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"Employee-Employer Relationship" Empowerment and Interpersonal Trust in Private Educational Institutions and Its Impact on overall Profitability of an Organizations

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Abstract

The study was aimed at exploring empowerment and interpersonal trust, and how it would impact on the overall profitability of organizations. Given this conceptualization, empowerment may influence interpersonal-level trust and profitability in several ways. If principal create a work environment that enhances the feeling of empowerment in terms of meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. Teacher may be more likely to trust their supervisor and it will impact on overall profitability of organization. Faisalabad city was selected as universe and sample of 100 respondents were analyzed. Questionnaire tool was used to collect the data. After collecting information certain statistical tools (Mean, Standard deviation, regression and multi variate analysis) were applied to examine the relationship between empowerment and interpersonal trust and that relationship had an impact on overall profitability of institutions. Interpersonal trust level in colleges increased when teachers perceived that they were empowered in their work related activities. Teachers who perceived higher levels of empowerment in terms of the subscales of self-determination and impact also showed higher levels of interpersonal-level trust in their principals. Interpersonal trust and empowerment are very much essential to increase overall profitability in terms of goodwill and organizational learning.

Keywords: Empowerment, Interpersonal trust, Profitability, Teachers and Principal

Introduction

Employee employer relationship could be studied in reference of empowerment and interpersonal trust in any organization. Within private educational institutes, interpersonal trust and empowerment relationship could create differences. It could help to improve organizational profitability. Focus of this study is to analyze relationship of employee employer relationship in terms of trust and empowerment, and also its impact on overall profitability of organization. Trust is like a vital element in well functioning organizations (Moran & Hoy, 1998). Baier (1985) gave the idea that trust acts as necessary element for the effective collaboration and communication which act as bases for dynamic relationships. It is stated as mortar that binds leader to follower, and forms

the basis for leaders' legitimacy (Nanus, 1989). Trust has been described by Powell (1990) as a remarkably well-organized catalyst that reduces the complications of organizational life and facilitates all activities within organization than any other means of managing.

Trust acts like a salient feature in well-functioning organizations (Lane, 1998). Trust helps to maintain a positive working environment facilitating honest and supportive relationships (Moye, Henkin & Egle, 2004). It facilitates open exchange of ideas and impacts on quality and quantity of information exchanged (Bartolme, 1989; Diffie-Couch, 1984; Tyler, 1998). Trust acts as an important catalyst and leave profound effect on organizational decision making (Mishra & Morrissey, 1990). And acts as "an important

factor in terms of employee willingness to collaborate, and strengthens employee capacity to handle crises" (Diffie-Couch, 1984; Mishra, 1996; Mishra and Morrissey, 1990; Zand, 1972). Relationships of interdependence depend on trust, and people can achieve their goals with cooperation of one another (Hardin, 2002; Loomis, 1959).

Importance of trust in an organization cannot be denied. Especially in private institutes, as there interdependence demands an environment of trust that facilitates empowerment. In the absence of trust employees are less motivated to take risks, demand greater security to avoid likelihood of betrayal, and become more concerned about their rights (Tyler and Kramer, 1996). On the other hand, people's propensity for gossip, and the speed with which news of betrayal can spread throughout the organizational grapevine, can also make trust harder to establish (Moran & Hoy, 1998). According to Erdem, (2003) climate of mutual trust is required for effective team work and good performance. According to Bruhn, (2001) the ways that trust (or distrust) develop between peers and between managers and subordinates have critical implications for the functioning of individual subordinates, managers, work teams and the organization itself.

Interpersonal Trust

For proper functioning of institute, interpersonal trust is really important. When people will trust each other they will be in a better position to empower each other. And empowerment will also increase trust level in organization. Cook and Wall (1980) cited long term stability and well being of employees is very much dependant on trust between individuals and groups. So interpersonal trust in institutional context is of due importance. "Interpersonal trust is associated with organizational variables such as quality of communication, performance, citizenship behavior, problem solving, individual risk taking, and cooperation" (Baier, 1986, & Whitener et al., 1998). Costigan et al. (1998) gave the idea that trust in one's immediate supervisor is often described as an interpersonal trust that stems from day-to-day interactions between the trustor and trustee. Basis of interpersonal trust could be supervisor's

