

Evaluation of Psychological Empowerment, Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance in Turkey's Universities

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Abstract

This study aims to find out differences regarding demographical factors of academicians in Turkey as searching their perception about psychological empowerment, job satisfaction and employee performance. These three variables have great attention in the literature. Data was gathered via survey study from over 900 university employees. Analyses were made in order to investigate any differences among respondents on research variables according to their demographical properties such as gender, age, job experience, academic position (instructor, research assistant, assistant professor, associated professor, professor etc.), or status of university (private or public). Research results indicate that there are significant differences between groups of demographical factors for all research variables. For psychological empowerment and job satisfaction female average values were found higher than male respondents. Also, regarding age groups for all variables high-level age groups' average values were observed higher than low-level age groups. Moreover, for job experience category similar results were obtained as age groups. Regarding academic position and status of university also significant differences were realized. This study implies that; psychological empowerment, job satisfaction and employee performance attitudes of university employees range according to some demographical characteristics

Keywords: academicians, demographical factors, difference analysis, employee performance, job satisfaction, psychological empowerment.

Introduction

Today's work atmosphere is shaped with several elements of organizational behavior. These elements such as job satisfaction, organizational culture, organizational commitment, empowerment, organizational trust etc. have strong or weak relationships with each other. Through these relationships these organizational behavior subjects have significant effects on some specific outcomes like organizational performance, employee turnover, productivity or

quality outcomes. Organizational behavior literature gives great attention to relationships and effects of mentioned elements and includes plenty of researches and publications.

On the other hand, beside these relations and effects with each other or on company outputs, some demographical characteristics also play an important role on organizational behavior issues. In the literature, there are few studies which investigate demographical factors' impacts on behavioral variables. Gender, age, experience or education characteristics are sometimes critical for organizational processes and outcomes.

Hence, we need to search more about demographical variables' impact on organizational behavior elements. Also organizational studies are made on some specific areas and again lack of enough results about academicians. This study aims to fill these gaps and plan to make a research about demographical characteristics' impact on psychological empowerment, job satisfaction and employee performance.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

“To empower” has several meanings in terms of to give “power” to, such as authority, energy, capacity etc [1]. In management literature, empowerment refers to sharing power or delegating authority with some participative management methods. Conger & Kanungo define empowerment through powerlessness as to weaken one's belief in individual powerlessness [2]. Spreitzer [3] defined psychological experience of empowerment based on relevant definitions [1,2] about empowerment concept which are based on motivational side of it. Additionally, he constructed a simple combination of four basic dimensions derived from Thomas & Velthouse's intrinsic motivational elements for describing the empowerment process in individuals. These dimensions are meaning, competence, self-determination and impact that contribute overall construct of psychological empowerment and without any of these dimensions the concept would be incomplete [1,3]. Meaning is the value of importance and/or recognition of individual about his/her work role and includes a fit between the purpose of a work role and individual's intrinsic care, beliefs or own standards [1,3,4]. Competence is about the self-trust degree of individuals to themselves about their talents, skills, capacity or efficacy [1,4]. Self-determination, which is mentioned as ‘choice’ by Thomas & Velthouse, is defined as freedom and self-control of people about their work accomplishment, work methods and decision making [3,4]. Impact refers to individual's degree of effect on strategic, managerial and operational results of task [3].

Literature highlights some assumptions of psychological empowerment. First one is the importance of work environment [1]. Secondly, researchers mentioned its continuity which refers empowerment is an unfinished process. Thirdly, it is specific to the work domain. Spreitzer developed a work-specific measure for psychological empowerment because it has not a global nature [3].

Apart from the formal organizational structure, empowerment has a great potential for effectiveness and innovative behavior of employees. Effectiveness encourages proactive behavior to fulfill work role expectations [3]. When people are empowered, their personal self-efficacy expectations will be strengthened [2]. Feedback about the performance of individual is quite an important issue for psychological empowerment. Because people need to learn their performance results and how well they are. Also incentives and rewards trigger empowerment not only with recognition and reinforcement of competencies but also participation and effect to the decision making process [3].

