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THE MODERATING EFFECTS OF PERCEIVED ACCOUNTABILITY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SALES PERSONNEL'S EMPOWERMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: A FIELD RESEARCH IN TURKISH TRAVEL AGENCIES

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ÖZET

Bu araştırmada, çalışanların işyerinde psikolojik güçlendirme ve organizasyona bağlılıkları arasında varolduğu bilinen ilişki üzerinde, demografik değişkenler ile algılanan sorumluluğun düzenleyici etkileri incelenmiştir. Araştırmanın örneklemi olarak Türkiye'de seyahahat acentalarında çalışan 426 satış personeli belirlenmiştir. Değişkenler arasındaki analizlerde genel kabul görmüş tanımlar ve yaygın bir şekilde kullanılan ölçüm araçları kullanılmıştır. Hipotez testi için demografik verileri ile algılanan sorumluluk verilerinin regresyon analizine düzenleyici formda girebilmesi için sınıflandırılmıştır. Bulgular, çalışanların psikolojik güçlendirmesini birinci derecede etkileyen değişkenler olarak satış personelinin sorumluluk algılaması ve gelir düzeyleri olduğunu göstermiştir. Ancak, çalışanların psikolojik güçlendirmesi ile organizasyona bağlılıkları arasındaki ilişki üzerinde düzenleyici etki sadece yaş ve medeni durum değişkenlerine ait olmuştur.

Anahtar sözcükler: algılanan sorumluluk, çalışanın psikolojik güçlendirmesi, organizasyonel bağlılık, satış personeli, seyahat acentası.

ABSTRACT

In this research study, the moderating effects of demographic variables and perceived accountability on the evident relationship between employee empowerment and organizational commitment were examined. 426 sales persons in travel agencies in Turkey were chosen as sample of the survey. The common definitions and widely used measures were used for the analyses among variables. Responses for some demographics and perceived accountability were categorized in order to be able to regress in moderated form to test the hypotheses. Findings proved that perceived accountability and income level of the sales persons were found to be the first order determinants of employee empowerment. However, only the age and marital status factors have a moderating effect on the relationship between employee empowerment and organizational commitment.

Keywords: perceived accountability, employee empowerment, organizational commitment, sales personnel, travel agency.

Introduction

Employee Empowerment

The term employee empowerment (EE) is frequently used by business leaders and commentators on business activities. It refers to employees being more proactive and self-sufficient in assisting an organization to achieve its goals (Herrenkohl et al., 1999:374). The term became prominent as part of the total quality movement, although its roots are in issues raised earlier under the heading "employee involvement" (Lawler, 1988; Wilkinson, 1998) or employee participation.

Empowerment in work organizations, other than personal empowerment of therapists and educational empowerment in education forums, has been examined through two main point of views (Bodner, 2003). First, the management empowerment of employees from *the relational perspective* or *the macro approach* and second, the psychological empowerment of employees from *the psychological perspective* or *the micro approach*. Former dealing with the extrinsic elements of motivation of employees and second dealing with the intrinsic elements of motivation both focus on how to motivate employees in the organizational life. Regarding the results of some research, relational empowerment may produce with the psychological empowerment. Outcomes of psychological empowerment are listed as innovation, upward influence, and effectiveness (Cyboran, 2005:38).

In practice, empowerment should seek to strengthen the flexibility, self-confidence, authority and effectiveness of salespeople as they endeavor to fully satify customers and achieve customer relationship management objectives (Martin & Bush, 2003; Sallee & Flaherty, 2003; Sparks et al., 1997). One important way to empower salespeople is to give them more financial flexibility to commit company resources in serving customers, for example, approving reimbursements for unsatisfactory products, negotiating price discounts, providing additional purchase incentives, and resolving customer complaints. By being able to make on-the-spot decisions, salespeople may enhance their image and competence vis-a-vis customers and thereby feel more psychologically empowered and motivated for customer relationship management (Anderson & Huang, 2006:143).

Empowerment also necessitates sharing with employees information and knowledge that enables them to understand and contribute to organizational performance, rewarding them based on the organization's performance and giving them the authority to make decisions that influence organizational outcomes (Bowen & Lawler, 1992:33). Seen this way, the concept of empowerment is something broader than the traditional concepts of delegation, decentralization and participatory management as the responsibility for the decision-making process is stretched beyond a mere contribution to a specific decision area. Empowerment assigns the manager or frontline employee decision responsibility for the entire job and for knowing how the performance of that job fits within the organizational purpose and mission (Ford & Fotler, 1995).

The purpose of EE is not only to ensure that effective decisions are made by the right employees but to provide a mechanism by which responsibility for those decisions is vested in individuals and teams (Plunkett & Fournier, 1991).

Organizational Commitment

For a long time, organizational commitment (OC) in the work environment has been an important topic and has been variably and extensively defined, measured and researched. Many authors have defined OC in a number of ways. Some view commitment to the organization as the strength of involvement one has with the organization (Brown, 1969; Hall & Schneider, 1972; Mowday et al., 1979). Others suggest that commitment is shown through congruence between personal and organizational goals and values (Buchanan, 1974) or through an exchange of behavior for valued rewards (Becker, 1960; Meyer & Allen, 1984).

