ABAC ODI JOURNAL Vision. Action. Outcome

The Role of Empowerment, Organizational Commitment and Working Environment on Job Performance in AAA Non-Profit Organization

Khin Ei Ei Hlaing, Maria Socorro C. L. Fernando

The Role of Empowerment, Organizational Commitment and Working Environment on Job Performance in AAA Non-Profit Organization

Khin Ei Ei Hlaing[1], Maria Socorro C. L. Fernando[2]

[1]Master of Management in Organization and Development (MMOD)
Graduate School of Business and Advanced Technology Management (GS-BATM),
Assumption University, Thailand. Email: khineieihlaing@gmail.com
[2]Lecturer and Program Director, MMOD & PhDOD, GS-BATM,
Assumption University, Thailand. Email: mlfernando@gmail.com

Abstract

Empowerment has become a big part of our today's job performance. For organizations in a highly competitive environment, empowerment ensures sustained productivity and creating a committed workforce. This research study assesses the needs of three factors that help to enhance individual's job performance in the non-government organization: empowerment, working environment, and organizational commitment. A mixed research methodology was used to study the whole population in the organization. All 28 local employees responded to the survey questionnaire for quantitative research, whereas 8 key employees were selected to participate in an individual interview. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive analysis and PNI Modified. The qualitative data was analyzed using inter-coding method. The results from PNI Modified show that empowerment, working environment, and organizational commitment are the factors that have to be prioritized. The qualitative data used appreciative inquiry (AI) to explore the topic of empowerment, working environment and organizational commitment. Based on the overall results, the current situation of job performance is favorable, but PNI Modified suggested that some factors should be prioritized in order to enhance individual's job performance. Therefore, strategies are presented based on the findings.

Keywords: Empowerment, Working Environment, Organizational Commitment, Job Performance

Introduction

In this competitive world, all the organization is challenging regarding to sustain productivity and maintain committed workers. There is no organization which can achieve their goals without the committed workforce. Empowerment concept is always changing, and it can be interpreted in different ways depending on the involving individuals. Researchers agree that there is no comprehensive definition for empowerment, but there are different definitions which consist of fundamental view evaluated in combining with other significant factors.

Pelit et al. (2011) defined that empowerment is the delegation of authority and/or

responsibility by a superior to a subordinate. Empowerment characterizes the working environment in which individuals have the capacity and accountability to develop and improve their activities to get customer satisfaction over good relationships and outcomes for the benefit and to meet objectives of the organization. Excessively compliance to rules and regulations can negatively impact on service quality of employees (Kundu & Vora, 2004). Employee empowerment has widely been documented as a critical contributor to organizational success. There are many authors witnessing a direct relationship between the level of employee empowerment and performance, employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

In this age of globalization, employees' empowerment becomes a must in the organization so that employees can set a quick decision and perform quickly according to fast changing environment. That employee empowerment is an inspirational way that is designed to increase performance through the levels of employee's involvement and self-autonomy.

Background of the Organization

Since 1998, the AAA non-profit organization started launched the health programs in Myanmar. By coordinating with the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the organization promoted programs to prevent infectious diseases. More recently, the organization also assisted other activities focused on advancing livelihoods, agriculture and fisheries, water and sanitation, health, and shelter.

In 2012, the programming has been offered to setting the phase for the democratic and economic transition of Myanmar after several years of military control. After 2015 elections, the organization's key focus was supporting the preparation for and implementation of elections that would represent a substantial step toward restoration of democratic rule. The organization also reinforced economic policy reforms, linked to specific priorities, and anticipated to launch working relationships in different areas. Apart from that the organization supported in the areas of peace process among the government and ethnic minority groups. The organization is working with other civil society and media to develop their role and advocacy for spreading services to address specific diseases and delivering humanitarian assistance to displaced populations within and outside of Myanmar.

The researcher analyzed the organization by using SOAR framework and the below table 1 shows the SOAR analysis of the organization. The organization has a good reputation in Myanmar. The safe working environment motivate employees to work better, and the employee know the vision and mission of the organization. The strength includes good reputation, good working environment, competitive remuneration/ benefits and clear vision and mission. For the opportunity, with the improvement of organizational management function/ system, employees can get more empowerment. The aspiration is to fulfill the organization's vision and mission as well as to inspire and enable employees to fully empower for better work results and commitment. The short-term wishes are to improve working process and sustain productivity and committed workforce.