In literature, there are limited researches [5,6] about the impact of demographical factors on psychological empowerment. Also none of them is conducted among academicians.

Job satisfaction refers to somebody's positive and negative evaluations [7] or fulfillment, positive emotions about her/his work [8]. Job satisfaction is defined as the degree of positive attitude to the work or elements of it and it has close relationship with the characteristics of employee, features of job and organization of work in the corporate workplace [9].

Job satisfaction is evaluated together with the motivation concept in the literature [10].

Basic motivation theories are Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's motivators and hygiene factors, Vroom's expectancy theory, Adam's equity theory etc [11]. Besides of these motivation theories, emotional responses of employee about work are explained with general satisfaction, internal work motivation and some special satisfactions (job security, pay and other compensation, social satisfaction/peers and co-workers, supervision and opportunity for personal growth and development on the job [12]. Moreover, task identity, task significance, skill variety, autonomy and feedback from the job itself plays an important role for job satisfaction degree of employee [13]. Some researchers highlights main elements of job satisfaction as organization as a whole, salary, promotion, characteristics of job, supervisor, co-workers, job security, opportunity for improvement, working conditions, working hours, control of employee over her/his work [14]. Evaluations and satisfaction degree of individual about the job are under the effect of several factors.

There are many researches on job satisfaction area in the literature, some of them aim to find relationship of this concept with other subjects such as employee commitment, turnover intention & burnout, employee performance etc. On the other hand, very few of these studies investigate the impact of demographical factors [15,16] such as age [17], gender [5] or other factors as academic rank [18] on job satisfaction of academicians.

Employee performance is defined as effort of an individual that serves organizational performance [19] According to Campbell et al, it contributes organizational goals through the appraisal of an employee's performance on job-related attitudes and outcomes in comparison with her/his colleagues [20]. Organizations need highly performing employees to meet their goals and maintain daily activities [21]. Performance is about achieving task and responsibilities that contribute to the product or service production or management duties. As a multidimensional concept, employee performance includes accomplishment of task and duties is not enough for a good performance; employee should also be in positive organizational citizenship behavior and avoiding counterproductive behaviors to the organization [22,23].

Although there are some studies about employee performance of academicians [19], literature is lack of sufficient research about demographical factors effect on this subject.

In order to fill some gaps in the literature on psychological empowerment, job satisfaction and employee performance we propose below hypotheses:

H1a: There is statistically significant difference between female and male respondents for psychological empowerment

H1b: There is statistically significant difference between female and male respondents for job satisfaction

H1c: There is statistically significant difference between female and male respondents for employee performance

H2a: There is statistically significant difference among age groups of respondents for psychological empowerment

H2b: There is statistically significant difference among age groups of respondents for job satisfaction

H2c: There is statistically significant difference among age groups of respondents for employee performance

H3a: There is statistically significant difference among job experience periods of respondents for psychological empowerment

H3b: There is statistically significant difference among job experience periods of respondents for job satisfaction

H3c: There is statistically significant difference among job experience periods of respondents for employee performance

H4a: There is statistically significant difference among current workplace experience periods of respondents for psychological empowerment

H4b: There is statistically significant difference among current workplace experience periods of respondents for job satisfaction

H4c: There is statistically significant difference among current workplace experience periods of respondents for employee performance

H5a: There is statistically significant difference among academic rank groups of respondents for psychological empowerment

H5b: There is statistically significant difference among academic rank groups of respondents for job satisfaction

H5c: There is statistically significant difference among academic rank groups of respondents for employee performance

