commitment to the organization and to the profession, and to their OCB. It was also clear from the study findings that teachers who view themselves as professionals or perceive opportunities to grow professionally may contribute more to the school as their commitment to the organization and to the profession increases. Principals need to recognize that the feelings and perceptions of teachers about their schools and their desire to attain opportunities for professional growth. According to Osborne (2002) team empowerment also leads to higher levels of

commitment in the organization. Result from the study by Choong, Wong and Lau (2011) has shown that there are significant relationship between psychological empowerment and organizational commitment.

Conceptualization and Hypothesis Development

Based on the literature the researchers have formulated above conceptual model as shown in Figure 1.

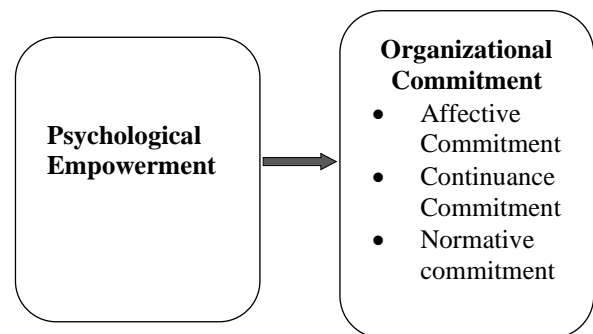


Figure 1: Conceptualization

Based on the literature and the conceptual model of the current study, the hypotheses of this study were developed.

H1: There is a positive relationship between psychological empowerment of teachers and their commitment

H1a: There is a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and affective commitment of teachers.

H1b: There is a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and continuance commitment of teachers.

H1c: There is a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and normative commitment of teachers.

H2: There is significant impact of psychological empowerment of teachers on their organizational commitment.

H2a: There is a significant impact of psychological empowerment of teachers on their affective commitment.

H2b: There is a significant impact of psychological empowerment of teachers on their continuance commitment.

H2c: There is a significant impact of psychological empowerment of teachers on their normative commitment.

Methods

The current study employed a cross sectional survey method and the study was explanatory in nature. The unit of analysis was individual employees. The target population in the current study was the teachers in Jaffna District schools. For carrying out this research, attention was focused to ensure that the research samples were selected on accurate representation of the population. The researchers used convenient sampling technique and the Jaffna Zone, Valikamam Zone and Vadamradchi Zone were considered for sampling. A total of 368 teachers were selected as a sample and the questionnaire were distributed. Out of them 290 usable surveys were returned constituting a response rate of 79%.

For the research purpose, primary data have been collected through the questionnaire. The Empowerment questionnaire developed by Spreitzer (1995) was used to measure the psychological empowerment. It is a 12 item scale in 5 point Likert type. The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire developed by Allen and Meyer (1996) was used to measure organizational commitment. It consists of 18 items in 5 point Likert scale. A pilot study was conducted with 30 teachers selected based on convenience sampling and the instruments were modified or reworded based on the feedback of the respondents. Subsequently the survey was administered to the study samples.

Data Analysis

Reliability Test

The reliability test was done using SPSS software and the results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Aspects	Cronbach's Alpha
Meaning	0.708
Competence	0.743
Self-determination	0.812
Impact	0.742
Affective commitment	0.759
Continuance commitment	0.742
Normative commitment	0.842

Source: Survey data, 2021

As can be seen in Table 1, the Cronbach's alpha of study sub scales are above 0.7 and the data are considered reliable to conduct further analysis.

Table 2: Demographic profile of respondents

		Frequency	Per cent
Gender of Respondents	Male	94	32
	Female	196	68
	Total	290	100
Age of the Respondents	From 20 to 29	78	27
	From 30 to 39 years	120	41
	From 40 to 49 years	56	19
	More than 50 years	36	12
	Total	290	100
Respondents' Education Level	High school	30	10
	Diploma	86	30
	Bachelor degree	108	37
	Master	34	12
	Post Graduate	32	11
	Total	290	100
Respondents' Year of Experience	Less than 5 years	76	26
	5 to 9 years	68	23
	10 to 14 years	82	28
	15 years and more	64	22
	Total	290	100