Table 1

SOAR Analysis

Strength	Opportunity
Good reputation Good working environment Competitive remuneration/benefits Clear vision and mission	Improve organizational management function/ system
Aspiration	Result
To fulfill the organization's vision and missions. To inspire and enable employees to fully empower for better work results and commitment.	Improved working process Sustained productivity and committed workforce.

Statement of Problem

Enhancing employee empowerment is the key to performing the duties with better performance during the challenges with limited resources. This is the case study of the non-government organization in Yangon, and this mixed method research will determine the difference between the current and expected situation of AAA organization and propose recommendations based on the findings.

Research Objectives

The objective of the research is to explore the employee empowerment and job performance of local staff. The research objectives are as follows.

1. To analyze the current and expected situation of employee empowerment, organizational commitment, working environment and job performance at the organization.

2. To discover the best experience of the employee empowerment and job performance

3. To identify the employee goals and aspirations of empowerment on job performance

4. To design strategies based on the findings.

Definitions of Terms

Empowerment refers to the allocation of some authority to employees and including them in the decision-making procedure.

Positive work behaviors are an individual's initiative mindset and aim to have self-improvement as well as their performance.

Organizational commitment is an individual's dedication and participation in a particular organization.

Job performance refers to how individuals perform their duties with expected quantity and quality which includes organizational commitment, job engagement and positive work behavior.

Literature Review

According to empowerment is the improvement of the autonomy of individuals in their role or increased contribution in decision making more generally within the broader outline and interest of the organization. A recent definition said that empowerment is a procedure of allowing individuals or groups to take control over their own lives, make decisions, and take actions that affect their personal and professional development, as well as the growth and success of the organization they work for. Empowerment involves the transfer of power, authority, and responsibility from managers to employees, and the creation of a supportive work environment that fosters autonomy, trust, and collaboration.

Most researchers focused on the individual's psychological experience of empowerment and connecting this with several work-related outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, job engagement and work performance). Yet, an example that focuses on individual reactions is inadequate if it does not include an investigation of the contextual factors that shape those observations (Seibert et al., 2001).

Empowerment in the workplace influences in individual and organizational outcomes and is connected to positive work performance as employee effectiveness and employee productivity (Koberg et al., 1999) and management effectiveness (Gregory et al., 2010; Spreitzer, 1995). Spreitzer (1995) and Conger and Kanungo (1988) also described that empowerment as a process of granting employees the authority, resources, and support to make decisions that affect their work and the organization as a whole.

Moreover, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) and Conger and Kanungo (1988) indicated that empowerment is a dynamic structure that changes over time and influenced by different organizational factors such as leadership style, organizational culture, and communication patterns. Additionally, empowerment can be viewed as a means of promoting job engagement and employee motivation by giving a sense of ownership and responsibility for their work and its productivity (Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Corresponding to previous findings, individuals who experience empowered are more creative and productive, and are observed to be more skilled when performing their tasks (Spreitzer, 1995). They are also more flexible and willing to take extra miles (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). Spreitzer (1995) stated that co-workers and organizational members believe that empowered individuals are more efficient and flexible.

Working environment is the physical arrangement of space, layout, noise, tools, materials, and co-worker's relationship. The value of all of those aspects has a significant and positive effect on the quality of the performance. Grawitch et al. (2010) also defined that working environment can be the combination of physical, social, and psychological factors that influence the way employees perceive and experience their work. Physical factors of the working environment include the design, layout, lighting, and temperature of the workspace, as well as the availability of equipment and resources needed to perform the job. Social factors refer to the relationships and interactions between employees and their supervisors, colleagues, and customers, as well as the organizational culture and values that shape those interactions. Psychological factors relate to employees' perceptions of their job tasks, their sense of control and autonomy over their work, and their overall job satisfaction and engagement (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Furthermore, the working environment can also be viewed as a key element of

employee well-being, health, and safety. A positive work environment that promotes employee health and well-being can lead to reduced absenteeism, increased job satisfaction, and improved organizational performance (Allen et al., 2016).

Organizational commitment defined as an individual's acknowledgement with a specific organization, the integration of the values and goals of that organization, and the readiness to apply significant effort on behalf of the organization (Angle & Perry, 1981; Bateman & Strasser, 1984; Griffin & Hepburn, 2005; Mowday et al., 1979; Porter et al., 1974). Commitment to an organization indicates the loyalty to the organization and willingness to involve in an organization (Lambert & Hawkins, 2004). Definition of organizational commitment has been further refined and developed over the years. Organizational commitment has been significantly studied because of its status as a core job attitude steering how employees approach their work and career (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Mowday et al.,1979).

