



The Relationship between Employee Empowerment and Organizational Commitment in the Hotel Industry and its Implications for the Management

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Abstract: In most companies with deeply entrenched hierarchical systems, employees' development and performance may take a backseat. Employees might feel powerless and indifferent and this may affect their commitment and efficacy in some way (Crawford, *et al.*, 2009). There is need for the leaders and managers to assess empowerment as a motivational factor to stimulate the employees' commitment to service (Jogarathnam and Ching-Yick Tse, 2006; Havill, 2010). The purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine the relationship between employee empowerment and commitment. A questionnaire comprised of a battery of two standardized instruments by Spreitzer (1995) and Allen and Meyer (1990) respectively was distributed in the 12 selected hotels based in United Arab Emirates (UAE) and data gathered from 273 employees were evaluated. Spearman Correlation and Linear Regression were used as the main methods to examine the relation of the two concepts. The finding of the study shows substantial evidence supporting the relationship between affective commitment and empowerment and supports previous studies that commitment is an indispensable constituent in the process of empowering employees (Manville and Ober, 2003; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Further there is less evidence supporting the relationship between normative commitment and empowerment and continuance commitment and empowerment was found. The study finally concludes with recommendation to examine the relation between dimensions with help of Multilevel Regression Analysis.

Keywords: Employee Empowerment; affective commitment; normative commitment; continuance commitment.

1. INTRODUCTION

The traditional organizational platform of a highly hierarchical framework does not always fit in with today's dynamic work environment. The rigidity and strict control exercised in Taylorian structures might constrain the performance and produce inefficiencies. In today's world where information, action, and

delivery need to be fast and flexible, the advantages of hierarchical philosophy are no longer valid (Crawford, *et al.*, 2009). To preserve effectiveness and efficiency in the increasingly complex organizations, management must constantly look for new strategies and ways to create competitive advantage. Customer expectations have changed and demands are increasing. Hospitality organizations are among those that need to be the most flexible and responsive to quickly meet any customer needs (Manville and Ober, 2003).

Hotel Industry, as the object of the study, must face the challenge, because of the intensive service orientation and interaction with the customer. Service employees must quickly react to and meet the customers' expectations (Gkorezis and Petridou, 2008). Empowerment in this context is perceived as flexibility and ability to adapt, to improve organizational performance and ensure survival. According to Spreitzer (1995), implementing the concept of psychological empowerment helps the organization to achieve better employee commitment and customer satisfaction.

In the hotel industry employees are most exposed to customers. It is one of the sectors in which customers have the highest expectations from the service and the responsibility of meeting these expectations rests almost entirely with the service employees. In the hotel industry, service quality is crucial in successful organizational performance (Umashankar and Kulkarni, 2002).

Studies conducted in several industries have shown the relevance of employee empowerment. Many researchers have emphasized this concept as a predictor of organizational performance and effectiveness and a key factor in creating competitive advantage and especially enhancing commitment level (Hall, 1994; Hildula, 1996; Melhem, 2004; Sanchez-Gutierrez, *et al.*, 2010; Sharma and Kaur, 2008; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Zhang and Bartol, 2010).

The empowerment literature implicitly shows employee commitment as a form of employee control. It also shows a positive correlation of commitment with empowerment. Several studies asserts that commitment is an indispensable constituent in the process of empowering employees (Manville and Ober, 2003; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Umashankar and Kulkarni, 2002). encouraged to go beyond the call of duty. Nelson (1997) says that every man's and woman's desire is to do a good job, which they will do, if provided with supportive working environment.

In today's competitive world customer-contact employees are central to the quality of service. Committed and motivated employees can fully utilize their capacities when they are empowered to take decisions and solve problems independently. High quality service increases customer satisfaction and retention. Their intrinsic motivation to do a job erodes however, with external control (Quinn and Spreitzer, 1997).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Employee Empowerment

The word "Empowerment" has been widely used in management science since the 1980's. It was often interchanged with terms like participation, involvement, decision-making, problem solving, engagement, control, power, or authority (Harrison, 1983). But these are only the operational techniques that initiate the empowerment process (Kanter, 1983 cited in Thomas and Velthouse, 1990).

Recent studies started more rigorous investigation of the construct. Methods were developed to better evaluate and implement the concept to organizational systems to improve performance and productivity of employees (Boudrias, *et al.*, 2009; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Lawton, 1995; Quinn and Spreitzer, 1997).

Because the new management paradigm focuses on commitment to task, empowerment can be viewed in terms of changes in cognitive variables, which determine motivation. Empowerment can be identified with a type of motivation – intrinsic task motivation—associated with positively valued experiences directly derivable from task. This produces motivation and commitment (Conger and Kanungo, 1988).

The employees go through interpretative processes of task assessments that are perceived differently by each. The construct of the task is therefore central (Conger and Kanungo, 1988). Four cognitive components of a task intrinsic motivation are identified as: impact, meaning, choice (also self-determination), and competence (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990).