In another way, commitment is defined as (a) a belief in and acceptance of organizational goals and values; (b) a willingness to exert effort towards organizational goal accomplishment; and (c) a strong desire to maintain organizational membership (Mowday et al., 1979; Steers & Porter, 1979; Morrow, 1983). It's also accepted that commitment is a process of identification with the goals of an organization's multiple constituencies. These constituencies may include top management, customers, unions, and\or the public at large (Reichers, 1985).

A review of OC research developed by the studies of Meyer et al. (1991), Dunham, Grube and Castaneda (1994) identified three types of OC: affective, continuance and normative. These three components make up a construct and an employee may have varying degrees of all three components as a result of his or her relationship with an organization.

Affective commitment is defined as employee emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization and its goals. Continuance commitment is defined as willingness to remain in an organization because of personal investment in the form of nontransferable investments such as close working relationships with coworkers, retirement investments and career investments, acquired job skills which are unique to a particular organization, years of employment in a particular organization, involvement in the community and other benefits that make it too costly for one to leave and seek employment elsewhere. Normative commitment is induced by a feeling of obligation to remain with an organization. Such a feeling of obligation often results from what Wiener (1982) characterized as "generalized value of loyalty and duty". This is an almost natural predisposition to be loyal and committed to institutions such as family, marriage, country, religion and employment organization as a result of socialization in a culture that places a premium on loyalty and devotion to institutions.

Another important area of study with respect to OC has been the examination of its antecedents (Luthans et al., 1987; Williams & Hazer, 1986) and consequences

(Blau & Boal, 1989; Randall, 1990; Kacmar et al., 1999). According to the researchers, positive consequences of OC is a long list that includes higher rate of attendance, reduced burnout, employee retention, improved job performance, work quantity, work quality, limited tardiness, low labour turnover and personal sacrifice on behalf of the organization. (Tan and Akhtar, 1998; Walton, 1985; Somers & Birnbaum, 1998; DeCotiis & Jenkins, 1986).

Perceived Accountability

Perceived Accountability (PA) has been suggested to be the most fundamental factor that influences people's behavior, especially performance, in organizations (Ferris et al., 1997; Frink & Ferris, 1999; Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). To accomplish organizational goals, managers cannot afford to depend on chance or employees' goodwill for obtaining the performance behaviors needed for the achievement of goals (Kerr, 1975). Their role is to induce proactively all desirable behaviors from their members to accomplish organizational goals by increasing the accountability for the behaviors through various formal or informal organizational or job related features (e.g., job characteristics, task difficulty, job type and behavioral norms, etc.). (Dose & Klimoski, 1995; Drucker, 1993).

PA is accepted as a motivational state in which there is an increased sense of self-relevance for a certain situation (Dose & Klimoski, 1995:36). This means that individuals come to see their actions or behaviors as salient, important or consequential. PA increases self-awareness relative to a task, role or a decision to be made. Individuals who are accountable, then are more likely to act in a consider and motivated manner.

PA refers to an individual's feeling of obligation and need to justify one's actions to others (supervisors, co-workers and clients) or self (Frink & Klimoski, 1998; Weigold & Schlenker, 1991). Another definition of PA is that it is the extend to which actions are evaluated by an external constituency who is belived to have reward and sanction powers that are contingent on this constituency 's view of those actions (Ferris et al, 1997). Then PA does take both internal factors (e.g., value system incorporated in self-image; Schlenker et al., 1994) and external factors (e.g., formal evaluation systems, reward systems, disciplinary procedures, organizational culture, social norms, informal organizational network and so forth; Frink & Klimoski, 1998).

Employee Empowerment And Organizational Commitment

It is a common statement that employee commitment in an organization can be accelerated by giving opportunities to take on more responsibilities and perform more challenging work (Meyer et al., 1991). Thus OC, having positive relation to the works that requires interaction with people and let employee to develop himself by learning, has been referred to as a natural outcome of psychological empowerment. There are studies supporting this. For example, Ugboro (2006:232) has made a study to determine the relationship between job redesign, EE and intent to quit measured by affective commitment among survivors of organizational restructuring and downsizing. The

results showed statistically significant positive relationships between job redesing, empowerment and affective commitment. Niehoff et al. (2001) also studied these relationships and found positive association between empowerment, job enrichment and employee loyalty in a downsizing environment.

Baker (2000) studied the relationship between EE and OC and found positive findings. An underlying assumption of this research was that empowered organizations substitute commitment as a control mechanism in place of compliance to traditional rules and procedures. To create an empowered organization, managers need to replace compliance based management systems with commitment based systems.

As a conclusion, supporting employees, treating them fair, enhancing their personal importance and competence and giving value to their contributions are barely the antecedents of affective commitment. These antecedents evoke power relationships in the organization like transfering power to the subordinates by decentralizing organization that has been known to have relation with affective commitment.

Perceived Accountability And Employee Empowerment

Empowerment requires that employees are held accountable and there is a large difference between being held accountable and bearing responsibility. Most organizations simply delegate responsibility and provide employees with just enough authority to accomplish their responsibilities. Simply delegating responsibility to teams for certain day-to-day procedures does not necessarily make those teams accountable for the process or outcome (DeLeede et al., 1999:213). Employees should have conceptual job autonomy, which is the freedom and authority to design and manage the completion of tasks and the ability to make important decisions independently (Dobbin & Boychuk, 1999:260). This autonomy should ultimately result in accountability. However, the level of autonomy is a critical factor in whether or not accountability is established.

