

## The Effect of Structural Empowerment and Organizational Commitment on Job Satisfaction of the Personnel at Islamic Azad University of Birjand

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to determine the effect of structural empowerment and organizational commitment on job satisfaction of the employees at Islamic Azad University of Birjand in 2015. Population of the study was all personnel at Islamic Azad University of Birjand (n = 130). Morgan's table and simple random sampling were used to select the participants and 97 employees were considered as the sample of the study. Data was collected by three standardized questionnaires of Maleki structural empowerment questionnaire, Myer and Allen's organizational Commitment Questionnaire (QCQ) and Kendal and Hulen job satisfaction questionnaire. After distributing and collecting the questionnaires, data was analyzed and hypotheses were tested by structural equation modeling and Smart PLS2 in two measurement and structural sections. First, technical characteristics of the questionnaires including reliability and convergent and divergent validity were assessed by PLS. Then, significance of the software was used to examine the hypotheses under study. Finally, findings of the study confirmed the effect of structural empowerment and organizational commitment and dimensions of each on job satisfaction of personnel at Islamic Azad University of Birjand.

**Key words:** Empowerment, commitment, job satisfaction, productivity, effort

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### INTRODUCTION

Since, efficient manpower is the major index of the organization superiority to other organizations, having staff with job satisfaction is one of the basic needs for any organization. The existence of such forces in the organization reduces absences, delays and displacements causing a significant increase in the performance of the organization, mental freshness of the personnel, better manifestation of both organizational ambitious targets and achievement of personal goals. Lack of commitment or a low level of commitment is followed by negative consequences for individual and the organization. Turnover, high absenteeism, lack of desire to stay in the organization, reduced consumer confidence and decreased revenues are some negative results. The evidence suggests that dissatisfied people leave their organization and further resign. Therefore, organizations need committed human resources to achieve their organizational objectives, a force that can reduce absenteeism, delays and displacements causing a significant increase in the performance of the organization.

No doubt, personnel satisfaction is of great importance in the area of human resources and attention paid to it has an undeniable impact on staff efficiency in organizations (Edris, 2004). In fact, as long as human

resources do not have acceptable job satisfaction, other activities of the organization would not have the desired result.

Thus, the use of concepts of personnel empowerment and organizational commitment is very important to better utilize and apply knowledge, abilities and skills of human resources because in today's competitive environment that is knowledge-based economy, the abilities and skills of the staff are known as a competitive advantage for organizations (Martin-de-Castro *et al.*, 2011).

Since, three more important organizational components including job satisfaction, organizational commitment and structural empowerment were further studied; organizational commitment and structural empowerment have been an important part of organizational studies in recent years as their relationship with job satisfaction has been proven. However, in the current situation, the university personnel has a daunting task in achieving a high position in accordance with the 1404 vision so job satisfaction was considered as one of the most important challenges in the studied population of the Islamic Azad University of Birjand. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the effect of structural empowerment and organizational commitment in job satisfaction of the personnel at Islamic Azad University of Birjand.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In their field study, Tong *et al.* (2015) concluded that development of empowerment strategy of managers in organizations increase team spirit among employees and job satisfaction. In addition, empowerment affects the commitment and understanding of employees and managers. According to the Laschinger *et al.* (2014), the impact of employee empowerment has become clear to most organizations and its' role in job satisfaction among employees and managers is proven (Laschinger *et al.*, 2014). In general, Gorji (2010) states that empowerment is effective in improving the performance of employees. According to Cai and Zhou (2009) as structural empowerment increases, safety and desire to reduce turnover and burnout decreases. Knol and van Linge (2009) believe that the increase in structural empowerment is associated with an increase in innovative behavior. Finally, based on Manajlovich (2005)'s studies, there is a relationship between structural empowerment and professional performance and autonomy increases as capacity increases.

Doaei *et al.* (2014) showed that empowerment has a significant positive effect on personnel's life quality. Dissatisfaction with the quality of life is difficult and damages staff and the organization regardless of the personnel organizational position thus, preventing these injuries is possible when and intellectual capital will be especially attended. Therefore, empowerment of human resources should not be forgotten in considering intellectual capital. Heydari (2013) states that there are many capable employees in the organization and if capabilities, thinking, mind and personnel's performances do change into optimal performance, the organization will be happy, profitable and effective. Ghassab *et al.* (2013) concluded that personnel empowerment is a modern technique used by managers to increase productivity through increased employee commitment to the organization and vice versa. Maleki *et al.* (2012) believe that if structural empowerment constructs implement in the workplace, readiness for change is increased. Khorram (2012) found that personnel's empowerment should be increased for improving organizational performance. The results of structural equation modeling in the field of organizational performance respectively emphasized aspects of job satisfaction, effectiveness, field performance and innovation, customer-orientation and pride in job. Finally, according to the literature review, hypotheses of the study are formulated as follows:

- Structural empowerment and its components (opportunity, information, support and resources) affect job satisfaction of personnel at Islamic Azad University of Birjand

- Organizational commitment and its components (normative commitment, continuance commitment, and affective commitment) affect job satisfaction of personnel at Islamic Azad University of Birjand

**Job satisfaction:** One of the fundamental elements of any organization is organization's human resources and it will be certainly difficult to achieve organizational goals regardless of the dimensions, motivations and intrinsic desires of individuals within the organization. Thus, those organizations will be successful that pay enough attention to the level of stimulation and the role of different factors in individuals' motivation and recognition of different angles and dimensions of staff behavior and discovery of their abilities and potential talent in the field of the organization and can guide and lead them towards the overall goals of the organization. The greater the consistency and compatibility between personality and jobs, the more job satisfaction will be followed and the less the consistency and compatibility between personality and jobs, the less job satisfaction will be provided (Nourani Pour and Akbarzade, 2011).

Job satisfaction refers to a positive or negative value judgment that one has of their jobs or their jobs status. In other words, job satisfaction is an attitude that shows how people feel about their jobs in general or its' different areas (Spector, 2000). Kinzberg point out two types of job satisfaction:

- Internal satisfaction
- External satisfaction

Internal satisfaction comes from two sources. First, the feeling of the pleasure that one gains only of their employment and activity, namely, the pleasure that is achieved as a result of progress or doing some social responsibility and manifestation of human ability and individual willingness.

External satisfaction is related with employment and workplace conditions and is ever-changing and evolving. External factors of satisfaction include working conditions, wages and bonuses, kind of work and the relationship between the worker and the employer (Shafiei, 2015).

It seems that internal factors, including individual characteristics are more stable compared with external conditions of working. Therefore, it may be said that inner satisfaction is more stable that external satisfaction. Job satisfaction is the result of the interaction between internal and external satisfaction. Parson (one of the sociologists) knows job satisfaction depending on five factors.

**Self-esteem:** Human beings live with ethical norms and needs that create within them. Respecting the norms and behavioral pattern has a significant impact on their job satisfaction. A competent manager helps the staff in creating these norms.

**Identification:** All human beings strongly or weakly interested in being recognizing and respecting by others.

**Satisfaction with desires:** Human beings are always seeking to satisfy their material and spiritual needs. It is effective on their job satisfaction.

**Pleasure:** A fun job and activity creates satisfaction in the staff.

**Intimacy:** Friendship and intimacy in the relationship between staff is considered as a powerful motivation that leads to job satisfaction (Williams, 2004).

In general, job satisfaction is affected by several factors. On the one hand, experiences, interests, motivations and personal characteristics affect the sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction; on the other hand, specific expectations of the job and work environment, regardless of what really exists at work (rate of expectations estimated) are effective in job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Moreover, quality of human relations in organizations, coworkers' relationships with each other, management, employees and many other factors affect the attitude of members toward their jobs. It is clear that organization management that is a very important factor in personnel's job satisfaction, itself is influenced by the culture governing the organization. In fact, all the procedures, work practices and credit the intended organization enjoys from in the community are all influenced by the organizational culture that affect the perception and attitude of the members of the organization (Ghassab *et al.*, 2013). Thus, this study intended to examine the components affecting job satisfaction, including structural empowerment and organizational commitment.

**Structural empowerment:** What organization and administration systems need are managers and workers who are able to think, be creative and inventive, be responsible, can manage their own affairs, work together while maintaining their individuality and ensure their abilities. In other words, organizations and social phenomena need to empowered people. Nowadays, it is important to have such a wealth in that the main source of competitive advantage would not be rooted in in new technology in the future decade and perhaps in the next

century but it will be subject to initiative, creativity, commitment and ability of human resources (Falahatkar, 2013). The history of the first definition of the term empowerment goes back to 1788 where empowerment was known as delegation on their organizational role and that the option should be awarded to the person or be seen in their organizational role. This empowerment meaning individuals' enthusiasm to take responsibility was the term was that was first formally interpreted as a response (Robbins *et al.*, 2002).

Structural empowerment is one of the three known empowerment approach that was developed by Kanter (1993). The approach derived from organizational theory related with the delegation of authority in the organization (Knol and van Linge, 2009) and in general, describes personnel access to four environmental factors that is opportunities, information, advocacy and resource in the organization (Manojlovich, 2005).