Spreitzer (1995) defines empowerment as a mindset about work role including four cognitions reflecting a proactive orientation to one's role in the organization. As per him empowerment must be explained in terms of fundamental beliefs and personal orientations. Thomas and Velthouse (1990) state that empowerment has multiple facets and is not easy to describe by a single definition.

Based on the four dimensions the present research aims to achieve the objective of determining the degree of empowerment in 12 chosen hotels located in UAE.

Impact

A person feels empowered when she believes that she can have a real impact on outcomes. This assessment refers to the degree to which an individual's behavior is seen to influence strategic, administrative or operating outcomes at work (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). When the manager seeks employees' opinion on the menu and arrives at a decision based on mutual consultation, the employees would naturally feel involved and responsible.

Competence

A person is empowered when she feels competent in her role. This assessment refers to the degree to which an individual can perform activities with skill when she tries. The perception or belief of capability and competence results in initiative, effort, and persistence. In contrast, low self-efficacy leads to avoidance behavior (Bandura, 1977; Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995). Room maids trained in language skills will better respond to guest requests and queries.

Meaning

A person is empowered only when she finds a meaning in her role. This assessment refers to the value of the goal, which differs according to each individual's own ideals or standards. Low value leads to apathy and detachment. High value results in commitment, involvement, and focus (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Kanter, 1968; Sjoberg, *et al.*, 1983; Thomas and Velthouse 1990). Training dish cleaners in food borne disease and the consequence of infection would show their job as one of the most crucial in keeping guests healthy.

Choice

A person feels empowered when she has a feeling of autonomy regarding specific means and resources to initiate, regulate and complete a task (Deci, *et al.*, 1989). Person's perception of greater autonomy results in flexibility, creativity, initiative and resilience or in contrast, in tension and decreased self-esteem (Vallerand, 2000). Security staff that can take their decisions without fear of undue reprisals in case of guest complaints will respond quickly and firmly in case of emergencies like fire or security breach.

The four components create an overall construct of psychological empowerment. Removing any one of the components will decrease, the overall degree of perceived empowerment. According to Thomas and Velthouse (1990, p. 667) these dimensions specify a “nearly complete or sufficient set of cognitions” for understanding empowerment.

Empowerment is not a straightforward phenomenon. It is not a personality characteristic and is not replicable across situations. The set of cognitions that create empowerment is driven by and dependent on the work environment (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990).

Empowerment is an ongoing process of people's perceptions about themselves in relation to their work environment. People can be viewed as less or more empowered rather than not empowered or fully empowered. The complexity of the term implies that there is no single method in identifying the best way in empowering employees. The construct contains many facets in relation to many outputs (Spreitzer, 1995). The degree of empowerment therefore, can be developed based on organizational structure.

2.2 Organizational Commitment

The empowerment literature implicitly shows employee commitment as a form of employee control. Based on the studies that assert that commitment is an indispensable constituent in the process of empowering employees, the main objective of the research was framed (Hall, 1994; Manville and Ober, 2003; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Umashankar and Kulkarni, 2002). The three components of organizational commitment of Allen and Meyer (1990) were utilized in the current study to achieve the objective, which is to determine the employee's degree of commitment in the hotels.

Allen and Meyer's approach (1984) became the leading research of organizational commitment. They claimed that the concept of organizational commitment portrayed in the literature could be divided into three: affective attachment, perceived costs, and obligation. They all share the same base which is the psychological state that is reflected in the relationship between a person and organization, and that influences the decision whether to continue or discontinue membership in the organization (Ko, *et al.*, 1997).

The three topics are now being referred to as affective, continuance and normative commitment respectively (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1991). The three dimensions are characterized as a “three component conceptualizations of Organizational Commitment” and were described as “distinguishable components, rather than types of attitudinal commitment; that is, employees can experience each of these psychological states to varying degrees” (Allen and Meyer, 1990, p. 3).

Affective commitment reflects emotional attachment to an organization. The high degree of identification, involvement, and enjoyment creates strong attachment (Porter, *et al.*, 1974). According to Meyer and Allen (1991) this kind of attachment is a result of the kind of work experiences an employee obtains. These are, for example, fulfilled needs, feeling of competence and satisfaction.

Continuance commitment reflects the attachment that is influenced by the person's awareness of the costs connected with leaving the organization. This represents the Becker's side bet (Becker, 1960). Employees with a strong feeling of continuance commitment often weigh the benefits against the cost of remaining in the organization. The accumulation of side-bets is the reason for remaining, because if the person discontinues he/she would lose the benefits (Ko, *et al.*, 1997). This is like bellboys and waiters continuing in job even after a major salary cut because the daily tips (gratuity) earnings in a busy hotel exceed the salary by a large margin.