According to Murphy (1989), job performance refers to a person's performance of specific job assignments that involve formal job descriptions. Stated that job performance is the employees' ability to do his/her job well and accomplish his/her goal within the context of a job in the set timeframe. Viswesvaran and Ones (2000) also discussed that job performance is the action, behavior, and outcomes that employees engage in or bring in which relate to and contribute to the organizational goals. Job performance is the quantity and quality of achievements by an individual or group at work. It is a foundation of productivity, and it should contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives (Schermerhorn, 1993).

Research Methodology

To accomplish this research study, the research employs mixed method research, which are qualitative and quantitative research. The outputs of the qualitative interview are drawn from 8 key informants who are working in project management and support roles with different years of working experiences. The quantitative outputs of data are drawn from the two-sided Likert scale embedded in the structured questionnaire, whereby the numeric data generate average means, standard deviation (SD), and PNI Modified (PNI Modified). The questionnaires related to the four variables are distributed to 28 respondents to all the local employees at the organization.

Results and Discussion

Table 2

The Descriptive Statistics for All Current Variables

Factors	n	M	SD
Empowerment	28	3.12	0.488
Organizational Commitment	28	3.49	0.443
Working Environment	28	3.46	0.856

Factors	n	M	SD
Job Performance	28	3.18	0.560

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviation of the existing situation for all variables from the quantitative survey. As per the statistics, the present situation of Organizational Commitment has the highest mean, which is 3.49, whereas Empowerment is the lowest means, 3.12.

It means, the respondents are committed to the organization currently, but they are not really satisfied with work empowerment.

Table 3

The Result of PNI Modified of All Variables

Factor	N	Current (D)		Preferred (I)		PNI Modified	Rank
		M	SD	M	SD		
Empowerment	28	3.12	0.488	3.57	0.419	0.14	1
Organizational Commitment	28	3.49	0.443	3.65	0.356	0.04	4
Working Environment	28	3.46	0.539	3.73	0.456	0.07	3
Job Performance	28	3.18	0.560	3.58	0.441	0.12	2

Table 4

Comparative Results of Survey Questionnaire and Interview Findings

Survey Questionnaire		Individual Interview
Factors	Rank	Common Themes
Empowerment	1	- Give responsibility - Capacity building
Organizational Commitment	4	- Job satisfaction - Competitive and flexible entitlements
Working Environment	3	- Healthy environment - Safety and facilities
Job Performance	2	- Capacity building - Career development

According to the above table (3 & 4), the result of Empowerment, which scored PNI Modified (0.14) and rated priority, was comparable with the qualitative findings of desired empowerment, particularly giving responsibility and capacity building.

Job Performance result, which scored PNI Modified (0.12) and rated second, were similar with the qualitative findings of desired job performance, such as capacity building and career development.

The result of Working Environment, which scored PNI Modified (0.07) and placed third, was consistent with the qualitative findings of preferred working environments such as healthy environment and facilities.

Organizational Commitment result, which scored PNI Modified (0.04) and graded fourth, were matching with the qualitative findings of preferred organizational commitment, such as job satisfaction and competitive entitlements.

According to the findings, employee empowerment based on PNI Modified (PNI Modified = 0.14) was agreed to be the first priority needed for employees at the organization. As we can see from the quantitative data in the current situation, the highest was employees are encouraged to come up with new ideas of doing things with the highest mean score (M = 3.32) while the lowest one is that employees can make appropriate decisions within the control (M = 2.96). Hence, we can conclude that employees hardly agree that within the organization they have limited empowerment on decision making according to the lowest mean finding. Moreover, regarding the qualitative data by content analysis showed that the themes that mentioned most and influenced employee empowerment were giving responsibilities and capacity building. So, employee empowerment is defined as to give responsibility, trust, sharing role and authority. Supervisors should understand the individual's responsibilities and enhance their skills. The respondents gave their own answers, stating that they feel engaged and committed when their supervisors trust and empower them with additional responsibilities and decision makings. Additionally, senior management should encourage and give additional roles and responsibilities according to the employee's skills and capabilities.

Next, the mentioned results showed that job performance based on PNI Modified (PNIModified = 0.12) was agreed to be the second priority needed for employees at the organization. It is clearly seen from the quantitative data in the current situation that the highest mean was employees can set priorities (M = 3.29). Meanwhile, the lowest mean score from the job performance from the current situation indicated that employees strongly agree that they are actively participating in meetings and/or discussions (M = 3.07). To sum up, the employees feel dissatisfied with their participation in meetings and discussions according to the lowest mean finding. Moreover, regarding the qualitative data by content analysis showed that the themes that mentioned the most and influenced job performance were capacity building and career development. The respondents answered that employees have positive attitudes and build up their capacity to increase their performance. Also stated that to empower staff through leadership and career development opportunities. So, organizations should analyze and revisit the entitlement plan regularly and provide opportunities for professional development as it will motivate the employee to improve their performance.