In fact, the structure means all the factors, physical and non-human conditions of the organization which are interconnected with a special arrangement and constitute the framework of the organization. Therefore, when information and material resources flow in a certain combination in the whole body of the organization, they are considered structural components. Structural barriers are actually non-alive factors of the organization such as restrictive rules of organization, inefficient payroll system, worn equipment and facilities, organizational structure characteristics (complexity, formalization, centralization), extreme hierarchy, the lack of effective organizational communication, strict control and supervision, lack of transparency of organizational goals, limited promotion and growth, unfair reward system, improper distribution of power and severe bureaucracy (Abtahi and Abesi, 2007). Thus, it seems that structural empowerment can play a role to reduce or increase job satisfaction that is examined in this study.

**Organizational commitment:** Moorhead and Griffin (1989) view organizational commitment as a sense of identity and individual dependence on the organization. In their view, commitment affects important behaviors such as movement and absence and can have many positive consequences. According to Robbins (1995), organizational commitment is a condition in which a person knows the organization representing themselves and wishes to remain in the organization. Porter know commitment a kind of support of the organizational goals, and desire for membership in the organization (Brown, 2003).

Organizational commitment is an attitude to the employees' loyalty to the organization and a continuous

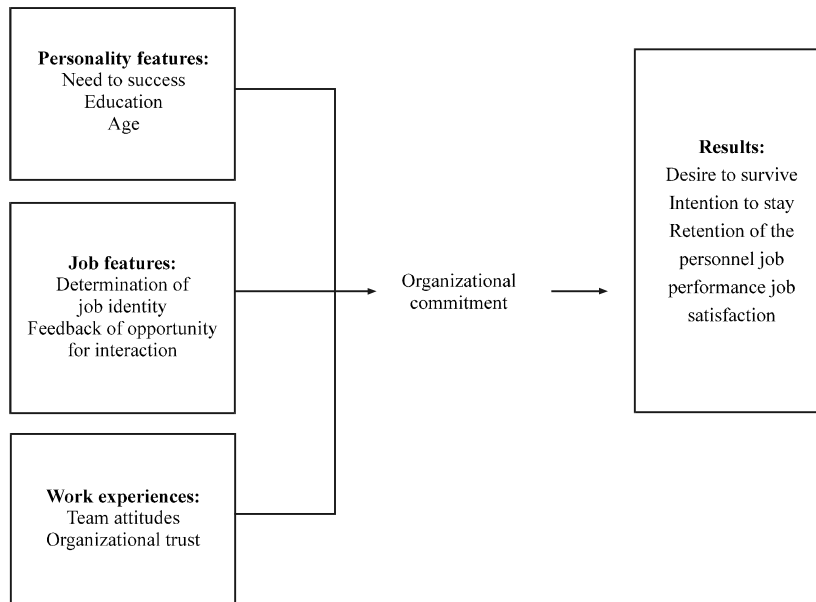


Fig. 1: Result of organizational commitment

process which results in the attention to the organization and the organization's success and prosperity through people participation in organizational training. Therefore, managers should keep personnel commitment to the organization and should be able to use employees' participation in decision-making and provide an acceptable level of job security in order to increase their commitment to the organization.

In order to examine the organizational commitment, Allen and Meyer theory is used (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). They have three components for organizational commitment:

**Affective commitment:** It includes personnel's affective bond to the organization so that people introduce themselves with their organization.

**Continuous commitment:** According to this commitment, individual computes the cost of leaving the organization. In fact, people who are continuously committed to the organization are those who need it to stay in the organization.

**Normative commitment:** In this case, an employee feels that he should stay in the organization and it is the right thing (Luthans, 2008).

Factors affecting the results of the organization's commitment have outcomes for the organization and the following diagram is a model that has been proposed by Estearas. The diagram consists of personality factors, job factors and work experiences affecting organizational

commitment and shows the results. As seen in Fig. 1, organizational commitment can affect personnel job satisfaction.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is an applied descriptive-causal study. The study is a quantitative one with respect to the method of data collection. Three questionnaires were used to collect personnel's comments at Islamic Azad University of Birjand and the results were included. Since a cause and effect relationship examined in the study, methodology of the study is causal and Structural Equation Model was used for comprehensive study of the conceptual model of the study. The model variables are divided into two explicit and implicit classes. Structural empowerment, organizational commitment and job satisfaction are hidden variables and dimensions of each are explicit variables.