Allen and Meyer (1990) define normative commitment as a feeling of obligation to continue the membership. It reflects the attachment which is influenced by the individual's feeling and ethical consideration about what is the right thing to do. Individuals with high degree of normative commitment are influenced by factors like socialization or culture that pressurize them to stay within the organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Wiener, 1982).

The current literature review in this research was presented to frame a concept for exploring the relationship between empowerment and commitment. This is the most crucial insight that might support or reject the existing hypothesis that empowerment is related to organizational commitment.

2.3 Using Commitment Model in the Empowering Processes

Emotional commitment must be present during performance for the good of the whole organization. Empowered employees can determine their course of action, and because they fully participate in the process of determination, they are automatically emotionally/affectively committed to it. That is why this research argues that commitment is a control instrument for employee empowerment and the relationship between the two concepts must be examined.

Manville and Ober's (2003) conceptualization of democratic system inspires to investigate in depth the relationship between commitment and empowerment. Mowday, *et al.* (1979, p. 226) define organizational commitment as 'the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. The degree of the four cognitions: meaning, impact, choice and competence reflect on the degree employees are empowered in their organizations. Both the concepts are measured on the psychological level (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990).

Based on the employee commitment and empowerment relationship analysis it is now possible to recognize how the different dimensions influence each other. This in turn leads to implications about implementation of empowering practices. The idea, that empowered employees with a strong sense of the four cognitions identify with the goals and values of the organization and desire to remain the member in the organization, has been investigated in the present study.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between the components of empowerment: impact, meaning, choice, and competence distinguished by Spreitzer (1995), and the three independent variables: affective, continuance and normative commitment constructing the overall organizational commitment concept of Allen and Meyer (1990). Taking the purpose into consideration following objectives/sub-objectives has been formulated:

A: To determine the relationship between empowerment dimensions and commitment dimensions.

Sub Objectives

- A1.** To determine Association between meaning and the commitment dimensions
- A2.** To determine Association between competence and the commitment dimensions
- A3.** To determine Association between choice and the commitment dimensions
- A4.** To determine Association between impact and the commitment dimensions
- A5.** To determine Association between overall empowerment construct and the commitment dimensions

B: To determine the predictive relationship between empowerment and commitment

Sub Objectives

- B1:** To determine Predictive relationship between commitment and meaning.
- B2:** To determine Predictive relationship between commitment and impact.
- B3:** To determine Predictive relationship between commitment and choice.
- B4:** To determine Predictive relationship between commitment and competence.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

The current study is based on descriptive research design. The underlying basis of the scientific investigation is the positivist epistemology. This research paradigm relies on identifying facts (Krauss, 2005). As per objectives the research aims to identify and determine different relations and facts using numerical indicators. Thus, the relationships can be assessed and understood to better predict and control the circumstances or environment.

4.2 Data Collection Method

The data collection was carried out through the distribution of a single battery of questionnaire to the employees of 12 chosen 5 star hotels located in United Arab Emirates. Additional “Letter to respondents” was attached to the survey, to explain the purpose of the study. Managers of all the departments in hotels were contacted to ensure cooperation and support. The Human Resource Managers in hotels informed employees about the research questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed and collected by the researcher with assistance of a Human Resource Manager.

The survey was distributed during employees’ working time. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality the names of the Hotels are not mentioned in the research paper. The analysis of the database was collective and not based on individual responses and opinions.

To prevent bias and minimize error, the questionnaires were filled out only in presence of the researcher and employees were assured that the responses would not be disclosed to management staff. They were assured that the data collected is for collective analysis. The subject of measurement was not declared directly.

4.3 Sample Selection and Size

The research cases for this study are 12 chosen 5 star hotels located in UAE. The sample for this study included all full-time employees (32 hours/week). The sample was determined using the non-probability approach, which does not involve any random selection (George and Mallery, 2009). The objective of the research was to approach the largest possible number among employees to generalize the results within the organization and that is why the stratified approach was not used.

The study focused particularly on 6 departments. The questionnaire was handed over to all employees of the Front Office, Spa Services, and Food and Beverage Service, Manager, Executive and Associate level were covered. In Food and Beverage Production, Security and Housekeeping, only the higher-level employees: Executives and Managers were taken into consideration. At these levels the employees are in direct contact with customers and therefore the empowerment is required and influential.

The employees were categorized into three groups. Under Manager Group come the heads of departments, Assistant Managers, and Senior Chefs. In the Executive Group, department Executives and Chefs were included. The third group of intensive customer contact employees included: therapists, stewards, bellboys, lifeguards, supervisors, team members and leaders and other Associates.

4.4 Questionnaire Design

Two instruments were used to design a complete battery of tests. To measure empowerment, the questionnaire developed by Spreitzer's (1995) was used. Empowerment is the independent variable in the study and it comprises items that reflect the meaning, impact, choice, and competence. Meaning dimension is reflected in items like: "the work I do is very important to me". Choice dimension is represented by "I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my work". Competence dimension is reflected by "I am confident about my ability to do my job". Impact dimension is reflected by "my impact on what happens in my department is large" (Spreitzer, 1995).