Employees with low autonomy are responsible for most aspects of a procedure but have little or no influence as to the final product or service. Employees with medium autonomy are responsible for most aspects of a procedures and have influence on some of the final product or service. Employees with high autonomy are responsible for all or most aspects of the process as well as the final products or services (Dobbin & Boychuk, 1999:261). It is the high autonomy that most likely is functioning to produce accountability. This is critical, as many experts beleive that empowerment is not truly valid unless workers have complete accountability. They also feel that management should remove themselves from the process and allow the employees to do things their own way. But employees must be aware of the expected outcome and that they will be held accountable for meeting that expectation fully (Heimbold, 1999:180).

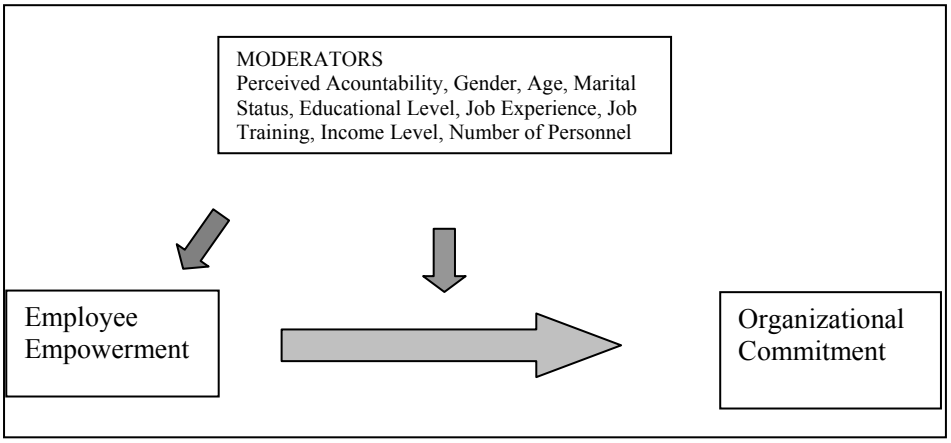
While accountability is essential to empowerment, there are some preconditions that must be met before individuals or teams can be held accountable. Those preconditions include: 1-the freedom to determine the reasons for acting, 2-

awareness of possible consequences, 3- the situation should include options, 4- the actor has the skills necessary to make a balanced evaluation between the different options. These four aspects of freedom to act are all necessary in order for employees to take responsibility and bear accountability. If one or more of these conditions are not met, an individual cannot bear full responsibility or accountability. In addition to these preconditions, employees must have the freedom to act in a responsible manner; this often serves as the overall precondition for responsibility and accountability (DeLeede et al., 1999:205).

The Effects Of Moderators On Both The EE & The Relationship Between EE And OC

The model of the research is illustrated in Figure 1. showing the effect of moderators on both the employee empowerment and the relationship between EE and OC.

Figure 1. The Effects of Moderators On Both The EE and The Relationship Between EE and OC



The hypotheses were deduced by taking the numerous research findings on moderators of EE-OC relationship into consideration. Multiple stepwise regression and multiple moderated regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses that fall into two groups. H_0 group is to test the association between independent variables and employee empowerment. H_1 group is to test the effects of moderators on EE-OC relationship.

H_{0a} = There is no significant relationship between Income Level and Employee Empowerment of the sales persons working in travel agencies.
H_{0b} = There is no significant relationship between Perceived Accountability and Employee Empowerment of the sales persons working in travel agencies.
H_{0c} = There is no significant relationship between The Level of Education and Employee Empowerment of the sales persons working in travel agencies.

H_{0d}= There is no significant relationship between The Gender and Employee Empowerment of the sales persons working in travel agencies.
H_{0e} = There is no significant relationship between The Number of Personnel in the organization and Employee Empowerment of the sales persons working in travel agencies.
H_{0f} = There is no significant relationship between Job Training and Employee Empowerment of the sales persons working in travel agencies.
H_{0g} = There is no significant relationship between Job Experience and Employee Empowerment of the sales persons working in travel agencies.
H_{1a} = The positive relationship between Employee Empowerment and Organizational Commitment is stronger among sales persons who are young.
H_{1b} = The positive relationship between Employee Empowerment and Organizational Commitment is stronger among sales persons who are married.

Research Method

Sample

In 2006, there were 5165 active travel agencies where 22000 people were employed in Turkiye regarding National Statistics of Employment. Supposing that approximately more than half of these employed staff have positions in sales or selling related departments in the agencies. The likely estimation of the survey population would be between 11000 and 22000. It was planned to have approximately 600 questionnaire in the beginning in a convenient sampling manner. But after excluding the misleaded and invalid cases we had 426 as sample size in this survey to represent nearly 22000 sales personnel in travel agencies.

Respondents of the survey were chosen among the middle level sales staff in travel agencies. Since Travel agencies in Türkiye conglomerate extensively in İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir and Antalya where the population and average income level of certain societies are relatively high. The distribution of 426 cases was made to represent this natural distribution of the industry among the cities.

Measures

Employee Empowerment Scale As Indepedent Variable (IV)

Spreitzer's 1995a 16-item scale was used to assess the degree of sales personnel's empowerment. Scale items were translated into Turkish and translated back into English by 3 specialists. The whole battery consisted 4 items under 4 sub dimensions and each item was presented with 5 options in Likert style. The Cronbach Alpha coefficiency of the measure was .89. The sub-dimensions of the scale are ignored in this research.