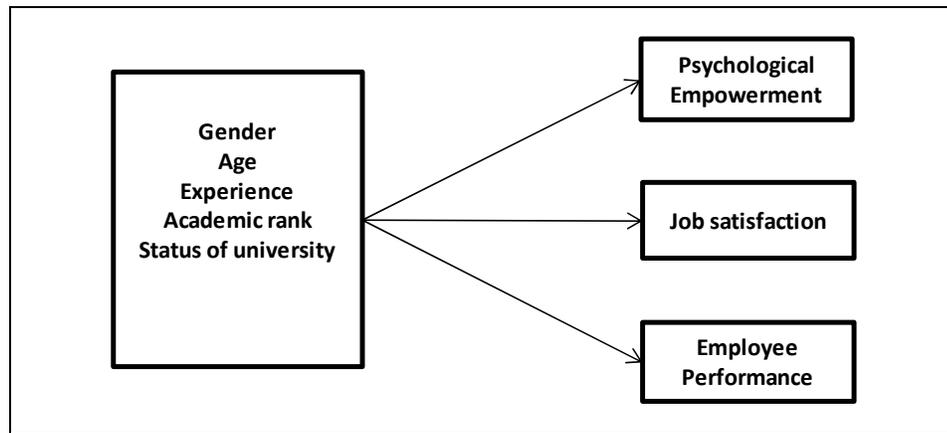
H6a: There is statistically significant difference between respondents from private and public universities for psychological empowerment

H6b: There is statistically significant difference between respondents from private and public universities for job satisfaction

H6c: There is statistically significant difference between respondents from private and public universities for employee performance

The research model is presented in Figure 1.

Figure I. Research Model



Methodology

Research goal

Main purpose of this study is to find out any significant difference on research variables (psychological empowerment, job satisfaction and employee performance) for control variables (gender, age, experience, academic rank and status of university). With the other words, aim of this study is to examine the effects of demographics on research variables. In order to realize this aim, a survey study was performed among academicians who are working in Turkey.

Sample and Data Collection

For data collection survey method is used. The survey was sent by e- mail to academicians of all universities in Turkey. Population of this research becomes from academicians who are research assistant, instructor, lecturer, faculty members, which are assistant professor, associated professor, professor, or from other divisions (expert, non-academic staff) In total 928 respondents were answered the survey and sent back.

Survey items for each variable derived from literature. Spreitzer contributed to psychological empowerment literature by developing a four-dimension scale, measuring and validating it. [3,24–26]. Sürgevil et al. adapted Spreitzer's scale into Turkish language as performing validity and reliability analysis [4]. In this study, for Psychological Empowerment Scale (PES) Sürgevil's Turkish version is used. This scale has four dimensions and each of them includes three questions. In total scale has 12 items. For job satisfaction variable Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire's short form with 20 items was used. Employee performance scale is adapted by Erdoğan [27] from Kirkman & Rosen's research and it has 7 items. All items within the survey were scored on a 5-point Likert scale with an agree/disagree continuum (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree). Survey also has some demographical items such as gender, age, job experience and academic rank of respondents and also status of universities.

Data reached from 928 respondents were analyzed with SPSS statistical program. Validity and reliability tests were performed and proposed hypotheses were tested via T-test and Anova analyses.

Analyses and Results

Data gathered from 928 academicians were analyzed with SPSS statistical program. First part of survey includes some descriptive information of respondents. Obtained information of respondents is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Descriptive information

Descriptive information	Frequency	Percent (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	471	50,8
Male	457	49,2
<i>Age</i>		
<26	72	7,8
26-35	510	55,0
36-45	210	22,6
>45	136	14,7
<i>Total job experience</i>		
<3 years	122	13,1
3-5 years	229	24,7
6-8 years	143	15,4
9-11 years	88	9,5
>11 years	346	37,3
<i>Current workplace experience</i>		
<3 years	368	39,7
3-5 years	267	28,8
6-8 years	85	9,2
9-11 years	45	4,8
>11 years	163	17,6
<i>Academic rank</i>		
Research assistant	317	34,2
Lecturer	204	22,0
Assistant professor	199	21,4
Associated professor	65	7,0
Professor	61	6,6
Others (Expert, instructor, non-academic staff)	82	8,8
<i>Status of university</i>		
Public	536	57,8
Private (named foundation university in Turkey)	145	15,6
Missing (no answer)	247	26,6