Population of the study is all knowledgeable and experienced managers and experts in the field. The sample of the study was selected by simple random sampling. According to the estimates and staffing of Islamic Azad University of Birjand, total number of eligible employees and managers of the study (male and female) were 130 people. The researchers used different ways to calculate the sample size. One of these techniques is Morgan's table. In cases where the population variance or required percentage is not available, this table can be used to estimate the sample size. According to information using the formula of sample size, participants of the study are 97 employees.

Table 1: Cronbach' alpha values and composite reliability

Variables	Structural empowerment				Organizational commitment			Job satisfaction	
	Opportunity	Information	Support	Resources	Normative	Continuous	Affective	Internal	External
Cronbach alpha	0.748	0.729	0.719	0.822	0.889	0.732	0.812	0.871	0.801
Composite reliability	0.705	0.844	0.714	0.790	0.801	0.801	0.828	0.808	0.791

Table 2: Divergent validity of the constructs

Constructs	Structural empowerment				Organizational commitment			Job satisfaction	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Structural empowerment</b>									
Opportunity	0.781								
Information	0.224	0.747							
Support	0.522	0.446	0.768						
Resources	0.224	0.531	0.225	0.813					
<b>Organizational commitment</b>									
Normative commitment	0.127	0.410	0.383	0.452	0.776				
Continuous commitment	0.447	0.222	0.332	0.111	0.340	0.764			
Affective commitment	0.542	0.346	0.334	0.226	0.124	0.236	0.720		
<b>Job satisfaction</b>									
Internal satisfaction	0.226	0.211	0.453	0.257	0.235	0.233	0.329	0.785	
External satisfaction	0.576	0.345	0.114	0.533	0.198	0.235	0.346	0.145	0.837

Three questionnaires were used to gather data. The standardized questionnaires of Maleki *et al.* (2012) structural empowerment questionnaire, including 12 items, Myer and Allen (1991)'s organizational commitment questionnaire (QCQ) including 24 items and Smith *et al.* (1969) job satisfaction questionnaire, consisting of 70 items.

Reliability was measured by data obtained from questionnaires using Smart PLS2 and SPSS. In PLS method, reliability was calculated by measuring composite reliability and in SPSS it was measured by Cronbach's alpha. Values greater than 0.7 on these two criteria showed acceptable reliability. The results of these two criteria are shown in Table 1. All values are greater than 0.7 indicating good reliability of the questionnaires.

Validity of the questionnaires was measured by convergent and divergent validities that are specific to the structural equation modeling. Finally, findings indicated that all amounts of AVE of constructs are greater than 0.5 showing acceptable convergent validity. Divergent validity compares the difference between the indices of a construct and other constructs indices in the model. This is calculated by comparing the square root of the AVE of any construct with the values of correlation coefficient between constructs. Thus, a matrix should be formed that is the main diagonal values of square roots matrix of AVE coefficients of each construct and is the lower and upper main diagonal values of the correlation coefficients between each construct and other constructs. Results showed that the square root of AVE of each construct is greater than the correlation coefficient of that construct with other constructs (values in the row and column) that shows acceptable divergent validity of the constructs. (Table 2).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At this stage, the cause and effect relationship between structural empowerment and organizational commitment and job satisfaction was measured in the structural model. As shown in Fig. 2, structural empowerment and organizational commitment and its dimensions has a positive significant effect on job satisfaction of the personnel at Islamic Azad University of Birjand.

Figure 2 shows the causal impact of the model and the relationship of the major variable (emotional intelligence and its dimensions) on knowledge management in the high school teachers in Tehran. PLS output confirms the major and minor hypotheses of the study in table below. Since all of the t-values are above 1.96, all hypotheses are confirmed (Table 3).

The first hypothesis of the study confirmed the effect of structural empowerment on job satisfaction of the personnel at Islamic Azad University of Birjand. In fact, reduction of work-related stress and increased job satisfaction are the two results of attitude after structural empowerment in the organization's environment. Low levels of option during daily work relate with mental pressure and increased chronic diseases. Research shows that structural empowerment decreases absenteeism from work, transfer and neural and mental stress. High levels of significance and a sense of competence (self-esteem) will increase job satisfaction by creating interest among employees about their jobs. Moreover, freedom in work (the right of self-determination) is one of the motivators intended by Herzberg that is considered as a type of intrinsic reward. Therefore as predicted by Herzberg, freedom will result in job satisfaction. Feeling of