Allen and Meyer (1990) measured the construct of commitment with an instrument having three six item scales. All measures serve as a self-assessment of the respondents' beliefs, opinions and attitudes. It is worth mentioning that some of the items were reformulated in a way that the actual level of commitment could be assessed. The word "Organization" too was converted to the name of the Hotel.

Both the measurements of empowerment and commitment used the five point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" that assessed opinions, beliefs, and attitudes (Clark and Watson, 1995). Higher scores indicated stronger sense of commitment and empowerment. Measurement of both the constructs was combined in a single questionnaire consisting of 36 items that were mixed, without any specific order. The questionnaire also included demographic variables like gender, age, tenure, position, department, and education. The Analysis delivered results on the association of demographic characteristics with organizational commitment and empowerment, similar to available literature on this aspect.

4.5 Validity and Reliability

Internal consistency reliability of the scale was measured using Cronbach's alpha test (Riege, 2003). Cronbach's alpha reliability scores were found ranging from 0.79 to 0.88. The overall Cronbach's alpha score calculated for empowerment construct in this study is 0.803, which is divided into meaning (0.836), choice (0.722), competence (0.517), and impact (0.794). Overall all items were found exhibiting good internal consistency.

In commitment scale as proposed by Allen and Meyer (1990) the Cronbach's alphas for the three-dimensional commitment construct are 0.82 (affective), 0.74 (continuance), and 0.83 (normative). In the current study the scale of the three dimensions are 0.738 for affective commitment, 0.651 for continuance commitment, and 0.491 for normative commitment. The reliability level for organizational commitment was found under acceptable range.

The scale items of empowerment construct are taken from the survey that was developed and validated by Spreitzer (1995) that shows the extent to which the empirical relationships are consistent with theory. Spreitzer's (1995) validity of the construct is supported by the evidence of convergent and discriminant validity.

5. FINDINGS AND EVALUATION

5.1 Sample Description

With help of Univariate method, data of employees from different departments and at different positions were assessed. The sample target was 300, but because of dropouts the total sample size became 273 employees, resulting in 91% return rate.

Demographically analyzing, the sample of 273 is dominated by males (77.1%); the rest are females (22.9%) with mean of 1.77 ($SD = 0.422$). Age ranging from 21 to 56 years, with mean of 1.93 ($SD = 0.961$). Most the employees belong to the age group below or equal to 25 (39.4%). 38% of the people belong to the age group ranging from 26-30. 12.7% are 31-35 years and 9.9% are equal to or above 36 years. Most of the employees under the analysis are at the level of Associates (63.9%). The middle management level of Executive constitutes 11.1% and the higher managers 25% ($\chi^2 = 2.5278$, $SD = 0.69144$).

Length of the working time ranges from less than 1 year to 5 years, with mean of 1.7421 ($SD = 1.16328$). 62.9% have been in the organization up to 1 year, 15.7% up to 2 years. Up to 3, 4, 5 years is represented by 10%, 7.1%, 4.3% respectively. Education level ranges from 10th class to post graduate studies, with mean 2.1045 ($SD = 1.53874$). Bachelor is the education level widely spread making it 58.2% followed by 12th class (17.9%). 10th class is 14.9% and post-graduation 9%.

5.2 Relationship between Empowerment and Commitment

The objective of the study is to analyze the relationship between the commitment dimension and the empowerment dimension (objective 1). A Spearman correlation was used because the variables are assumed to be ordinal. The values of the variables are converted in ranks and then correlated (George and Mallery, 2009). The following correlation (Table 1) presents the correlation score between components of empowerment and commitment.

Table 1

Table showing Spearman Correlation between empowerment and commitment

	<i>Affective</i>	<i>Continuance</i>	<i>Normative</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Choice</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Competence</i>	<i>Empowerment</i>
<i>Spearman's rho</i>								
<i>Affective</i>								
Correlation Coefficient	1.000							
Sig. (2-tailed)	–							
<i>Continuance</i>								
Correlation Coefficient	0.427**	1.000						
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	–						
<i>Normative</i>								
Correlation Coefficient	0.337*	.303*	1.000					
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.013	0.028	–					
<i>Meaning</i>								
Correlation Coefficient	0.342**	0.151	.322*	1.000				
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.008	0.275	0.017	–				
<i>Choice</i>								
Correlation Coefficient	0.475**	0.257	0.204	0.286*	1.000			
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.051	0.127	0.024	–			
<i>Impact</i>								
Correlation Coefficient	0.475**	.272*	0.158	.423**	.597**	1.000		
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.037	0.237	0.001	0.000	–		
<i>Competence</i>								
Correlation Coefficient	0.236	0.159	0.094	.443**	.359**	.566**	1.000	
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.067	0.241	0.493	0.000	0.004	0.000	–	
<i>Empowerment</i>								
Correlation Coefficient	0.534**	.356*	0.234	.615**	.852**	.675**	.697**	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.011	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	–

** correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

All empowerment dimensions were weakly to moderately correlated among one another with values ranging from rho = 0.28 to rho = 0.597. The overall empowerment construct was fairly to strongly correlated with the empowerment dimensions with *r* values ranging from rho = 0.615 (meaning) to rho = 0.852 (choice). The moderate correlations suggest the empowerment dimensions were measuring a common element, yet they were distinctively different. All empowerment correlations were positive and statistically significant.