personal character and behavior (Butz et al., 2001). Again he came with the idea that interpersonal trust between employee and supervisor results in positive relations and increase performance of employees and organization. Trust is further associated with innovative behavior and satisfactory supervisor employee relationships (Tan & Tan, 2000). In a study of superiors and subordinates Kramer (1996) found that different people have different scales to judge trust in any organization depending upon levels in organization. Individual in authority evaluated the trustworthiness of a subordinate based on that person's ability to perform work competently, and to faithfully fulfill the role obligations and duties (Moran and Hoy, 1998). The superiors searched for evidence of motivation and values consistent with the norms of the organization in deciding how much trust to invest in a subordinate (Moran and Hoy, 1998). So within the context of colleges we may say, interpersonal-level trust refers to the extent to which a teacher is confident in, and willing to act on the basis of the words, actions, and decisions of his or her principal (McAllister, 1995).

Empowerment

According to Honold, (1997) Control of one's own work, autonomy on the job, variations of teamwork, and pay systems that link pay with performance are all called empowerment. Liden et al (2000) highlight that "Researchers and practitioners have embraced empowerment as a way to encourage and increase decision making at lower levels in an organization, and concurrently, enrich the work experience of employees". The interpersonal trust facilitates work climate for managers and their subordinates, and contributes directly to subordinates' feelings of self-worth and sense of self-determination (Deci et al., 1989). Main purpose of empowerment is to achieve individual and organizational goals and management should try to facilitate their employees in achieving these goals by providing favorable environment (Duvall, 1999). Organizational environment should support collaboration, commitment and freedom to act (Duvall, 1999). "A process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the

identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information" (Conger and Kanungo, 1988). We can say it as "the major new industrial weapon against domestic and international threats" (Menon, 2001), that contributes to the organizational effectiveness "through the wise utilization of an organization's human resources" (Siegall and Gardner, 2000). According to Dimitriadis, 2005 (as cited by Menon, 2001) "Empowerment has been considered an act: the act of granting power to the person(s) being empowered". It has been considered a process: the process that leads to the experience of power and also as psychological state that manifests itself as cognitions that can be measured (*ibid.*).

Culbert and McDonough (1986) gave the idea that, "empowerment is the key to understanding trust and trusting relationships in an organization" (p. 182). People without having some power in their hand would not be able to provide performance to their fullest. Within an organization one must feel that he is an important part of the organization and his contributions are valuable (Culbert and McDonough, 1986). Work of Conger and Kanungo, (1988) was then extended by Thomas and Velthouse, (1990). They thought of empowerment as a multidimensional construct. They defined empowerment in terms of four cognitions that reflect an individual's orientation to his or her work role. The four cognitions include meaning, competence (identical to Conger and Kanungo's self-efficacy), choice (self-determination), and impact (*ibid.*). Thomas and Velthouse, (1990) defined empowerment not as enduring personality trait that is manifest across situations, but a set of cognitions created by the work environment or context. Empowerment was judged as employee's perception about their position in organizational context and their working environment (Spreitzer, 1995).

According to Spreitzer (1996) concept of empowerment is facilitated by an environment having: low role ambiguity, working for a manager who has a wide span of control, sociopolitical support, and access to

information, access to resources, and a participative unit climate. Again she found that role ambiguity was negatively related to empowerment. Positive relationship was found regarding wide span of control, sociopolitical support, access to information, and unit climate as evaluated by manager's subordinates. Access to resources, however, was not related to empowerment and managers with higher education were more in a state to be empowered (Spreitzer, 1996).

"Empowerment fosters confidence, enabling individuals to step forward and handle situations effectively, without hesitancy or need for approval" (Nykodym, et al, 1995). Empowerment process requires commitment and cultural changes. When connected with organizational values such as team work, two-way communications, one can enjoy this practice (Smith, 1997). For growth of empowerment in organization, employees should feel that their ideas are valued and they are contributing to the organizational objectives and success (Smith, 1997). Val and Lloyd (2003) defined empowerment as "managerial style where managers shares with the members of the organization their influence in the decision making process". Further studies examined empowerment concept and its effects on organization. "Empowerment and trust can have dynamic effects in organizations in terms of organizational complexity, reduce transaction costs, strengthen relational systems within flatter organizational structures, and diminish the need for supervisory oversight" (Moye and Henkin, 2005). It can also effect unproductive controls and different measurement systems that could effect performance negatively and organization could become inconsistent in highly competitive markets" (*ibid.*).

