

Structural Empowerment and Organizational Commitment of Lecturers in Private International Educational Institutions at Thailand

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to measure the level of structural empowerment and organizational commitment of lecturers at private international educational institutions at Thailand. Further to measure the relationship between structural empowerment and organizational commitment of lecturers. The target respondents of the study were lecturers from 4 private international educational institutions. And the sample size for the study was 165 respondents, chosen randomly by using Krejcie and Morgan table. The sampling method adopted for the study is stratified random sampling, stratification done based on lecturers' research status. The study revealed that majority of the respondents were female, who have two or more than two research every year. And the major groups of the respondents fall under the age group of less than 35 years. Most of the respondents' academic position was assistant professors and lecturers. The study revealed that level of structural empowerment and organizational commitment is at high. Among the dimensions, structural lines of power (in Structural Empowerment) and Affective commitment (in Organizational Climate) is at high level. The interesting fact is the relationship between these 2 dimensions is at moderate level, rather there is a high correlation between normative commitment and structural lines of opportunity at .676. However, in overall the relationship between structural empowerment and organizational commitment is highly correlated at .810, with the statistical significance value of P-Value .01. Hence, it is evident that structural empowerment leads to organizational commitment. Recommendations are presented for further research.

Keywords: structural empowerment; organizational commitment, private international educational institutions, Thailand.

1. Introduction

Building of empowerment in work is the augmentative process of creating self reliance of a person which will eliminate conditions and official technical process that will make a person feel so powerless and will prevent the person from being self confident (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). There are 2 kinds of empowerments i.e. structural (organizational) empowerment and mind empowerment. The structural empowerment will focus on working duties and the participation of workers' development in organization, whereas, mind empowerment is the recognition of reinforcing the mind, in order to make workers feel confident in themselves that they are capable to work successfully (Areewan Oumtanee, n.d.). Kanter is the first person, who studied the structural empowerment by starting to do social research and found that the main problems in work are fear of changing, fear of risk, having low motivation for success and lack of organization commitment. Kanter (1979) Laschinger (1996) and Aniruth Tulsuk (2009) followed in the line of Kanter's research and presented the guidelines to prevent these problems with 3 factors of structural empowerment. They are structure of power (power structure in the organization), structure of opportunity (opportunity in the organization) and structure of proportion (social composition of workers in the same position).

When workers gain structural empowerment, it avails them to receive necessary information in performing their jobs, accessible to sufficient resources for their work and finally they will have opportunities to develop and improve knowledge and skills, which will also have impact on their job performance (Aimon Tospuntee, 2008). The structural empowerment is an advantage to the commanders and subordinates to serve clients and the organizations too. Besides, the research work also found that structural empowerment has effect on organizational commitment (Menon, 1995; Boon et al, 2007), which corresponds to the study of Kahaleh and Gaither (2007), who found the relationship between employee empowerment and organizational commitment, loyalty, identification and turnover. The empowerment also creates cooperation, sacrifice and organizational commitment. Apparently, if anyone obtains high level of empowerment, at the same time, that person would

possess high level of organization commitment too. Therefore, employees whoever shows organizational commitment definitely express attitudes for effective achievement of specified targets in the organization (Utcharaporn Phromkhunthong, 2014).

International Institutions of Quality Assurance Network (IQAN) has 4 private educational institutions in Thailand. They are St. Theresa International College, Rangsit University, Asia-Pacific International University and Stamford International University. They are private international educational institutions that hire overseas lecturers from different countries. There is continuous structural empowerment process to lecturers from both Thailand and other countries, to build Organization Commitment. Based on this scope, the researchers felt that a study could be conducted in order to measure the structural empowerment and organizational commitment in private international educational institutions at Thailand.

1.1 Research Objectives

- ✦ To study the level of structural empowerment of lecturers in private international educational institutions.
- ✦ To find out the level of organizational commitment of lecturers in private international educational institutions.
- ✦ To measure the relationship between the structural empowerment and organizational commitment of lecturers.
- ✦ To suggest measures for further research in the area of structural empowerment and organizational commitment.