Source: Survey data, 2021

Table 2 shows that, out of 290 respondents, 68% are females. 41% of respondents are in the age group of 30 - 39 years and 27% are in the 20-29 years age group. There are five categories of respondents' education level which include High school, Diploma, Bachelor Degree, Master and Postgraduate. 37% of the respondents are Bachelor Degree holders, 30% are Diploma holders and 12% are Master degree holders. In case of respondents' teaching experience, 28% are with 10-14 years, 26% are with less than 5 years and 23% are with 5-9 years experience and 22% of the respondents' are with an experience of 15 years or above.

Correlation analysis

For this study, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to find the relationship between the psychological empowerment and organizational commitment of teachers in National schools and to test hypothesis. Correlation analysis is a statistical analysis, which measures the nature of the relationship between two variables and indicates the direction, strength, and significance of the bivariate relationship among all the variables. The results of correlation are shown in Table 3.

Table 1: Correlation

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Psychological empowerment	-				
2. Organizational commitment	.648**	-			
3. Affective commitment	.572**	.662**	-		
4. Continuance commitment	.583**	.584**	.614**	-	
5. Normative commitment	.698**	.711**	.601**	.724**	-

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2tailed).

Source: Survey Data, 2021

The Table 3 shows the correlation between psychological empowerment and organizational commitment of teachers. Based on the results, there is a strong positive relationship between psychological empowerment and organizational commitment ($r = 0.648$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore the H1 is supported.

According to results reported in Table3, psychological empowerment positively associated with affective commitment ($r = 0.572$, $p < 0.05$), continuance commitment ($r = 0.583$, $p < 0.05$), and normative commitment ($r = 0.698$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore H1a, H1b and H1c are supported.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was performed to identify the impact of psychological empowerment on organizational commitment of teachers.

Impact of psychological empowerment on organizational commitment

As the first step, in regression analysis, the effect of psychological empowerment on organizational commitment was measured and the results are shown in Tables 4, 5, and 6.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.648 ^a	.42	.403	.18735	1.229

a. Predictors: (Constant), Psychological empowerment

b. Dependent Variable: Organizational commitment

Table 2: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	17.108	1	17.108	362.137	.000 ^b
	Residual	6.708	142	.047		
	Total	23.816	143			

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational commitment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Psychological empowerment

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	.399	.188		2.125	.035
	Psychological empowerment	.585	.047	.528	19.03	.000

Dependent Variable: Organizational commitment

Source: Survey data, 2021

Impact of psychological empowerment on affective commitment

Table 1: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.572 _a	.327	.301	.11255	1.522

a. Predictors: (Constant), Psychological empowerment

b. Dependent Variable: Affective commitment

Table 2: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16.772	1	16.772	210.08	.000 ^b
	Residual	11.336	142	.080		
	Total	28.108	143			

a. Dependent Variable: Affective commitment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Psychological empowerment

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.564	.244		2.311	.022
	Psychological empowerment	.376	.060	.341	14.494	.000

Dependent Variable: Affective commitment

Source: Survey data, 2021

The Tables 7, 8 and 9 depict the results of regression for the impact of psychological empowerment on affective commitment. The model summary shows that R² value is 0.327. This implies that 32.7% percent of the total variance in affective commitment could be explained by psychological empowerment. The ANOVA also is significant (F=210.08, p < 0.01). Table 9 shows that psychological empowerment positively influences affective

commitment (B = 0.341 ; p < 0.01). Based on the results **H2a is supported**.

Impact of psychological empowerment on continuance commitment

Table 1: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.583 _a	.339	.310	.12287	1.023

a. Predictors: (Constant), Psychological empowerment

b. Dependent Variable: commitment

Table 2: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.431	1	19.431	225.01	.000 ^b
	Residual	12.263	142	.086		
	Total	31.694	143			

a. Dependent Variable: Continuance commitment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Psychological empowerment

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.021	.254		.083	.034
	Psychological empowerment	.383	.063	.351	15.00	.000

Dependent Variable: Continuance commitment

Source: Survey data, 2021

The Tables 10, 11 and 12 depict the results of regression for the impact of psychological empowerment on continuance commitment. The model summary shows that R² value is 0.339. This implies that 33.9% percent of the total variance in affective commitment could be explained by psychological empowerment.