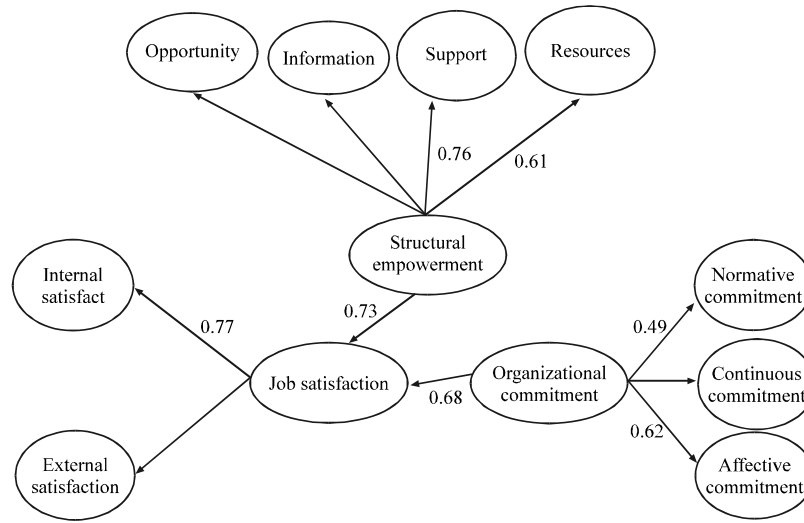


Fig. 2: Coefficients of the causal impact of the model

Table 3: Examination of the study hypothesis

Hypotheses	Standard coefficients	t-values	Result
Structural empowerment-personnel job satisfaction at Islamic Azad University of Birjand	0.73	17.76	Confirmed
Organizational commitment- job satisfaction at Islamic Azad University of Birjand	0.68	16.29	Confirmed

effectiveness (that has an inverse relationship with the general feeling of acquired helplessness) will lead to increased job satisfaction because according to Abramsun, general feeling of acquired helplessness will lead to job dissatisfaction by creating discouragement among employees, identification of opportunities, reduced motivation and depression.

In addition, since job satisfaction states personnel's attitude toward their own work, if the person's attitude is positive, job satisfaction is high and if it is negative, dissatisfaction is high. When personnel consider a certain organization and wish to stay always in that organization and know organizational goals representing their identity, we will see that the personnel will commit to their organization.

As discussed above, commitment shows the positive flow of the work and is set forth by three components of affective commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment. The personnel commitment has an inverse relationship with absence and resignation and has a direct relationship with job satisfaction. In fact, the committed personnel continue their attitude and try to coordinate their attitudes and behavior with organizations and create the conditions for job satisfaction in employees. According to Iravani (2015), access to jobs outside the organization will be followed by a sharp reduction in continuous commitment. Normative

commitment has the highest direct effect on job satisfaction and affective commitment and job satisfaction have a positive relationship with each other.

### CONCLUSION

Finally, according to the confirmation of the hypotheses of the present study it must be acknowledged that several factors affect job satisfaction, especially in organizations such as Islamic Azad University. These effects can be positive that leads to job satisfaction and can be negative that will be followed by job dissatisfaction. Therefore, as Houshangi (2013) expressed, in the studies of job satisfaction, we should accept the fact that only one factor cannot cause job satisfaction and in fact, a combination of various factors results in personnel's job satisfaction so that they say they are satisfied with the jobs and enjoy them.

What is apparent in the area of management and organization is that most managers are effective in showing the staff's weakness but they will not have the same effect in helping to find the causes of weaknesses. In other words, they are strong to identify problems but are weak in its analysis and this is the weakness of the lack of correct diagnosis and assessment of problem solving in the organization and employees emphasizing different factors such as the amount of salary, bonus, job

promotion, job fitness and organizational climate at different times are satisfied or dissatisfied with their job in different ways. According to the confirmation of the impact of structural empowerment and organizational commitment on job satisfaction of the personnel at Islamic Azad University of Birjand and with regard to the fact that some conditions should be provided in order to make job satisfaction so that the personnel are proud to their jobs, enjoy it and do their best.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The following suggestions are made:

- Personnel should commit to their work. When they commit their job, they feel that their work is useful and perform the work with more motivation and commitment
- Each person should be committed to their work. If employees ensure that they have commitment and responsibility and a successful work depends on the extent of their personal efforts, other factors will have less effect and they will be satisfied with their job
- Justice and positive reinforcement should be observed in the personnel empowerment. When the participatory approaches within the organization are fair, thoughtful and without bias, employees will be more satisfied and more secure
- It is suggested that planners and decision makers provide access to new knowledge and new skills with the personnel and provide opportunities for the personnel to do challenging works in order to empower employees and improve their readiness for change

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