J. Appl. Environ. Biol. Sci., 3(9)83-87, 2013

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ISSN: 2090-4274
Journal of Applied Environmental and Biological Sciences
www.textroad.com

Investigation of Relationship between Organizational Commitment and Employees' Empowerment

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ABSTRACT

The present paper tries to investigate relationship between dimensions of organizational commitment (OC) and employees' empowerment in Moghan cultivation and industry stock company. Three dimensions were considered for OC based on Allen and Meyer theory: affective commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment. Four dimensions were also considered for empowerment based on Thomas and Wolthas theory: sense of competency, sense of independence, sense of effectiveness and sense of meaningfulness. Population of the present study included all employees of Moghan cultivation and industry stock company (1754 people). Cocheran's formula was used to calculate sample size (315 people). Data collecting tool was two questionnaires which were distributed among sample members after verifying their validity and reliability. Descriptive statistics was used for analysis, classification and paraphrase of data and inference statistics (including Spearman correlation test and Friedman test) were used to test the hypotheses. Results showed that there is a significant relationship between OC and employees' empowerment and its dimensions in Moghan cultivation and industry stock company. Furthermore, results showed that the strongest relationship exists between OC and meaningfulness sense and the weakest relationship exists between OC and sense of independence.

KEYWORDS: OC, empowerment, continuous commitment, normative commitment, sense of self-determination, sense of impact

INTRODUCTION

Today, most theorists believe that human resource is an important factor in achieving competitive advantage and organizations' success depends on optimal use of these factors. On the other hand, human resource is a factor of differentiation between developed and developing countries (Dianati, 2007). Rapid environmental changes threaten many organizations life and global economy is thrusted by regional economy. Conservation of many organizations is threatened by not adapting to new changes. Empowerment is regarded as a strategy of organizational conservation. Furthermore, it seems that empowerment results in intra-organizational flexibility and it is an important element in organic and systemized organizations (Mazid Abadi Farahani, 2004). If an organization seeks being pioneer and tries not to fall behind in competition, it must use creative and motivated forces. Human resource is the basis for real wealth of an organization. A systematic approach to organization reveals that organizational success is dependent on optimal combination of inputs and empowered human resource results in this optimal combination. Empowerment is one of the mechanisms used to adapt to rapid environmental changes and plays a key role in organizational success. 21st century is knowledge-based and as Alvin Toffler believes, thought and information bring power today. Therefore, empowered human resource is the most valuable asset of an organization due to having thought power, creativity and innovation. Employees have hidden power due to their knowledge and experience and empowerment is actually releasing this power.

Many factors have relationship with OC and employees empowerment. In the present research, relationship between OC components and employees empowerment in Moghan cultivation and industry stock company was investigated.

Organizational commitment was investigated with three dimensions presented by Allen and Meyer:

1. Affective commitment: it is defined as emotional dependence and support for one's company and tendency to stay and work in that company.
2. Continuous or rational commitment: this kind of commitment is based on the costs resulted from organization leaving and the more is the investment in employees, th more is the possibility of leaving one's job. In other words, individuals do not leave their jobs if they spend time and money on their job and they necessarily continue their job.
3. Normative commitment: in this dimension, individuals consider remaining in their organization as a duty and responsibility so that they can pay their debts. (Allen & Meyer, 1990, P.P.1-18).

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Empowerment was investigated based on Thomas and Volthas theory:
Sense of competency means to have experience and capabilities to move forward confidently.
Sense of competency is actually individuals' feeling to be able to do their duties with high skill. In other words, employees believe that they are able to do work, and there is no external obstacle to stop them.
2. sense of self-determination: this dimension or having freedom of action refers to personal independence in determining necessary activities for job duties.
3. sense of impact: it refers to the fact that doing one special duty changes all works. Empowered individuals feel self-control on the results.
4. sense of meaningfulness: this dimension is directly related to individual value system and his job. Empowered individuals believe that their intentions, goals and activities have value (Abtahi and Aabesi, 2007).
Human resource is the most important factor in organizations in today's changing world. Therefore, preparation of the mentioned resource is of great importance and all organizations must pay the most attention to human resources, because organizations will be able to compete well and adapt to the changes with empowered, motivated and skillful employees. Empowerment is the healthiest method of involving other employees in power. Empowerment results in sense of trust, doubled energy, pride and self-dependence in employees and participation will increase in organizational affaires and finally, performance will be improved.

Theoretical framework of research

In the present research, Allen and Meyer theory of OC and Thomas and Wolthas theory of empowerment were used to investigate relationship between OC and employees' empowerment in Moghan cultivation and industry stock company.

Research literature is reviewed in three sections OC, empowerment and a summary of previous studies.