Within the context of educational institutes, principals are the persons who act as leaders. They are responsible to provide a direction to their subordinates. And how increased performance through empowerment and trustworthy environment can be achieved is dependant on them. "The development of a strengths-based, positive organizational culture begins with strong, positive leadership" (Tombaugh, 2005). Empowerment and trust are

the elements that could facilitate a supportive environment. And it will lead towards increased profitability for institutes in terms of goodwill and improved learning.

Study Inquiry

In this study focus was on exploring relationship between empowerment and interpersonal trust, and how it would impact on the overall profitability of organizations. Given this conceptualization, empowerment may influence interpersonal-level trust and profitability in several ways. If principal creates a work environment that enhance the feeling of empowerment, teachers may be more likely to trust their supervisor and it will have greater impact on overall profitability of organization. The study was designed to address following issues:

- 1- To examine the relationship between teachers perceived level of empowerment and their level of interpersonal trust in their principals.
- 2- To study whether certain predictor variables (age, education, gender, marital status, years in teaching professions) moderates the relationship between perceived level of empowerment and level of interpersonal trust in the principal?
- 3- To evaluate relationships between empowerment and interpersonal trust and its impact on overall profitability of an organization.

Method

Participants and Data Collection

This study was based on quantitative approach; respondents in this study were college teachers and principals. The study universe was colleges of private sector in Faisalabad in Pakistan. Data was collected from 100 respondents (including teachers and principals). All the respondents were assured about the confidentiality and anonymity and that the data will be reported in aggregate.

Instrumentation

Testing instruments of regression and beta test was constructed to measure the relationship between teacher empowerment and level of

interpersonal trust. The relationship of these variables helped to measure overall profitability of organization.

Validity and Reliability of the Survey Instrument

For this study the validity of the survey used is supported by the fact that all of the items were derived from established instruments. The entire statistical instrument used for getting results is revealed to have acceptable levels of validity in previous studies (McAllister, 1995; Spreitzer, 1995). However, slight modifications were done to make the wording understandable in an educational context. In this study, to access employee's feeling of empowerment multidimensional measures of psychological empowerment were used. (spreitzer, 1992). Dimensional factors under study are meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. Thomas and Velthouse (1990) define dimension of meaning as "the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual's own ideals or standards" (Spreitzer, 1995). The second dimension is Competence can be renamed as self-efficacy, In accordance with Gist (1987), competence was defined as "an individual's belief in his or her capability to perform activities with skill" (Spreitzer, 1995). The third dimension, self-determination, was defined as, "an individual's sense of having choice in initiating and regulating actions" (Spreitzer, 1995). The final dimension, impact, was defined as, "the degree to which an individual can influence strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at work" (Spreitzer, 1995). In order to assess employees' level of interpersonal trust; empowerment in terms of perceived decision-makers' behaviors is used. Respondents indicated on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). For this study, focus of the study is to measure the relationships between trust and empowerment with their supervisors (principals) in the colleges and peers at work.

Results

Several statements were tested—multidimensionality. Before any statistical analysis, frequencies were calculated for the background variables and basic statistical (Mean, Standard deviation) tests were used to

get results. Beta test and multi variate tests were used to study the relationship between empowerment and interpersonal-level trust. And further results and conclusion is constructed. Bivariate regression test was estimated. First it regressed the total empowerment scale on interpersonal-level trust (Table II). The model indicated that empowerment was a significant predictor of interpersonal-level trust. The chi-square (29.72) show a highly significant association ($P = .00$) between trust and empowerment. The gamma value shows a strong positive relationship between the variables. Data clearly indicates that if the trust increase then also empowerment increases. So higher the trust of the principal, higher will be the empowerment of teachers. Further it regressed the empowerment subscales (meaning, competence, self-determination, impact) along with the demographic variables on interpersonal-level trust (Table III). When all of these variables were checked

simultaneously, they presented 0.42 coefficient of the variation in interpersonal-level trust. The variables; impact and self-determination have significant association with interpersonal trust level. Average of 4.92 respondents strongly agrees over the concept that self-determination is significant predictor of empowerment. Where as the variables; competence and meaning have less significance in determining interpersonal trust. Teachers who were empowered in their work showed higher levels of interpersonal-level trust in supervisors. Teachers who perceived higher levels of empowerment in terms of the subscales of self-determination and impact also showed higher levels of interpersonal-level trust in their principals.

Table IV shows bivariate relationship between different variables (age, marital status, trust, empowerment and education) and profitability. All these factors revealed to have strong relationship with profitability of organization.