Organizational Commitment Scale As Dependent Variable (DV)

The respondents' commitment to their work organization were ascertained by using 18-item scale that are adopted from Meyer et al (1993)'s study and each item was presented with 5 options in Likert style. All Items in the scale were translated into Turkish and translated back into English by 3 specialists. The Cronbach alpha coefficiency of the whole scale was .71. The sub-dimensions of the scale are ignored for research purposes.

Perceived Accountability Scale As Moderating Variable

PA of the sales staff was measured via the 12-item job dedication that was originally developed by Van Scotter and Motowidlo (1996) have been used to reveal individual's perception of accountability in the context of accountability theory. All items were presented with binary mode (agree, disagree).The Cronbach's α of the whole scale based on 12 items was .85. Thus the measure proved to be internally consistent and reliable.

Demographic Variables

Gender (GE), age(AG), marital status (MS), educational level (EL), job experience (JE), job training (JT), income level (IL) and number of personnel (NP) were the demographic variables measured in categorical level in this research. All these binary variables were dummy coded and their moderating effect on OC have been searched along with PA.

Research Procedure

During day times, sales personnel of the travel agencies in the agenda have been visited by the undergraduate students as part of their research project schedule. Questionnaires have been filled out by personal assistance of the students. The participants were intentially chosen among the sales staff and were instructed to complete the questionnaire without having opinion of other colleagues.

Results Of Research

Descriptive Statistics

In the survey sample there were 218 female sales persons and 208 male sales persons. 141 of them were married and 279 of them were single respondents. 145 salespersons had 12 years of elementary-junior school degree and 281 of them had university and higher levels of education. When missing values ignored total number of the sample was 426. Table 1. below shows the descriptive statistics of all scales and demographics.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Statistics

		Employee Empowerment	Organizational Commitment	Perceived Accountability	gender	marital status	Age	Education Level	job experience	income level	no of personn	job train
N	Valid	426	426	425	426	423	425	426	426	342	410	419
	Missi	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	0	84	16	7
Mean		4,41	3,79	,91	,49	,66	1,39	,66	,73	,44	,45	,32
Std. Error of Me		,029	,030	,014	,024	,023	,024	,023	,022	,027	,025	,023
Median		4,00	4,00	1,00	,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	,00	,00	,00
Mode		4	4	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Std. Deviation		,604	,621	,286	,500	,473	,488	,474	,446	,497	,498	,469
Variance		,365	,385	,082	,250	,224	,239	,225	,199	,247	,248	,220
Skewness		-,546	-,066	-2,888	,047	-,698	,450	-,676	-1,027	,249	,197	,752
Std. Error of Skew		,118	,118	,118	,118	,119	,118	,118	,118	,132	,121	,119
Kurtosis		-,253	-,103	6,371	-2,007	-1,520	-1,806	-1,550	-,950	-1,950	-1,971	-1,441
Std. Error of Kurto		,236	,236	,236	,236	,237	,236	,236	,236	,263	,240	,238
Range		3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Minimum		2	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Maximum		5	5	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1

The Relationship Between Independent Variables And Employee Empowerment

Technique used to reveal the most effective factors on Employee Empowerment among interacting factors was multiple stepwise regression.

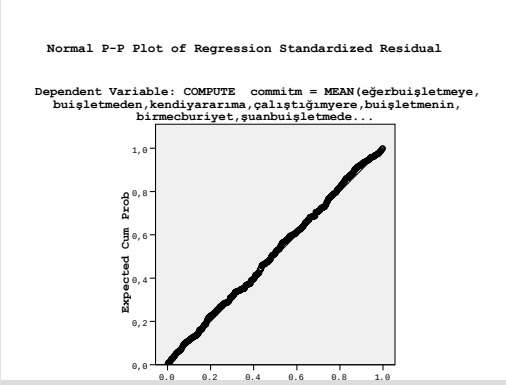
Basic Assumptions of Multiple Linear Regression

The major assumptions that must be met for assuring that data is suitable for multiple linear regression are linearity, normality, multicollinearity and independence of residuals Leech et al., 2005:90). Four major assumptions for multiple linear regressions were tested in SPSS (Hair et al., 1998: 69).

The assumption of linearity requires a straight-line relationship between two variables. The linearity of the relationship between dependent and independent variables represents the degree to which the change in the dependent variable is associated with the independent variable. If there are substantial nonlinear relationships among variables, they are ignored (Tabachinick & Fidell, 1996). The linearity assumption was confirmed in three ways as normality probability plot, partial regression plot and, curve

estimation. In this study, normality probability was used to meet the assumption. Normality probability plot showed that a linear relationship exists for each dependent variable and their independent variables in the study. So, linearity of the relationship assumption was met.

FIGURE 2
Normality Probability Plots For Organizational Commitment



Second assumption was normality assumption. Screening continuous variables for normality is an important early step in almost every multivariate analysis, particularly when inference is goal. This assumption was tested by Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. p= 0.39 for organizational commitment. Thus, organizational commitment was believed to have normal distribution by having significant values higher than 0.05 (Hair et. al., 1998: 72).