Correlations between the three commitment dimensions and the five empowerment variables were weak ($\rho = 0.151 - 0.475$) except for the correlation between normative commitment and competence. This correlation was close to zero and statistically insignificant. The overall interpretation for organizational commitment indicates that the meaning, choice, and impact have a significant impact on affective commitment ($\rho = 0.008$, $\rho = 0.00$, $\rho = 0.00$ respectively). As the level of sense of meaning, choice, or impact increases, the level of affective commitment increases ($\rho = 0.342$, $\rho = 0.475$, $\rho = 0.475$ respectively).

It is noticeable, that the meaning dimension is in significant positive relationship with normative commitment ($\rho = 0.017$) too. By developing the sense of meaning an increase in affective as well as in normative commitment will follow. Similarly, the sense of impact is insignificant correlation with continuance commitment ($\rho = 0.037$). By developing the sense of impact an increase in affective as well as in continuance commitment will follow.

However, the strength of the affective commitment-meaning correlation is stronger ($\rho = 0.342$) than that of the normative commitment-meaning correlation ($\rho = 0.322$). It means that by developing the sense of meaning among the employees the affective commitment will be influenced stronger than the normative commitment (Table 1).

In the second case, the strength of the affective commitment-impact correlation is much stronger ($\rho = 0.475$) than that of the continuance commitment-impact correlation ($\rho = 0.272$). It means that by developing the sense of impact among the employees the affective commitment will be influenced stronger than the normative commitment (Table 1).

The competence, as the fourth dimension of empowerment, did not significantly influence any of the commitment dimensions. In other words, developing the employee's sense of competence in performing his or her work role doesn't significantly increase the degree of any of the commitment dimensions.

The whole empowerment construct, consisting of all the four dimensions shows significant correlation with affective ($\rho = 0.000$) and continuance commitment ($\rho = 0.011$). However, the correlation between empowerment and affective commitment is stronger ($\rho = 0.534$). In summary, the results from the Spearman Correlation analysis imply that by strengthening the level of meaning, choice and impact, the development of affective commitment will follow. In other words, strengthening the individual belief in impact on organizational outcomes (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990), increasing the value of the task goal or purpose (Kanter, 1968; Sjoberg, *et al.*, 1983; Thomas and Velthouse 1990), and feeling of autonomy regarding completing a task (Deci, *et al.*, 1989) will strengthen the individual's identification with goals and values and involvement in an organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Mowday, *et al.*, 1979).

Because of existing limitations of the study as well as insufficient prior empirical research on employee organizational commitment and empowerment in other countries or industries, it is advisable to continue the research in this field to validate the findings and minimize the error and bias.

5.3 Predictive Relationship between Empowerment and Commitment

The Linear Regression Analysis was utilized in the study to determine the predictive relationship between empowerment and commitment (objective 2). The coefficients of the linear equation were estimated, involving independent variables that best predict the value of the dependent variable. The general regression line is as follows:

$$\text{Affective commitment} = a + B \times (\text{empowerment}) \text{ (Abowitz and Toole, 2010).}$$

5.3.1 Predictive Relation between Affective Commitment and Empowerment Dimensions

The R² values indicate that 22% of the affective commitment can be explained by the sense of meaning, 20% of the affective commitment by the sense of choice, 28% by the sense of impact, and 7% by the sense of competence (Table 2).

Table 2
Model Summary for empowerment and affective commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			
						F Change	df ₁	df ₂	Sig F Change
<i>Model Summary for meaning and affective commitment</i>									
1	.470 ^a	0.221	0.207	0.56338	0.221	16.169	1	57	0.000
a. Predictors: (constant), meaning									
B. Dependent variable: affective									
<i>Model Summary for choice and affective commitment</i>									
1	.451 ^a	0.203	0.19	0.57559	0.203	15.318	1	60	0.000
a. Predictors: (constant), choice									
<i>Model Summary for impact and affective commitment</i>									
1	.535 ^a	0.286	0.275	0.53752	0.286	24.837	1	62	0.000
a. Predictors: (constant), impact									
<i>Model Summary for competence and affective commitment</i>									
1	.278 ^a	0.077	0.062	0.61515	0.077	4.955	1	59	0.030

a. Predictors: (constant), competence

The table coefficients provide information on each predictor variable necessary to predict affective commitment from developing the sense of meaning (Abowitz and Toole, 2010). Table 3 shows that developing sense of meaning contributes significantly to the development of affective commitment ($\rho = 0.000$). The 100% of significance occurs at the Beta level of 0.470.