2. Research Methodology

For the purpose of the study, the two years data related to structural empowerment and organization commitment levels of lecturers were collected and analyzed. From the population of 290 lecturers from 4 private international institutions, who teach in bachelor level, a sample of 165 lecturers was drawn randomly using Krejcie & Morgan Table. The sampling method adopted for the study is stratified random sampling and the stratification done based on lecturers' research status criteria. The variables, (1) structural empowerment-with three aspects, namely, structural lines of power, structural lines of opportunity and structural lines of proportion and (2) organization commitment-with three aspects, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment were considered for the study. The primary data were gathered using structured questionnaire and tested for reliability. The discrimination value ranges from .46-.87 and the Cronbach alpha value is .902, which holds good reliability. The statistical tools used for the study are Descriptive statistics and Pearson's simple correlation.

3. Analysis

3.1 Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the respondents includes gender, age, academic position and educational qualification of the lecturers' is presented in Table-1.

From the Table 1 it is observed that majority (67.9%) of the respondents is female and male respondents accounted for (32.1%) respectively. Among total number of male respondents (53%) of respondents have at least one research per year when compared to 46.4% of female respondents. And 41.1% of the female respondents have two or more than 2 researches per year, whereas male respondents contributed only 30%. 17% & 12.5% of the male and female respondents doesn't have a single research for the year. In overall 41.2% of the respondents fall under the category of less than 35 years, followed by 27.3% of the respondents under the age group of 41-45, 17% in 30-35 years and 14.5% are more than 45 years. Among the respondents, 89.7% of the respondents in less than 35 years age group contribute two or more than 2 researches per year. 82.2% of the respondents in the age group 41-45 years contribute one research every year. And it is also observed that the age group more than 45 years doesn't have more than 1 research every year. The academic position of the respondents is classified as follows, 39.4% (Lecturers), 44.2% (Assistant Professor), 8.5% (Associate Professor) and 7.9% (Professor) respectively. It has been noticed that majority of the respondents are Assistant Professor (44.2%) and Lecturers (39.4%) respectively. Moreover Lecturers (90.8%) contribute two or more than two research every year and Assistant professors (86.3%) contribute 1 research every year, whereas, the professors doesn't contribute 2 research every year, except few contribute 1 research. The educational level of the respondents indicates that (75.8%) holds master degree and (24.8%) holds doctorate degree. The major group of respondents (53.6%) having Masters' qualification contributes 1 research and (36%) with 2 or more than 2 researches every year. Similarly, doctoral level respondents (42.5%) contribute more than 2 researches every year, eventually few respondents (32.5%) have 1 research and few respondents (25%) doesn't have any research.

Table-1
Demographic profile of the Respondents

| Variables | Research Outcomes | No Research | 1 Research Topic per year | 2 Research Topics Onwards | Total Number of Respondents |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Gender | Male | 9 (17%) | 28 (53%) | 16 (30%) | 53 (32.1%) |
| | Female | 14 (12.5%) | 52 (46.4%) | 46 (41.1%) | 112 (67.9%) |
| Age | Less than 35 years | 6 (8.8%) | 1 (1.5%) | 61 (89.7%) | 68 (41.2%) |
| | 35- 40years | 4 (14.3%) | 23 (82.1%) | 1 (3.6%) | 28 (17%) |
| | 41- 45years | 8 (17.8%) | 37 (82.2%) | 0 (0) | 45 (27.3%) |
| | More than 45 years | 5 (20.8%) | 19 (79.2%) | 0 (0) | 24 (14.5%) |
| Academic Position | Lecturers | 5 (7.7%) | 1 (1.5%) | 59 (90.8%) | 65 (39.4%) |
| | Asst. Prof. | 10 (13.7%) | 63 (86.3%) | 0 (0) | 73 (44.2%) |
| | Assoc. Prof. | 2 (14.3%) | 9 (64.3%) | 3 (21.4%) | 14 (8.5%) |
| | Prof. | 6 (46.2%) | 7 (53.8%) | 0 (0) | 13 (7.9%) |
| Educational Levels | Master Degree | 13 (10.4) | 67 (53.6) | 45 (36) | 125 (75.8%) |
| | Doctorate Degree | 10 (25%) | 13 (32.5%) | 17 (42.5%) | 40 (24.2%) |