Third assumption was the multicollinearity. Independent variables were analyzed in a bivariate correlation matrix where cases having missing values were excluded listwise. As expected, there was some correlation among these measures. However, the magnitude of the observed correlations were not more than 0,50 at 0,05 (2-tailed) significance level. This has meant that there were no collinearity among independent variables prepared for the regression equation. So, multicollinearity assumption was met. In addition to this, tolerance values (1/VIF) were confirmed. It was found around "1" showing that no multicollinearity among independent variables exist (Leech et al., 2005:95).

TABLE 2 Correlations

		gender	marital status	Educational level	age	tenure	Total life time working time	monthly income	Company Size	job training	Strict Absenteeism measures	job contract type	travel agency experience	Psychological Well-being	Employee empowerment	Level of accountablity	Perceived performance
Gender	P. Correlation																
	Sig. (2-tailed)																
marital status	P. Correlation	-,07															
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,13															
educational level	P. Correlation	-,11(*)	,08														
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,02	,12														
Age	P. Correlation	,08	-,47(**)	,06													
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,10	,00	,25													
Tenure	P. Correlation	,05	-,24(**)	,06	,45(**)												
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,27	,00	,23	,00												
total life time working time	P. Correlation	,15(**)	-,42(**)	-,04	,80(**)	,57(**)											
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,00	,00	,41	,00	,00											
Monthly income	P. Correlation	,06	-,28(**)	,21(**)	,41(**)	,35(**)	,45(**)										
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,19	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00										
Company size	P. Correlation	-,03	,07	,08	-,02	,05	-,03	,08									
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,51	,17	,10	,59	,30	,54	,12									
job training	P. Correlation	-,07	,09	,12(*)	-,02	,12(*)	,01	,12(*)	,04								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,150	,07	,01	,69	,01	,85	,02	,43								
Strict absenteeism measures	P. Correlation	-,03	,03	-,08	-,01	,05	-,02	-,02	,04	-,09							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,51	,51	,12	,74	,31	,70	,62	,38	,08							
job contract type	P. Correlation	-,01	-,08	-,02	,08	-,00	,09	,00	,00	-,00	-,03						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,76	,11	,65	,13	,90	,07	,91	,93	,91	,55						
Travel agency experience	P. Correlation	-,04	-,05	,10(*)	,08	-,03	,10	,12(*)	-,08	-,00	-,08	,00					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,43	,34	,04	,11	,53	,05	,01	,09	,89	,12	,93					
Psychological well-being	P. Correlation	-,01	,09	,14(**)	-,08	-,05	-,04	-,05	-,00	,09	-,08	-,00	,00				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,83	,06	,00	,13	,31	,36	,29	,90	,08	,10	,96	,99				
Employee empowerment	P. Correlation	-,06	-,08	,11(*)	,05	,18(**)	,15(**)	,18(**)	-,07	,15(**)	,00	,01	,08	,38(**)			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,20	,12	,03	,32	,00	,00	,00	,13	,00	,86	,74	,12	,00			
Level of accountability	P. Correlation	-,07	-,00	,01	,02	,09	,07	,07	-,08	,03	-,02	-,00	,12(*)	,23(**)	,53(**)		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,17	,98	,73	,64	,07	,14	,15	,13	,53	,62	,86	,02	,00	,00		
Perceived performance	P. Correlation	-,18(**)	,01	,08	-,02	,05	,00	,07	,00	,21(**)	,00	,05	-,04	,28(**)	,36(**)	,22(**)	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,00	,76	,11	,63	,29	,98	,16	,93	,00	,96	,32	,40	,00	,00	,00	

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
a Listwise N=350

Fourth assumption was independence of residuals. Durbin Watson test found 1,89 that is between 0 and 4 and very close to 2. So, independence of residuals were nearly met (Field, 2005).

Table 3. Model Summary for IV s and EE as DV

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	,282[a]	,079	,077	,590	,079	28,446	1	330	,000
2	,336[b]	,113	,108	,580	,034	12,465	1	329	,000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Accountability

b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Accountability, Income Level

Table 4. Coefficients for IV s and EE as DV

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	3,828	,110		34,953	,000	3,612	4,043
	Perceived Accountability	,611	,115	,282	5,333	,000	,386	,837
2	(Constant)	3,749	,110		34,114	,000	3,533	3,966
	Perceived Accountability	,589	,113	,271	5,214	,000	,366	,811
	Income Level	,227	,064	,184	3,531	,000	,100	,353

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Empowerment

Interpretation of the Table 3. and Table 4. shows that the relationship found is statistically significant ($p<0,05$). When all are effective at the same time the biggest role in effecting employee empowerment of a sales person in a travel agency is played by perceived accountability (58%) and income level 22% in order. Thus the H0b and H0a hypotheses are rejected. That is perceived accountability and income level of the sales persons have a significant relationship with their empowerment. H0c, H0d, H0e, H0f and H0g hypotheses could not be rejected. That is there is no meaningful association between these and EE.

The Effects Of Moderators On The Relationship Between Employee Empowerment And Organizational Commitment

The moderation effect of demographic variables and perceived accountability on EE-OC relationship were analysed in Model 1 and Model 2 by using multiple moderating regression technique. Age and Marital Status were examined in models for they were the only statistically significant variables suitable for multiple moderator regression analysis.