The ANOVA also is significant ($F=225.01$, $p < 0.01$). The coefficient of regression shown in Table 12 implies that psychological empowerment positively influences continuance commitment ($B= 0.351$; $p < 0.01$). Therefore, **H2b is supported**.

Impact of psychological empowerment on normative commitment

Table 1: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.698 ^a	.488	.484	.33596	1.913

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Psychological empowerment
- b. Dependent Variable: Normative commitment

Table 2: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15.250	1	15.250	135.108	.000 ^b
	Residual	16.028	142	.113		
	Total	31.278	143			

- a. Dependent Variable: Normative commitment
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Psychological empowerment

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	.612	.290		2.109	.037
	Psychological Empowerment	.836	.072	.698	11.624	.000

Dependent Variable: Normative commitment
a

Source: Survey data, 2021

The regression results for measuring the impact

of psychological empowerment on normative commitment are shown in Tables 13, 14 and 15. The model summary shows that R^2 value is 0.488. This implies that 48.8% percent of the total variance in normative commitment could be explained by psychological empowerment. The ANOVA also is significant ($F=225.01$, $p < 0.01$). The coefficient of regression shown in Table 15 implies that psychological empowerment positively influences normative commitment ($B= 0.698$; $p < 0.01$). Based on the results, **H2c is supported**.

Discussion

The present study reveals that psychological empowerment has significant positive impact on organizational commitment. It was also concluded that psychological empowerment of teachers significantly and positively impact the dimensions of organizational commitment namely affective continuance, continuance commitment and normative commitment. The findings of this study is consistent with the empirical evidences in the literature (for example, Bogler and Somech, 2004; Choong et al., 2011; Honold, 1997; Ibrahim, 2020). Teachers’ organizational commitment is important for school effectiveness and for enhancing affects students’ outcome. If employees are empowered, they would show high commitment to their organization and its goal achievement. Empowered employees would display high self-confidence and support their colleagues at work.

Recommendations

The study established that teacher empowerment has an effect on the level of commitment exhibited by the teachers. It is important to reward good performance for empowering teachers. Based on the finding, it is vital to practice teacher empowerment in order to improve their commitment. There are various ways the schools and other organizations can create a feeling of empowerment among teachers. One way is to listen to teachers’ ideas in decision making regarding school management. They will then likely to care about the work they perform (meaning) and observe that their co-workers (teachers) listen to their ideas. Teachers who receive related feedback and encouragement is likely to sense that they have the ability to

influence their co-workers (impact), and might perceive themselves as free to choose the work that they perform (self-determination). All these aspects ultimately improve their organisational commitment which could result in school effectiveness.

Conclusion and Suggestions for the Future Research

The findings of this study portray the importance of psychological empowerment of teachers towards the level of their organizational commitment. This study had been met the target to conduct the research project and it indicated that perceived empowerment is significantly related to the organizational commitment among school teachers in Jaffna District. This study provides valuable insights which could assist school administrators in formulating appropriate policies for empowering teachers. Teachers need to have an influence on teaching-learning process and school decision making. They need to perceive that they are of value to the organization.

The results of this study can help school administrators to take necessary steps in order to increase teacher's organizational commitment and the quality of teaching, and increase school efficiency. Teachers should be involved in decision-making in school management. Other institutions in the education sector can also benefit from the finding of this study. By this research they are able to understand the significance of employee empowerment in developing the commitment among employees.

This study focused on Jaffna District schools. It is important to conduct a survey involving larger samples from all educational zones in Jaffna and in other regions of Sri Lanka to provide a more elaborate understanding on the effect of empowerment on commitment of teachers. Future researchers could extend the study to other sectors and with larger samples. In addition, the other predictors of organizational commitment such as organizational citizenship behaviour, motivation and leadership should be examined by the researchers.

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