The results showed that a working environment based on PNI Modified (PNI Modified = 0.07) was pointed out to be the third priority needed for employees at the organization. It is clearly seen from the quantitative data in the current situation that employees strongly agree

that the working environment provides security facilities with the highest mean score (M = 3.57). While the lowest one was employees agree that they are motivated working in the safe organization (M = 3.36). Therefore, according to the lowest mean finding, we can conclude that a safe working environment does not really impact employees' motivation. In addition, the qualitative data by content analysis showed that the themes that mentioned the most and influenced the working environment were healthy environment, safety and facilities. Most of the respondents stated that the organization's close-knit and friendly working environment as well as facilities and workspaces provided are exceptional.

Lastly, the results showed that organizational commitment based on PNIModified (PNIModified = 0.04) was pointed out to be the last priority needed for employees at the organization. It is clearly seen from the quantitative data in the current situation that employees strongly agree that employees are honored to tell that they are part of the organization and they are eager to put in extra effort beyond their duty to help the organization be successful with the highest mean score (M = 3.57). While the lowest one was employees strongly agree that the organization deserves employees' loyalty (M = 3.36). Therefore, we can state that employees are not really committed to the organization according to the lowest mean finding. Furthermore, the qualitative data by content analysis showed that the themes that mentioned the most and influenced the organizational commitment were job satisfaction, competitive and flexible entitlements. Respondents cited that commitments depend on individuals' interpretation and understanding. Some value the responsibilities but some highlight entitlements. To enhance employees' commitment, the organization should understand their employees' nature.

Conclusion and Recommendations

According to the quantitative and qualitative results, suggestions could be made for the organization on empowerment, working environment, organizational commitment and job performance.

Regarding employee empowerment, the researcher found two main themes areas that factored to empowerment were mentioned the most which were giving responsibilities and capacity building. Empowerment described as a process of granting employees the authority, resources, and support to make decisions that affect their work and the organization (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995). In this case, the researcher recommends the organization to empowers their staff by establishing a learning and development atmosphere. Empower employees by giving decision-making power and let employees grow and develop through responsibilities and giving them positive feedback. In this case, supervisor should trust their employee to feel more confidence to take more responsibilities or take decisions.

According to the PNI modified, job performance is the second priority factor that the researcher observed in two main stages, capacity building and career development. Thus, the researcher recommends the organization to strengthen employees' professional development which is a kind of incentive, and it is also related to workforce having positive acknowledgement for their inputs and being treated in a caring and kind manner (Greenberg & Baron, 2008). Therefore, the organization is advised to sustain their employees in establishing their own advancement plan to improve their career.

The third key factor that the researcher found from the study was a healthy environment, safety and facilities. A positive work environment that supports employee well-being can lead to reduced absenteeism, increased job satisfaction, and improved organizational performance (Allen et al., 2016). Therefore, the senior leadership should listen to employees' feedback and provide opportunities to express their feelings to improve a healthy working environment. Respecting other values and any discrimination manner are prohibited in the organization.

Commitment to an organization indicates the loyalty to the organization and willingness to involve in an organization (Lambert & Hawkins, 2004). Thus, based on the data findings, the researcher proposes that the organization build a strong teamwork culture, set clear goals and expectations to the teams. Also be clear and promote open communication.

Table 5

Strategies based on the findings

Quantitative Findings		Qualitative Findings	Recommendations	Strategies (Activities/ etc)
Factors	Rank	Common Themes		
Empowerment	1	- Give responsibility. - Capacity building	- Support learning and development principles in the working environment. - Empower employees by giving decision-making authority. - Let employees grow and develop with responsibilities and provide positive feedback.	- Let the supervisor trust their employees to feel more confidence to take responsibilities or take decision.
Job Performance	2	- Capacity building - Career development	- Support employees' professional growth. - Support employees in determining their own development plan to enhance their career.	- Create career ladder position. - Create opportunities for capacity building and promotion for career development
Working Environment	3	- Healthy environment - Safety and facilities	- to improve a healthy working environment. - Respecting other values and any discrimination manner are prohibited in the organization.	- Forming staff council/ committee - Create safe platforms for staff to speak out

Quantitative Findings		Qualitative Findings	Recommendations	Strategies (Activities/ etc)
Factors	Rank	Common Themes		
Organizational Commitment	4	- Job satisfaction - Competitive and flexible entitlements	- Establish a strong culture, set clear goals and expectations for the employees. - Be transparent and promote open communication.	- Create organizational cultures of recognizing employees for their contributions

References

Allen, N. J., & Meyer, J. P. (1990). The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization. *Journal of Occupational Psychology, 63*(1), 1-18.