Age as An Effective Moderator

Interpretation of Model 1

$OC = a + b_1EE + b_2AG$ *(1st Equation)*

$OC = 2,475 + 0,282EE + 0,053AG$

The intercept in 1st Equation means that the young group which refers to (0) in dummy coding with an average EE score across the entire sample (i.e., Mean EE = 4,41; see Table 1.) is predicted to increase by 2,475 in OC. Note that the way the data were coded has important implications regarding result interpretation. Specifically, İf we used the (0) value for the old group, the intercept would represent the predicted increase in OC for old sales person with an average EE score.

The coefficients for both EE and AG in Model 1 are statistically significant at the $p<0,05$ level. The Equation above shows that for a 1-point increase in EE score, OC may increase by 0,282 across groups , given that AG is held constant.

Unstandardized regression coefficient associated with AG is 0,053. This means that the difference in *OC* increase between the young (0) and old (1) groups is 0,053, given that EE scores of young (0) and old (1) groups of sales persons are held constant.

Model 1 does not include the product term and, thus, ignores a possible moderating effect of AG status. That is, holding AG status constant, increase in OC by an average of 0,282 when EE increases 1 point. Model 2, will reveal the moderating effect of AG on the effect of EE score on OC increase.

Table 5. Model Summary for Age as Moderator

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	,279[a]	,078	,073	,598	,078	17,754	2	422	,000
2	,305[b]	,093	,087	,594	,016	7,236	1	421	,007

a. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Employee Empowerment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Employee Empowerment, EE and AGE

Table 6. Coefficients for Age as Moderator

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2,475	,227		10,879	,000	2,027	2,922
	Employee Empowerment	,282	,048	,274	5,864	,000	,188	,377
	Age	,053	,060	,042	,898	,370	-,064	,170
2	(Constant)	,837	,649		1,289	,198	-,439	2,113
	Employee Empowerment	,654	,146	,635	4,474	,000	,367	,941
	Age	1,199	,430	,942	2,789	,006	,354	2,044
	EE and AGE	-,260	,096	-,987	-2,690	,007	-,449	-,070

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment

Interpretation of Model 2

$OC = a + b_1EE + b_2AG + b_3\ EE \times AG$ (error terms omitted for simplicity) (2nd Equation)

Model 2 shows results after the product term has entered the equation. As shown in Model Summary, the addition of the product term resulted in an R^2 change of 0,016, F(1, 421) = 7,236, p<0,05. The moderating effect of AG explains 1,6% of variance in OC increase above and beyond the variance explained by EE scores and AG status. This result does partly support the presence of a moderating effect.

Predicted OC = 0,837 + 0,654EE + 1,199AG - 0,260EE x AG

The 2nd Equation refers to the conclusion where the product term is entered in. The statistical significance (i.e., p value) for the R^2 change from Model 1 to Model 2 based on the F statistic is identical to the statistical significance for the regression coefficient for the product term based on the t statistic. The product term should be significant in the regression equation in order for the interaction to be interpretable. Here we have 0,007 as F Change and t statistic. (i.e., p<0,05).

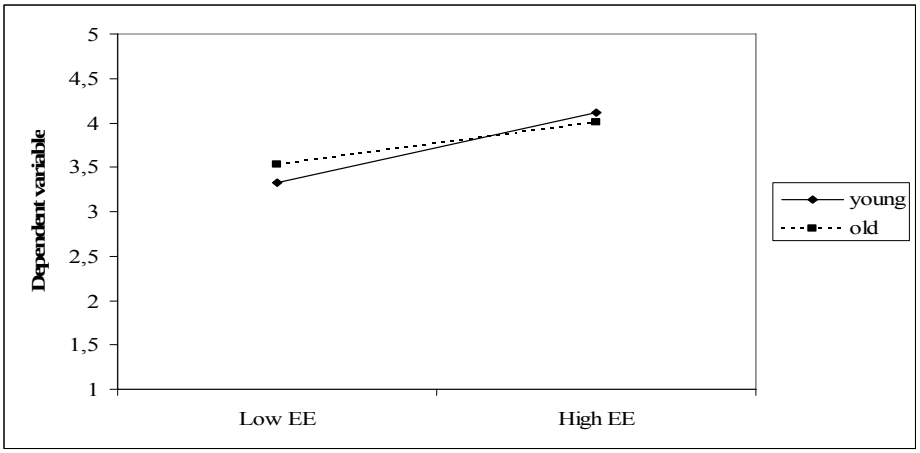
The interpretation of the regression coefficients was based on the fact that the binary moderator should be dummy coded. Regarding 2nd Equation, there is a -0,260 points of difference between the slope of OC increase on EE between the young (0) and the old (1). In other words, the slope regressing OC on EE is a little different for young sales persons as compared to old sales persons.

2nd Equation for young group (0) results in the following:
Predicted OC = 0,837 + 0,654EE + 1,199AG(0) - 0,260EE*(0) x AG*
Young Group Predicted OC = 0,837 + 0,654 EE

2nd Equation for old group (1) results in the following:
Predicted OC = 0,837 + 0,654EE + 1,199AG(1) - 0,260EE*(1) x AG*
Old Group Predicted OC = 2,036 + 0,394 EE

To plot the EE-OC relationship for each group on a graph the computations above were used. We have to choose values of 1 standart deviation. (SD) above and below the mean for EE in the Equations above (Cohen et al., 2003). Table1. shows that the mean score for EE is 4,41, and the SD is 0,604. So, using the value of 5,01 (1 SD above the mean) and 3,80 (1 SD below the mean) in the Equations above yields the graph shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Slopes for OC on EE for Young and Old Sales Persons based on 2nd Equation.