Organizational commitment

OC is an important organizational and occupational concept which has received a lot of attention in the previous years by organizational behavior experts. This concept has experienced many changes and one of the main changes was multi-dimensional approach to this concept. Considering the recent transformations in business environment and mergers and delayering projects, some experts believe that the influence of OC on other organizational phenomena like absence at work, job leaving and performance is reduced. However, some other researchers believe that OC has not lost its importance and it can be studied further (Farhangi and Hosseinzadeh, 2009). Investigation of historical path of OC studies reveal that this concept has received an increased amount of attention in the recent years and experts have presented many definitions of this concept (Boudelayee et al, 2009, 62).

Employees' empowerment

Organizations need to have flexible instructions for staying in competition and encourage creativity and personal responsibility. This is while organizations seek for increasing productivity through their employees. The present employees need to be empowered so that they can play their role well. Therefore, organizational flexibility is necessary. Empowerment and giving freedom of action to employees is an important strategy for increasing performance and conserving in today's organizations (AmirKhani et al, 2011). When managers increase employees' power in decision-making process without managerial interference, team work I encouraged and it functions well. Today, many organizations give more power to employees because they believe that employees have knowledge on their specialized field. If employees can exercise changes without asking permission from managers, they can respond to customers' and clients expectations more rapidly (Rezaeeyan, 2007, 8).

When empowerment is implemented in an organization, employees work with excitement, sense of ownership and honor. Moreover, they work with a sense of responsibility and prefer organizational goals to personal benefits.

In order to have an empowered working environment, management's role must change from control and commanding to supporting, so that all employees find opportunity to cooperate (Blanchard et al, 2009, 14). Empowerment implementation has had any benefits for organizations like increase in profit, decrease in costs, customer satisfaction, increase in employees' loyalty, improvement of effectiveness, efficiency in problem-solving and improvement of coordination. Presence of empowered employees in organizations may result in higher performance and reduction in absence and job leaving and also improves organizational impression in society and facilitates development and growth in organization. Empowerment tries to apply employees' brains just like their arms. Therefore, empowerment refers to an internal sense in employees which help employees with making their decisions in their work process (Boudelayee et al, 2009, p60).

Empowerment means to give power. In other words, it means to help individuals with improving their self-confidence, overcoming their inability and sense of misery and increasing interest and motivation in them (Abtahi

and Abesi, 2007, p 2). Empowerment does not mean giving power to individuals. Individuals have already a lot of power (a capital of knowledge and motivation) to do their work excellently. Empowerment is releasing this power (Blanchard et al, 2002, 34). Many definitions have been provided for this concept. Some of the main definitions are:

1. Kanger and Kanengo (1988): empowerment is a fundamental element in managerial effectiveness and empowerment technique plays an important role in maintaining and creating group.
2. Bowen and Lawler: empowerment is an instrument for enabling employees to make decisions.
3. Empowerment is giving decision-making authority to employees in order to increase their efficiency and strengthen their organizational role (Esmaeeli Givi and Hedayeti nia, 2006, 331-332).

Previous studies

Yousef Danvish (2000) conducted a research to study OC role as a mediator between job Islamic ethics and perspective towards organizational change in UAE University. He studied 474 people of employees from 30 organizations in 5 fields in UAE. Path analysis method was used to conduct statistical analysis. results showed that Islamic work ethics influences both perspective towards organization and organizational change positively and directly. Moreover, commitment to Islamic ethics influences on behavioral and emotional fields and approach to organizational change. In other words, continuous commitment and normative commitment to occupational Islamic ethics influence on attitude towards change. This is while continuous commitment from work Islamic ethics influences on attitude towards change (Danvish, 2000).

Li-Chun Chang and Chieh-Sing Liyou investigated job productivity, innovation and employees' empowerment within the framework of a research in Technology Institute of Chang Gung with a sectional questionnaire in Taiwan National University in 2007. This research investigated relationship between job productivity, innovation and employees' empowerment in north Taiwanese general health offices. The research had three hypotheses and was conducted in the form of correlation method. Sample consisted of 6 health offices and 670 people of nurses were selected and 576 valid questionnaires were returned. Results indicated that empowerment and innovation have influence on nurses' job productivity. Moreover, employees' empowerment was higher than average and organizational commitment was lower than average (Li Chun Chang et al, 2008). Framarz Shokri conducted a research in the form of master degree thesis assisted by Doctor Alireza Amirkabiri in Islamic Azad University in 2007 to investigate factors affecting OC and OC of Tehran Agricultural Banks branches. This research used Penli Gold model and surveyed 100 people of employees of the banks in two categories of managerial and expert. Data gathering tool was Penli Gold standard questionnaire. Results showed that enriched jobs increase job commitment of Agriculture bank employees. Furthermore, managers' experience increases their job commitment. However, this relationship was not verified for experts. Age factor increases OC in mangers and this factor was not verified for experts. Other factors including education level of employees, employees' participation in their work and employees' staying increases organizational commitment (Banerjee et al, 2002).