Allen, T. D., French, K. A., Dumani, S., & Shockley, K. M. (2016). *Health and well-being at work: A survey of organizational health practices* (2nd ed.). American Psychological Association. doi: 10.1037/14867-000

Angle, H. L., & Perry, J. L. (1981*).* An empirical assessment of organizational commitment and organizational effectiveness. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 26*(1), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.2307/2392596

Bateman, T. S., & Strasser, S. (1984). A longitudinal analysis of the antecedents of organizational commitment. *Academy of Management Journal, 27*(1), 95-112. https://doi.org/10.2307/255959

Conger, J. A., & Kanungo, R. N. (1988). The empowerment process: Integrating theory and practice. *Academy of Management Review, 13*(3), 471-482. doi: 10.5465/amr.1988.4306983

Grawitch, M. J., Gottschalk, M., & Munz, D. C. (2010). The path to a healthy workplace: A critical review linking healthy workplace practices, employee well-being, and organizational improvements. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 62*(3), 129-147. doi:10.1037/a0020720

Gregory, B. T., Albritton, M. D., & Osmonbekov, T. (2010). The mediating role of psychological empowerment on the relationships between P-O fit, job satisfaction, and in-role performance. *Journal of business and psychology*, *25*(4), 639-647.

Greenberg, J., & Baron, R. A. (2008). *Behavior in Organizations* (9th ed.). Pearson Education.

Griffin, M. L., & Hepburn, J. R. (2005). Side-bets and reciprocity as determinants of organizational commitment among correctional officers. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 33*(6), 611-625. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2005.08.010

Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1976). Motivation through the design of work: Test of a theory. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 16*(2), 250-279. doi:10.1016/0030-5073(76)90016-7

Koberg, C. S., Boss, R. W., Senjem, J. C., & Goodman, E. A. (1999). Antecedents and outcomes of empowerment: Empirical evidence from the health care industry. *Group & organization management*, *24*(1), 71-91.

Kundu, S. C., & Vora, J. A. (2004). Creating a Talented Workforce for Delivering Service Quality. *Human Resource Planning, 27*(2), 40-51.

Lambert, M. J., & Hawkins, E. J. (2004). Measuring Outcome in Professional Practice: Considerations in Selecting and Using Brief Outcome Instruments. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 35*(5), 492-499. https://doi.org/10.1037/0735-7028.35.5.492

Morrison, E. W., & Phelps, C. C. (1999). Taking charge at work: Extra role efforts to initiate workplace change. *Academy of Management Journal, 42*(4), 403-419. https://doi.org/10.2307/257011

Mowday, R. T., Steers, R. M., & Porter, L. W. (1979). The Measurement of Organizational Commitment. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 14*, 224-247. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(79)90072-1

Murphy, K. R. (1989*)*. Is the relationship between cognitive ability and job performance stable over time?. *Human performance*, *2*(3), 183-200.

Pelit, E., Öztürk, Y., & Arslantürk, Y. (2011). The effects of employee empowerment on employee job satisfaction. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 23*(6), 784-802. https://doi.org/10.1108/09596111111153475

Porter, L. W., Steers, R. M., Mowday, R. T., & Boulian, P. V. (1974). Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover among Psychiatric Technicians. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 59*, 603-609. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0037335

Schermerhorn, J. R. (1993). *Management for Productivity*. John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L., & Liden, R. C. (2001). A Social Capital Theory of Career Success. *Academy of Management Journal, 44*(2), 219-237. https://doi.org/10.5465/3069452

Spreitzer, G. M. (1995). An empirical test of a comprehensive model of intrapersonal empowerment in the workplace. *American journal of community psychology*, *23*(5), 601-629.

Thomas, K. W., & Velthouse, B. A. (1990). Cognitive elements of empowerment: An "interpretive" model of intrinsic task motivation. *Academy of Management Review, 15*(4), 666-681. doi:10.5465/amr.1990.4308154

Viswesvaran, C., & Ones, D. S. (2000). Perspectives on models of job performance. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 8*(4), 216-226. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2389.00151