Results based on 2nd Equation led to the conclusion that there is a slight moderation effect of AG. A perusal of Figure 2. showing the EE-OC increase relationship for each of the groups separately gives us a better sense that the relationship is stronger (i.e., steeper slope) for the young group (0) as compared to the old group (1). Thus, H_{1a} hypothesis positing that "The positive relationship between Emloyee Empowerment and Organizational Commitment is stronger among sales persons who are young." is accepted.

Marital Status as An Effective Moderator

Interpretation of Model 1

$OC = a + b_1EE + b_2MS$ *(1st Equation)*

$OC = 2,547 + 0,281EE + 0,011MS$

The intercept in 1st Equation means that the married group which refers to (0) in dummy coding with an average EE score across the entire sample (i.e., Mean EE = 4,41; see Table 1.) is predicted to increase by 2,547 in OC. Note that the way the data were coded has important implications regarding result interpretation. Specifically, İf

we used the (0) value for the single group, the intercept would represent the predicted increase in OC for single sales person with an average EE score.

The coefficients for both EE and MS in Model 1 are statistically significant at the p<0,05 level. 2nd Equation shows that for a 1-point increase in EE score, OC may increase by 0,281 across groups , given that MS is held constant. Unstandardized regression coefficient associated with MS is 0,011. This means that the difference in *OC* increase between the married (0) and single (1) groups is 0,011, given that EE scores of married (0) and single (1) groups of sales persons are held constant.

Model 1 does not include the product term and, thus, ignores a possible moderating effect of MS status. That is, holding MS status constant, increase in OC by an average of 0,281 when EE increases 1 point. Model 2, will reveal the moderating effect of MS on the effect of EE score on OC increase.

Table 7. Model Summary for Marital Status

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	,274[a]	,075	,071	,599	,075	17,013	2	420	,000
2	,287[b]	,083	,076	,598	,008	3,498	1	419	,042

a. Predictors: (Constant), marital status, Employee Empowerment

b. Predictors: (Constant), marital status, Employee Empowerment, EE and Marital Status

Table 8. Coefficients for Marital Status

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2,547	,218		11,695	,000	2,119	2,975
	Employee Empowerment	,281	,048	,273	5,825	,000	,186	,376
	marital status	,011	,062	,008	,176	,861	-,110	,132
2	(Constant)	3,072	,355		8,657	,000	2,375	3,770
	Employee Empowerment	,162	,080	,157	2,020	,044	,004	,319
	marital status	-,813	,445	-,619	-1,828	,068	-1,688	,061
	EE and Marital Status	,187	,100	,646	1,870	,042	-,010	,384

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment

Interpretation of Model 2

$OC = a + b_1EE + b_2MS + b_3\ EE \times MS$ *(error terms omitted for simplicity) (2nd Equation)*

Model 2 shows results after the product term has entered the equation. As shown in Model Summary, the addition of the product term resulted in an R^2 change of 0,008, F(1, 419) = 3,498, p<0,05. The moderating effect of MS explains 0,8% of

variance in OC increase above and beyond the variance explained by EE scores and MS status. This result slightly supports the presence of moderating effect.

Predicted OC = 3,072 + 0,162EE - 0,813MS + 0,187EE x MS

The 2nd Equation refers to the conclusion where the product term is entered in. The statistical significance (i.e., p value) for the R^2 change from Model 1 to Model 2 based on the F statistic is identical to the statistical significance for the regression coefficient for the product term based on the t statistic. The product term should be significant in the regression equation in order for the interaction to be interpretable. Here we have 0,04 as F Change and t statistic. (i.e., $p<0,05$).

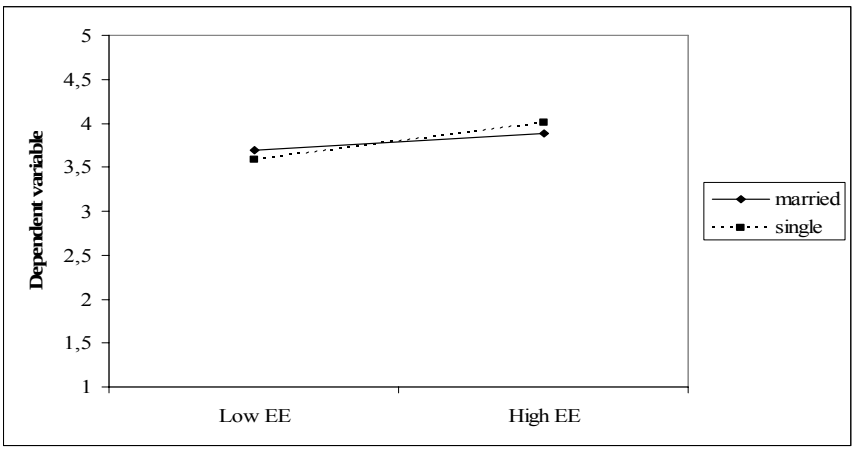
The interpretation of the regression coefficients was based on the fact that the binary moderator should be dummy coded. Regarding 2nd Equation, there is a 0,187 points of difference between the slope of OC increase on EE between the married (0) and the single (1). The slope regressing OC on EE is a little different for married sales persons as compared to single sales persons.