Table-I Distribution of the Respondents According To Gender, Age, Marital Status, Education and Experience

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	68	68.0
Female	32	32.0
Total	100	100.0
Age		
20-25	9	9.0
26-30	43	43.0
31-35	26	26.0
36-40	17	17.0
Above 40	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0
Qualification		
Master	83	83.0
M.Phil	13	13.0
Ph.D.	4	4.0
Total	100	100.0
Marital Status		
Married	69	69.0
Unmarried	31	31.0
Total	100	100.0
Working experience (years)		
0-1	16	16.0
1-2	16	16.0
2-5	30	30.0
5-7	19	19.0
7-9	19	19.0
Total	100	100.0

Table- II Association between Trust Respondents and Empowerment

Trust	Empowerment			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Low	5	19	0	24
	20.8%	79.2%	.0%	100.0%
Medium	6	40	4	50
	12.0%	80.0%	8.0%	100.0%
High	4	9	13	26
	15.4%	34.6%	50.0%	100.0%
Total	15	68	17	100
	15.0%	68.0%	17.0%	100.0%

Chi-square = 29.72 d.f. = 4 P-value = .00 Gamma = .529

Table-III Multivariate Analysis

Variables	Beta	T	P
Empowerment	.304	2.209	.030*
Gender	-.017	-.158	.875
Age	.150	1.099	.275
Marital status	.226	1.637	.105
Education	.377	2.485	.021*
Collegial leadership	.146	1.356	.179
Professionalism	-.097	-.957	.341
Trust	.219	1.925	.057
Impact	.261	2.150	.034*
Meaning	.139	.904	.369
Self-determination	.332	2.952	.004**
competence	.142	.866	.389

Dependent Variable: Profitability

R² = .42

Table -IV Association of Variables with Profitability

Variables	profitability			
	Chi-square	d.f	p	gamma
Age	27.91	8	.00	.217
Marital status	12.28	2	.00	-.347
Education	27.91	4	.00	.217
Trust	29.72	4	.00	.529
Empowerment	58.35	4	.00	.691

Discussion

A sample of private colleges in Faisalabad city was surveyed to collect data. Results of this study indicate that those teachers feel higher level of interpersonal trust, who are responsible to their work who are empowered in their work and who can influence their work environment make. The relationships found in this study between teacher empowerment and

interpersonal trust is significant with relationships between supervisors and employees in other work environments (Moye, 2003; Moye and Henkin, 2004).

Construct of Empowerment

For interpersonal trust, empowerment was the significant predictor. Spreitzer (1995) defined empowerment as a motivational construct

manifested via four cognitions: meaning, competence, self determination, and impact.

Meaning refers to degree to which a person values his work. Principal may strengthen the meaningfulness of teachers work by having different interactions with them, where they can highlight the importance of individual role, and the importance of activities that teachers perform.

Self determination refers to having a choice in initiating and regulating actions (Spreitzer, 1995). Employees with high self determination feel free to perform their day to day activities according to their own choice. Employees feeling of self determination can be aided by supervisor's direction towards work activities.

Impact refers to the intensity of influence that teachers could exert over administrative and strategic outcomes at work (Spreitzer, 1995). Impact by mean of employee's belief that they can make a difference in their work activities and have control over what happens in workplace should be motivated in institutes. As when people will observe that their decisions and plans are having effect on environment and institute they will feel empowered.

Interpersonal trust and empowerment have a strong positive relationship. When we empower teachers in their work activities they may be more disposed towards positive relationship with their principals. Such relationships cause to increase the profitability of an institute. In order to increase overall profitability of an institute, interpersonal trust and empowerment are very much essential. It is the sole responsibility of principal to promote trusting relationship through a trustworthy behavior (Whitener, et al, 1998). Communication is a tool that could act as a facilitator in improving teacher principal relationship. Principals, who exercise open communication with their employees, are in a position to empower their teachers. They communicate about all crucial factors effecting performance and helps to take better decisions. Principals should try to maintain friendly and healthy relationship with teachers. This will help them to make people believe that they are important for organization, they will feel empowered that will lead towards improved trust level. All this process will lead

the institute towards improved profitability in terms of goodwill, learning.

Strong relationship between empowerment and trust can provide many benefits to organization in terms of reduce transaction costs, strengthen relational systems within organizational structures, and diminish the need for supervisory oversight, unproductive controls. This will be having impact on overall performance of institutes (colleges). So within the context of private colleges of Faisalabad, trust and empowerment is essential element for proper functioning and acquiring competitive edge over others.

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