Second, third and fourth parts of survey had psychological empowerment, job satisfaction and employee performance items respectively. For each variable validity and reliability analyses were made. Psychological empowerment scale had four sub-dimensions according to factor analyses result. Result supported previous literature findings. Sub-dimensions were named as meaning, competence, self-determination and impact which were similar with Spreitzer's study [3]. These four sub-dimensions explained %80,204 of total variance. No items were deleted and in total 12 items presented the scale. Cronbach's alpha value of scale was 0,856. Job satisfaction scale had two sub-dimensions that were intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Scale explained %55,731 of total variance with 12 items in total. According to reliability analysis Cronbach's alpha value was found as 0,868. Employee

performance scale explained %64,088 of total variance with 7 items. Cronbach's alpha value was 0,790 of this scale.

We made T-test and Anova analysis to find out any difference on research variables for gender, age, academic rank, experience and also status of university. For psychological empowerment and job satisfaction there was significant differences between gender groups ($p < 0,05$). For both variable female average values were found higher than male respondents'. (Psy.Emp.; $Ave_{female}=3,9015 > Ave_{male}=3,7310$ and JobStf.; $Ave_{female}=3,7473 > Ave_{male}=3,6407$) There was no significant difference for gender on employee performance variable. These results showed that female academicians' psychological empowerment and job satisfaction level is more than male academicians, however there was no meaningful difference regarding their employee performance.

Secondly, Anova analysis for age groups of academicians was made. There was significant difference between <26 years and all other groups ($p < 0,05$). Average value of <26 years group was lower than 26-35, 36-45 and >45 groups for psychological empowerment variable (Psy.Emp.; $Ave_{<26}=3,36$, $Ave_{26-35}=3,7217$, $Ave_{36-45}=4,0206$, $Ave_{>45}=4,1054$). For job satisfaction and employee performance variables similar results were obtained. For <26 years and 26-35 years group there was significant difference with both 36-45 and >45 years groups ($p < 0,05$). It revealed that older groups' job satisfaction level was less than younger groups (JobStf.; $Ave_{<26}=3,5569$, $Ave_{26-35}=3,6287$, $Ave_{36-45}=3,8250$, $Ave_{>45}=3,8147$). Regarding employee performance, there was significant difference for <26 years group with both 36-45 and >45 years groups, then for 26-35 years group with >45 years group ($p < 0,05$). >45 years group average value was the highest among the other groups. However <26 years group value was the lowest for employee performance (Emp.Perf.; $Ave_{<26}=3,8552$, $Ave_{26-35}=4,0116$, $Ave_{36-45}=4,0789$, $Ave_{>45}=4,1775$).

Third control variable was the total job experience of respondents. For psychological empowerment variable there was significant difference between <3 years and 3-5 years groups with the other groups (6-8 years, 9-11 years and >11 years groups; $p < 0,05$). Average values of both <3 years and 3-5 years groups were found less than the other groups (Psy.Emp.; $Ave_{<3}=3,4085$, $Ave_{3-5}=3,6183$, $Ave_{6-8}=3,8666$, $Ave_{9-11}=3,9242$, $Ave_{>11}=4,0462$). For job satisfaction variable, >11 years group had significant difference with other groups ($p < 0,05$) and average value of >11 years group was higher than the other groups (JobStf.; $Ave_{<3}=3,5910$, $Ave_{3-5}=3,6074$, $Ave_{6-8}=3,6462$, $Ave_{9-11}=3,60$, $Ave_{>11}=3,8335$). For employee performance variable <3 years group had significant differences with the other groups ($p < 0,05$) and average value is less than these groups (Emp.Perf.; $Ave_{<3}=3,8290$, $Ave_{3-5}=4,0143$, $Ave_{6-8}=4,0420$, $Ave_{9-11}=4,0974$, $Ave_{>11}=4,1119$).