Source: primary data

3.2 Structural Empowerment

The level of structural empowerment of lecturers' in private international educational institutions reveals positive results, in over all, with the average value of 4.287 (Table-2).

Table-2
Level of Structural Empowerment (N=165)

| Aspects | Average Value | S.D. | Empowerment Level |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-------|-------------------|
| Structural lines of power | 4.397 | .4636 | High |
| Structural lines of opportunity | 4.250 | .5297 | High |
| Structural lines of proportion | 4.213 | .5188 | High |
| Structural Empowerment | 4.287 | .4397 | High |

Source: primary data

From the table 2, it is found that the level of structural empowerment of lecturers in international educational institutions is high. However, when each aspect is considered, it is found that the structural lines of power is high (average value of 4.397), followed by structural lines of opportunity (4.250) and structural lines of proportion (4.213), respectively. Hence it confirms the high level of structural empowerment in the institutions.

3.3 Organizational Commitment

The level of organizational commitment of lecturers in private international educational institutions is presented in Table-3

Table-3
The level of Organization Commitment (N=165)

| Factors | Average Values | S.D. | Organization Commitment Levels |
|-------------------------|----------------|-------|--------------------------------|
| Affective commitment | 4.411 | .5276 | High |
| Continuance commitment | 4.243 | .5406 | High |
| Normative commitment | 4.278 | .5501 | High |
| Organization Commitment | 4.311 | .4495 | High |

Source: primary data

From the table 3, it is inferred that, the level of organizational commitment of lecturers' in private international educational institutions is high (average value of 4.311). When each aspect is considered separately, it has been found that, the affective commitment component is high (with average value of 4.411), followed by the normative commitment (4.278) and continuance commitment with 4.243. In overall, the level of organizational commitment is high in the private international institutions.

3.4 Relationship between Structural empowerment and organizational commitment

The relationship between structural empowerment and the organization commitment of lecturers is shown in Table-4.

Table-4
Relationship between Structural Empowerment and Organization Commitment

| | Structural lines of power | Structural lines of opportunity | Structural lines of Proportion | Structural Empowerment |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Affective Commitment | .560** | .604** | .641** | .693** |
| Continuance Commitment | .522** | .557** | .536** | .619** |
| Normative Commitment | .553** | .676** | .639** | .718** |
| Organizational Commitment | .652** | .733** | .724** | .810** |

** P < .01

From the table 4, it is discovered that the structural empowerment and organizational commitment of lecturers in private international educational institutions is highly correlated at .810, with a statistical significance level of .01. When each component is considered separately, it is found that the dimensions of structural empowerment and organizational commitment have good relationship among each other. All dimensions correlation value is greater than .05. Hence, high correlation is found among the dimensions (Normative Commitment Vs Structural lines of Opportunity (.676), Affective Commitment Vs Structural lines of Proportion (.641), Normative Commitment Vs Structural lines of Proportion (.639), Affective Commitment Vs Structural lines of Opportunity (.604), except few dimensions which are moderately correlated viz. Affective Commitment Vs Structural lines of power, Continuance Commitment Vs Structural lines of Power, Normative Commitment Vs Structural Lines of Power, Continuance Commitment Vs Structural lines of Opportunity and Continuance Commitment Vs Structural lines of Proportion. However, high correlation is found in general for structural empowerment and organizational commitment.