By looking at the B under the Unstandardized Coefficients column we can present the regression equation as: Affective commitment = 0.859 + 0.600*(meaning). For one unit of increase in meaning we would expect 6 units increase in affective commitment.

Table 3 indicates that developing sense of choice contributes significantly to the development of affective commitment ($\rho = 0.000$). The 100% of significance occurs at the Beta level of 0.451. The regression equation is:

Affective commitment = 2.461 + 0.315 × (choice). For one unit of increase in choice we would expect 3 units increase in affective commitment.

Developing sense of impact contributes significantly to the development of affective commitment ($\rho = 0.000$). The 100% of significance occurs at the Beta level of 0.535. The regression equation is:

Table 3
Coefficients for empowerment dimension and affective commitment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
<i>Coefficients^a for meaning and affective commitment</i>						
1	(Constant)	0.859	0.686	0.47	1.252	0.216
	Meaning	0.600	0.149		4.021	0.000
<i>Coefficients^a for choice and affective commitment</i>						
1	(Constant)	2.461	0.306	0.451	8.05	0.000
	Choice	0.315	0.081		3.914	0.000
<i>Coefficients^a for impact and affective commitment</i>						
1	(Constant)	1.735	0.384	0.535	4.521	0.000
	Impact	0.451	0.09		4.984	0.000
<i>Coefficients^a for competence and affective commitment</i>						
1	(Constant)	2.238	0.631	0.278	3.547	0.001
	Competence	0.314	0.141		2.226	0.030

a. Dependent variable: affective.

Affective commitment = 1.735 + 0.451 × (impact). For one unit of increase in impact we would expect 4 units increase in affective commitment.

Developing sense of competence contributes significantly to the development of affective commitment ($\rho = 0.000$). The 30% of significance occurs at the Beta level of 0.278. The regression equation is: Affective commitment = 2.238 + 0.314* (competence). For one unit increase in competence we would expect 3 units increase in affective commitment.

All the empowerment dimensions predict the affective commitment well. The model applied is good enough in predicting the outcome variable. It implies that certainly, more specific managerial interventions can be designed in the process of empowerment and commitment.

5.3.2 Predictive Relation between Continuance Commitment and Empowerment Dimensions:

The R^2 values indicate that 5% of the continuance commitment can be explained by the sense of meaning, 6% of the continuance commitment by the sense of choice, 8% by the sense of impact, and 6% by the sense of competence (Table 4).

However, based on table 5 it can be seen that by developing sense of meaning, choice, and competence does not contribute significantly to the development of continuance commitment ($\rho = 0.088$; $\rho = 0.065$; $\rho = 0.073$ respectively).

Table 5 indicates that developing sense of impact contributes significantly to the development of continuance commitment ($\rho = 0.028$). The 28% of significance occurs at the Beta level of 0.286. The

Table 4
Model Summary for empowerment and continuance commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			
						F Change	df ₁	df ₂	Sig F Change
<i>Model Summary for meaning and continuance commitment</i>									
1	.235 ^a	0.055	0.037	0.61734	0.055	3.032	1	52	0.088
a. Predictors: (constant), meaning. b. Dependent variable: continuance.									
<i>Model Summary for choice and continuance commitment</i>									
1	.244 ^a	0.60	0.43	0.60846	0.060	3.546	1	56	0.065
a. Predictors: (constant), choice.									
<i>Model Summary for impact and continuance commitment</i>									
1	.286 ^a	0.082	0.066	0.59757	0.082	5.087	1	57	0.028
a. Predictors: (constant), impact.									
<i>Model Summary for competence and continuance commitment</i>									
1	.241 ^a	0.058	0.041	0.59815	0.058	3.334	1	54	0.073
a. Predictors: (constant), competence.									

regression equation is: Continuance commitment = 2.171 + 0.250* (impact). For one unit of increase in impact we would expect 2 units increase in continuance commitment.

Increase in affective and continuance commitment at the same time as the sense of impact, might be a result of the fact that the more affectively committed employees are, the more benefits or expectation of benefits they have. According to Allen and Meyer (1990) this is normal, as all of the employees experience different levels of commitment to various extents. There is positive relationship between continuance and affective commitment.

5.3.3 Predictive Relation between Normative Commitment and Empowerment Dimensions

The R² values indicate that 19% of the normative commitment can be explained by the sense of meaning, 8% of the normative commitment by the sense of choice, 5% by the sense of impact, and 2% by the sense of competence (Table 6).

However, based on table 7 it can be seen that developing sense of impact and competence does not contribute significantly to the development of normative commitment ($\rho = 0.090$; $\rho = 0.261$ respectively).