Current workplace experience was also asked to the respondents. For this control variable there was no statistically significant difference for both job satisfaction and employee performance ($p > 0,05$). On the other hand, for psychological empowerment there was difference between <3 years with 9-11 years and >11 years groups ($p < 0,05$); between 3-5 years group with 9-11 years and >11 years groups ($p < 0,05$). Average values of <3 years and 3-5 years groups were less than mentioned groups (Psy.Emp.; $Ave_{<3}=3,6899$, $Ave_{3-5}=3,7959$, $Ave_{6-8}=3,8206$, $Ave_{9-11}=4,0630$, $Ave_{>11}=4,0286$). Both total job experience and current workplace experience point of view, results highlighted the importance of experience for psychological empowerment.

Another control variable was the academic rank of respondents for difference analysis. Academic rank referred to the academic degree of university staff and includes research assistant, instructor, lecturer, faculty members, that are assistant professor, associated professor, professor, or from other divisions (expert, non-academic staff). For psychological empowerment there were several statistically significant differences found ($p < 0,05$). There was difference between research assistant and other groups and average value of research assistant is less than other groups (Psy.Emp.; $Ave_{res.ast.} = 3,4506$, $Ave_{lect.} = 4,0151$, $Ave_{ast.prof.} = 4,0335$, $Ave_{asso.prof.} = 4,0179$, $Ave_{prof.} = 4,2117$). For job satisfaction variable there were differences between research assistant and both assistant professor and professor ($p < 0,05$). Average job satisfaction value of research assistant was less than both groups (JobStf.; $Ave_{res.ast.} = 3,5787$, $Ave_{ast.prof.} = 3,8528$, $Ave_{prof.} = 3,9295$). Regarding employee performance, there was also differences between research assistant and both lecturer and faculty members (assistant professor, associated professor, professor; $p < 0,05$). Average employee performance value of research assistant was lower than these groups (Emp.Perf.; $Ave_{res.ast.} = 3,9027$, $Ave_{lect.} = 4,1275$, $Ave_{ast.prof.} = 4,0747$, $Ave_{asso.prof.} = 4,1451$, $Ave_{prof.} = 4,2084$).

Lastly, for the status of university there was no significant difference between public and private university on psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. However for employee performance we found difference between groups ($p < 0,05$) and average value of private university was higher than public universities (Emp.Perf.; $Ave_{public} = 4,0248$, $Ave_{private} = 4,1399$).

Conclusion

Empowerment, job satisfaction and employee performance are main topics of this study and our research area. Literature on these subjects is quite fruitful and presents lots of research results. There are plenty of researches that investigate separately or together of some combinations of empowerment, job satisfaction or employee performance (as work outcomes, innovation performance, efficiency etc.). However, these studies are lack of analysis about control variables such as age, gender, job experience, academic positions or university status)

Main hypothesis of this study states that there is *“There is statistically significant difference among demographical factors (gender, age, total job experience, current workplace experience, academic rank) and status of university groups of respondents for psychological empowerment, job satisfaction and employee performance.”* This hypothesis was separated to 18 sub-hypotheses and to test all hypotheses T-test and Anova analyses were made. According to results, without H1c, H4b and H4c hypotheses all research hypotheses were accepted. Rejected hypotheses revealed that for job satisfaction; there were no difference both between female and male respondents and current workplace experience groups. Additionally, regarding employee performance; there was no difference between current workplace experience groups.

This study highlights that universities need to pay more attention to demographical factors for psychological empowerment, job satisfaction and employee performance issues.

As this study was performed among academicians, in order to generalize results of this study for the other organizations, same study should be made in the future as including respondents from different industries. Moreover, it will be beneficial to repeat this research for other organizational behavior subjects.

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