Research methodology

The present study is a survey and applied study. Population of the research included all employees of all 8 units of Moghan cultivation and industry stock company (1754 people). Cocheran's formula was use to calculate sample size (315 people). Stratified random sampling was used for sampling. First, Moghan cultivation and industry stock company was classified into 8 units. Then, sampling was conducted. Standard questionnaire prepared by Allen and Meyer was used for gathering data.

Research hypotheses

1. There is significant relationship between OC and employees empowerment in Moghan cultivation and industry stock company.

1.1. There is a significant relationship between OC and sense of competency in Moghan cultivation and industry stock company.

1.2. There is a significant relationship between OC and sense of self-determination in Moghan cultivation and industry stock company.

1.3. There is a significant relationship between OC and sense of impact in Moghan cultivation and industry stock company.

1.4. There is a significant relationship between OC and sense of meaningfulness in Moghan cultivation and industry stock company.

2. There is a significant relationship between OC and employees empowerment dimensions in Moghan cultivation and industry stock company.

RESULTS

Descriptive and inference methods were used to analyze data. Spearman correlation test and Friedman test were used to test the hypotheses. Spearman test was used to determine the correlation between OC and empowerment dimensions according to table 1.

Table 1. Spearman r test for determination of correlation between OC and employees' empowerment and its dimensions

variable	Significance level	Organizational commitment
empowerment	000.0	592.0
Sense of competency	000.0	469.0
Self-determination dimension	000.0	432.0
Sense of impact	000.0	505.0
Sense of meaningfulness	000.0	445.0

Friedman test was used to determine the difference between OC relationship and empowerment dimensions.

Table 2. Friedman test for determination of difference between OC relationship with empowerment dimensions in Moghan cultivation and industry stock company employees

Statistical analysis (Friedman test)	
315	Number of answers
106.368	X-squared test
4	Degree of freedom
000.0	Significance level

Table 3. ranking of the degree of relationship between OC and employees empowerment dimensions in Moghan cultivation and industry stock company using Friedman test

(Ranks)		
rank	Rank mean	Empowerment dimension
2	79.3	Sense of competency
4	37.2	Sense of self-determination
3	57.2	Sense of impact
1	96.3	Sense of meaningfulness

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Table 9 shows the summary of testing hypothesis 1 and its subsidiary hypotheses. Significance level of r Spearman test is smaller than 0.01 significance level and r Spearman values are 0.592, 0.469, 0.432, 0.505 and 0.445, respectively. Therefore, there is significant relationship between OC and employees' empowerment and its dimensions, sense of competency, sense of self-determination, sense of impact and sense of meaningfulness.

According to tables 1 and 2, it can be observed that the calculated X^2 which is equal to 368.106 is greater than X^2 which is equal to 13.3 with a degree of freedom equal to 4 and alpha=0.01 and the significance level of Friedman test is smaller than 0.01 which is the minimum significance level. Therefore, H_1 is verified and H_0 is rejected. It can be concluded that there is significant difference in the degree of relationship between OC and each of the dimensions of employees' empowerment in Moghan cultivation and industry stock company. Therefore, we can rank the degree of relationship between OC and each of the dimensions of employees empowerment in Moghan cultivation and industry stock company as follows:

1. sense of meaningfulness, 2. Sense of competency, 3. Sense of impact, 4. Sense of self-determination.

The results of the present study match the results of some similar studies. For instance, Denis (2000) conducted a research and verified the relationship between OC and empowerment. In his research, results indicated that there is a significant and positive relationship between impact dimension and all dimensions of OC. Some studies showed that there is positive relationship between all dimensions of OC. Some studies verified the relationship between psychological empowerment and normative and affective dimensions except for self-determination. Results verify the relationship between impact dimension and commitment to staying, although there is no strong evidence for other dimensions. Results of Johnson study showed that there is a positive relationship between empowerment and OC. Results of Butnager research showed that employee's empowerment has positive and significant relationship

with OC. Kai et al similarly showed that (2008) employee's empowerment is the basis for a perceptive subject. All employees feel that they are empowered to a particular degree and they want to become empowered in some fields.

On the other hand, the results of our research contradict some studies. For example, results of Lashinger and Vang (1999) and Lashinger et al (2001) showed that empowerment dimensions and psychological dimensions have similar predictability in work productivity and this id not match the previous studies in which empowerment had the greatest impact on work productivity. Furthermore, results of Khanifar and Zarvandi did not verify the relationship between empowerment and OC and its subsidiary hypotheses except for sense of impact and sense of trust in colleagues. In any of the organizations, there was not a relationship between trust and OC.

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