In turn, the development of sense of meaning and choice (Table 7) contribute significantly to the development of normative commitment ($\rho = 0.001$; $\rho = 0.037$). The 99% of significance occurs at the Beta level of 0.438 for the meaning predictor. The regression equation is therefore:

Table 5
Coefficients for empowerment dimension and continuance commitment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
<i>Coefficients^a for meaning and continuance commitment</i>						
1	(Constant)	1.840	0.789	0.235	2.331	0.024
	Meaning	0.297	0.170		1.741	0.088
<i>Coefficients^a for choice and continuance commitment</i>						
1	(Constant)	2.622	0.334	0.244	7.844	0.000
	Choice	0.165	0.088		1.883	0.065
<i>Coefficients^a for impact and continuance commitment</i>						
1	(Constant)	2.171	0.475	0.286	4.575	0.000
	Impact	0.250	0.111		2.255	0.028
<i>Coefficients^a for competence and continuance commitment</i>						
1	(Constant)	1.831	0.785	0.241	2.333	0.023
	Competence	0.319	0.175		1.826	0.073

a. Dependent variable: continuance.

Normative commitment = 1.264 + 0.483 × (meaning). For one unit of increase in meaning we would expect almost 5 units increase in normative commitment.

In case of predictor choice, 60% of the significance occurs at the Beta level of 0.277. The regression equation is therefore:

Normative commitment = 2.823 + 0.171 × (choice). For one unit of increase in choice we would expect almost 2 units increase in normative commitment.

The implication might be that the development of sense of meaning and choice strengthen the normative commitment to some extent because of the values that are born during that process. The person is affectively committed, because of the empowered dimensions and this activates some need to stay. As there is some lack of literature regarding the normative level, it is desirable to have further research and validation.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

To examine the relationship between empowerment and commitment in the context of 12 five star hotels located in UAE, following research objectives were formulated based on the relevant literature:

- A. To determine the relationship between empowerment dimensions and commitment dimensions.
- B. To determine the predictive relationship between empowerment and commitment.

Based on the analyses conducted, it can be concluded that the sense of empowerment amongst employees at hotels is developed at a good level. However it can be an object of further improvement. The

Table 6
Model Summary for empowerment and normative commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			
						F Change	df ₁	df ₂	Sig F Change
<i>Model Summary for meaning and continuance commitment</i>									
1	.438 ^a	0.192	0.177	0.47725	0.192	12.590	1	53	0.001
a. Predictors: (constant), meaning.									
b. Dependent variable: normative.									
<i>Model Summary for choice and normative commitment</i>									
1	.277 ^a	0.77	0.60	0.51409	0.077	4.562	1	55	0.037
a. Predictors: (constant), choice.									
<i>Model Summary for impact and normative commitment</i>									
1	.225 ^a	0.051	0.034	0.51698	0.051	2.983	1	56	0.90
a. Predictors: (constant), impact.									
<i>Model Summary for competence and normative commitment</i>									
1	.154 ^a	0.024	0.005	0.52381	0.024	1.290	1	53	0.261
a. Predictors: (constant), competence.									

Spearman correlation shows that the affective commitment and empowerment dimension relationship correlates stronger than the rest of the dimensions.

Thus, there is evidence supporting the existence of a relationship between affective commitment and empowerment. Affective commitment is the most important dimension, as its characteristics according to Allen and Meyer (1990) are those of emotional engagement. Employees affectively committed show high degree of identification, involvement, and enjoyment and that determines strong attachment (Porter, *et al.*, 1974). Every organization desires employees that are affectively committed. Therefore with help of this level as a control instrument, the empowerment can be strengthened (Spreitzer, 1995).

Lack of evidence supporting the correlation between the whole construct of empowerment and continuance commitment seems appropriate after examining the definition of the concepts. Becker (1960) defines the continuance commitment as a form of attachment based on individual's awareness of the cost and benefits that are associated with discontinuing or continuing the relationship with the organization. According to Thomas and Velthouse (1990), the sense of impact means the feeling that an individual has a real impact on organizational outcomes. Some degree of continuance commitment is then predicted as a result. The reason could be that there is positive significant relationship between affective and continuance commitment.

Lack of evidence supporting the correlation between the whole construct of empowerment and normative commitment seems appropriate after examining the definition of the concepts. Normative commitment is defined as a form of attachment based on feeling of obligation or ethical consideration to

Table 7
Coefficients for empowerment dimension and normative commitment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
<i>Coefficients^a for meaning and normative commitment</i>						
1	(Constant)	1.264	0.629	0.438	2.010	0.050
	Meaning	0.483	0.136		3.548	0.001
<i>Coefficients^a for choice and normative commitment</i>						
1	(Constant)	2.823	0.312	0.277	9.050	0.000
	Choice	0.173	0.081		2.136	0.037
<i>Coefficients^a for impact and normative commitment</i>						
1	(Constant)	2.821	0.385	0.225	7.318	0.000
	Impact	0.156	0.090		1.727	0.090
<i>Coefficients^a for competence and normative commitment</i>						
1	(Constant)	2.702	0.694	0.154	3.891	0.000
	Competence	0.176	0.155		1.136	0.261

a. Dependent variable: normative.

continue the membership (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Ko, *et al.*, 1997; Wiener, 1982). Some individuals might associate the sense of choice and meaning with values that have something to do with socialization or culture and that pressurizes them to stay within the organization. However, the normative level does not have enough support of literature, and therefore it needs to be examined further (Ko, *et al.*, 1997; Morrow, 1993 cited in Liu, *et al.* 2007).