4. Summary of Findings

1. In overall view, the level of structural empowerment of lecturers in private international educational institutions at Thailand is high. When each aspect is considered separately, it has been found that, all individual dimensions (Structural lines of power, Structural lines of opportunity, and Structural lines of proposition) yields positive results i.e. high. In particular structural line of power is high when compared to other dimensions.

2. The level of organizational commitment of lecturers in private international institutions is high. The individual dimension of organizational commitment is also high and provided positive results. In particular affective commitment is high when compared to other dimensions.

3. The structural empowerment and the organizational commitment of lecturers in private international institutions are at high level. And the relationship between the two is positively correlated at .810, with the statistical significance level of .01. And among the dimensions, it is observed that there is a high correlation between normative commitment and structural lines of opportunity at .676.

4. The individual dimensions of structural empowerment and organizational commitment also highly correlated, except few dimensions which are moderately correlated. But it is observed that the correlation value of all dimensions are greater than 0.5. The positive strong association was found between the dimensions of structural empowerment and organizational commitment.

5. Discussion

In summary structural empowerment of lecturers in private international institutions is at high level, in accordance with the Kanter's concept. It states that strengthening of employee empowerment happen based on the 3 factors i.e. structural lines of power, structural lines of opportunity and structural lines of proportion (Kanter, 1977, pp. 175 – 179, 275; Aniruth Tulsuk, 2009, Page 19). It corresponds to Spreitzer's concept; (Spreitzer, 1995 quoted in the Sheila M. Smith, 2008) specified that the structural empowerment will happen, when the work performed by the employees is meaningful, when they are confident in their abilities, their awareness level regarding the boundaries of decision making and about the importance of outcomes from their work.

In over all, the level of organizational commitment of lecturers in private international institutions is high. The each individual aspect indicates that lecturers are highly committed to the organization, which corresponds to the concept of Allen and Meyer (1990) who states that the organizational commitment occurs in 3 forms i.e. affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment which is related to (Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982). Mowday's concept specifies that organizational commitment occurs from crucial factor of intense belief in accepting organization's goal and values, and the utmost willingness to benefit the organization with a strong wish to maintain organization's membership.

The relationship between structural empowerment and organizational commitment of lecturers in private international institution of are highly correlated at .810, with a statistical significance level of .01, which corresponds to (Menon, 1995; Boon, Arumugam, Safa and Baker, 2007). According to their research, strengthening of employee empowerment results from organizational commitment, which in turn corresponds to the study of Kahaleh and Gaither (2007), who found that the relationship between employee empowerment and the organizational commitment. The interesting fact is the relationship between normative commitment and structural lines of opportunity is highly correlated at .676, which strongly indicates that employees are empowered to access new challenges, increase knowledge and skills for growth and advancement hence they are (normative commitment) guided by their own duty, obligation and loyalty towards the organization.

6. Conclusion

The results of the study would provide an opportunity to utilize information for potentially developing the employees that will lead to educational efficiency, institutional administration and advantage for setting up an administrative network in educational quality assurance. Based on the findings in the study, it is confirmed that the administrators of private international educational institutions in Thailand developed structural empowerment that enhanced the level of organizational commitment by lecturers, which have potential positive impact on organizational effectiveness. However, the positive results had an interesting fact that in structural empowerment, structural lines of power is at high level means employees have the ability to exert lines of supply, lines of information and lines of support. Similarly, in organizational commitment, affective commitment is at high level, means employees are emotionally attached and involved in the organization. Hence there is a scope for further research in this area.

7. Recommendations

Further research can be conducted in this topic to study the cause effect relationship between structural empowerment & Job satisfaction, organizational commitment and retention. Also it can capture the outcomes in organizational effectiveness. Advanced statistical techniques like CFA and SEM model could be used to study

the causal relationships. This research has included only private international educational institutions, in future other private institutions and government institutions could also be considered, to identify the differences among them and which the results may be utilized for further improvement of institutions.

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