2nd Equation for married group (0) results in the following:
Predicted OC = 3,072 + 0,162EE - 0,813MS(0) + 0,187EE*(0) x MS*
Young Group Predicted OC = 3,072 + 0,162 EE

2nd Equation for single group (1) results in the following:
Predicted OC = 3,072 + 0,162EE – 0,813MS(1) + 0,187EE*(1) x MS*
Old Group Predicted OC = 2,259 + 0,349 EE

To plot the EE-OC relationship for each group on a graph the computations above were used. We have to choose values of 1 standart deviation. (SD) above and below the mean for EE in the Equations above (Cohen et al., 2003). Table1. shows that the mean score for EE is 4,41, and the SD is 0,604. So, using the value of 5,01 (1 SD above the mean) and 3,80 (1 SD below the mean) in the Equations above yields the graph shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Slopes for OC on EE for Married and Single SalesPersons based on 2nd Equation



Results based on 2nd Equation led to the conclusion that there is a slight moderation effect of MS. A perusal of Figure 3. showing the EE-OC increase relationship for each of the groups separately gives us a better sense that the relationship is less steep for the married group (0) as compared to the single group (1). Thus, H_{1b} hypothesis positing that "The positive relationship between Emloyee Empowerment and Organizational Commitment is stronger among sales persons who are married" is rejected.

Poor Moderators

Interpretation of Model 1

OC = a + b_1EE + b_2 MODERATORS (PA,GE,EL,JE,JT,IL,NP) *(1st Equation)*

OC = 2,352+ 0,231EE + 0,465PA
OC = 2,523+ 0,284EE + 0,036GE
OC = 2,554+ 0,286EE - 0,036EL
OC = 2,572+ 0,283EE - 0,035JE
OC = 2,659+ 0,271EE - 0,198JT
OC = 2,497+ 0,283EE + 0,102IL
OC = 2,511+ 0,287EE + 0,041NP

The coefficients for both *EE* and the MODERATORS in Model 1 are not statistically significant at the p<0,05 level. 2nd Equation shows that for a 1-point increase in *EE* score, *OC* may increase by b_1EE across groups (accountable-

unaccountable, males-females, low education-high education,etc..) , given the moderator in question is held constant.

Unstandardized regression coefficient associated with *MODERATORS* vary from 0,465 to 0,041. This amount refers to that the difference in *OC* increase between the groups is between 0,465 and 0,041, given that *EE* scores of groups are held constant.

The intercept in 2nd Equation means that the group which refers to (0) in dummy coding with an average *EE* score across the entire sample (i.e., Mean EE = 4,41; see Table 1.) is predicted to increase by b_1EE in *OC*.

Model 1 does not include the product term and, thus, ignores a possible moderating effect of b_2 *(PA,GE,EL,JE,JT,IL,NP)* status. That is, holding b_2*(PA,GE,EL,JE,JT,IL,NP)* status constant, increase in *OC* by an average of b_1EE when *EE* increases 1 point. Model 2, will reveal the moderating effect of b_2*(PA,GE,EL,JE,JT,IL,NP)* on the effect of *EE* score on *OC* increase.

Interpretation of Model 2

$$Predicted\ OC = a + b_1EE + b_2MODERATORS + b_1\ EE \times MODERATORS \qquad (2^{nd}\ Equation)$$

Model 2 shows results after the product term has entered the equation. As shown in Model Summary and Coefficients Tables, the statistical significance (i.e., p value) for the R^2 change from Model 1 to Model 2 based on the F statistic is identical to the statistical significance for the regression coefficient for the product term based on the t statistic. The product term should be significant in the regression equation in order for the interaction to be interpretable. In this instance there is no need to go further. Because statistical significance for the product term based on F Change and t statistic is 0,489 for PA, 0,461 for GE, 0,449 for EL, 0,956 for JE, 0,949 for JT, 0,165 for IL, and 0,758 for NP. (i.e., p>0,05). Unfortunately, the possible hypotheses claiming different effects of the groups in each variable on EE-OC relationship, could not be tested.

Discussion

The evidence found from the preceding analyses firstly indicates that perceived accountability and income level of the staff are closely associated with employee empowerment. The findings on PA support Dobbin & Boychuk's findings (1999). It's clear from the research that in order to improve the sales personell's empowerment, their perceived accountability should be researched and understood by the management. Besides, income level of sales personnel was found as an important demographic factor effecting employee empowerment. Thus, arrangement of a suitable income level may be a necessity for the empowerment of the employee.

On the other hand, age and marital status of the sales persons gain importance when the interaction of EE and OC is in question due to their moderating effects on the positive relationship between emloyee empowerment and organizational commitment. The research findings that are supported by the literature showed that age and marital status of sales persons are very important as the moderating factors on the relationship between employee empowerment and organizational commitment.

In the conclusion, it is advised for future researchers to enter many other organizational and personal parameters in work environment as candidates of moderators to see find a high moderator agent on the relationship between EE and OC. Natural consequence of this attempt would be to expand time and budget limitations of the research in the hand. Moreover, the recurrence of the effects mentioned over years may produce with the practical significance for managers who feel themselves in charge of OC as an output.

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