The other reason that normative commitment level is influenced to some degree is that there is positive significant relationship between affective and normative commitment. There is some evidence supporting the relationship between impact and continuance commitment, as well as between choice and meaning and normative commitment levels. As mentioned earlier, those levels of commitment might be affected too, as a natural process.

According to Allen and Meyer (1990) employees can experience each of these psychological states to varying degrees. This however does not negatively impact the affective commitment level. But, if the relationship between empowerment, continuance and normative commitment does exist at all; logically it should be an inverse one. A strong evidence of the correlation and predictive relationship between affective commitment and the whole empowerment construct indicates that “empowered” employees will stay in the hotel because of belongingness need and would have some degree of confidence to discontinue the relationship if needed. The managerial intervention should thus revolve around the relationship of affective commitment and empowerment to develop certain conditions that lead to higher level of empowerment and can further increase affective commitment.

The sense of choice is associated with an extent of freedom and independence on the way the individual work is done. Therefore the management intervention should focus on allowing the employees

to implement new ideas into their work and introduce improvements without seeking any approval (Spreitzer, 1995). Again, the aspect of easily modifiable procedures and more flexibility at work according to situation would strengthen their perceptions of impact on organizational performance, and decision-making abilities (Kazlauskaitė, *et al.*, 2006).

To develop the sense of competence, the interventions would relate to development of skills that are necessary for the job to increase the feeling of self-efficacy and capability to perform the work activities (Spreitzer, 1995). According to Kazlauskaitė, *et al.* (2006), stimulating the creative thinking and development of problem-solving skills and using them independently is an effective method as it significantly correlates with affective commitment and empowerment. Providing a real training to delegate authority and to take charge could be beneficial. Sharing information on how company objectives are to be achieved increases the sense of competence.

The sense of impact is associated with an extent of control employees have over what happens in their departments. Therefore the management intervention should focus on allowing participative leadership among employees, introducing teamwork that allows the employees to exchange their ideas and improve cooperation and team skills (Spreitzer, 1995). Strengthening the perception of employee's impact on organizational performance could be achieved by altering work place decision making, introducing flexibility in performance guidelines and transparency in information dissemination (Kazlauskaitė, *et al.*, 2006).

There is substantial evidence supporting the relationship between affective commitment and empowerment. It supports the previous studies that commitment is an indispensable constituent in the process of empowering employees (Hall, 1994; Manville and Ober, 2003; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Umashankar and Kulkarni, 2002). There is less evidence supporting a relationship between normative commitment and empowerment and continuance commitment and empowerment, which might be the result of unclear definition of continuance and normative commitment. It is therefore recommended to research further and examine the two remaining dimensions of commitment.

Ko's, *et al.* (1997) claimed that there is no clear distinction between the concept of normative commitment and affective commitment. It is not clear how normative dimension can be conceptually separable from affective dimension for their higher connection (Ko, *et al.*, 1997). Similarly Morrow, (1993) as cited in Liu, *et al.* (2007), argues that the normative category as a form of organizational commitment is not well supported. This might be an argument why the results of the current study do not provide full evidence. The concepts therefore need further exploration.

7. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It is very important to ask how empowerment is perceived by the employees. The cultural factor here might play a role. Some values that are important for employees in Asia might differ from those in Europe or America, where the study was developed. These results indicate that further research needs to be developed and conducted in the Asian context and the employees' perspective on empowerment understood. Proper modification of the questionnaire may be required.

Empowerment is a continuous variable, an ongoing process of people's perceptions about themselves in relation to their work environments. It has its speed and intensity (Spreitzer, 1995). The frequent mistake from the organization side is that empowerment concept is misunderstood by the management. It is therefore very crucial that managers understand the concept before implementing changes and expecting success.

Empowerment is often perceived by managers as delegation of authority, when leaders or managers share their power with subordinates (Conger and Kanungo, 1988). In order to better understand the perspective and perceptions of the employees it is recommended to conduct qualitative research based on interviews.

Regarding statistical methods for further research, recommendation would be to examine the relation between dimensions while applying control for demographic characteristics. Using further method of Multilevel Regression might be useful for additional insights. It might be that the existing predictive relationship between affective commitment and empowerment will not show its existence in a particular group (for example among the employees belonging to age group below 25, etc.). It is therefore recommended to examine the relationship while including the controlling variables.

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