

# Linking Psychological Empowerment to Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment: Investigating the Mediating Effect of Organizational Trust

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## Abstract

The main purpose of this research is to examine the influence of psychological empowerment and organizational trust on job satisfaction and organizational commitment among Kuwait free trade zone employees. Data were obtained for this research through a set of questionnaire which was divided into four parts and administered to a total of 271 respondents. The results showed that psychological empowerment mainly affects employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The results indicated that two dimensions of psychological empowerment, i.e. *Meaning* and *Impact*, are significant and positively related to job satisfaction. The existing literature supports the relationships between psychological empowerment dimensions and three dimensions of organizational commitment: *normative*, *continuance*, and *affective commitment*. However, results from this study showed inconsistency. The results showed that only one dimension of Psychological Empowerment, *Meaning*, is significant and positively Associated to *Affective Commitment*; two dimensions of Psychological Empowerment, *Meaning* and *Competence*, are significant and positively Associated to *Normative Commitment*; and no dimensions of Psychological Empowerment are statistically contributed to *Continuance Commitment*. Moreover, analysis has also showed that organizational trust mediates the relationships between psychological empowerment, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Some practical implications are also discussed. The research concludes with limitations and future research suggestions to enhance psychological empowerment in public and private organizations in Kuwait.

**Keywords:** psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational trust, Kuwait free trade zone

## 1. Introduction

In light of the global competition and rapid changes in the business environment, organizations seek to enhance the efficiency of human resources through the adoption of managerial applications that achieve optimum utilization of the human resources. One of these applications is empowerment. Employees who feel empowered they are Contribute more in organizational effectiveness (Chen & Chen, 2008; Liu, Fellows & Chiu, 2006).

The notion of psychological empowerment has acquired wide acceptance in both theories and management practices (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Donovan, 1994; Hall, 2008; Kanter, 1989; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). There is a large body of research during the past two decades, which looked at the concept of psychological empowerment and the investigation of its causes and consequences. It is generally accepted that this concept consists of four dimensions, i.e. *Meaning*, *Competence*, *Self-Determination*, and *Impact* (Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990), and is linked with a number of different work behaviors like employees' *performance* and *attitudes* (Fulford & Enz, 1995 ; Hall, 2008; Koberg, 1999; Spreitzer, 1995, 1996; Suzik, 1998), *job satisfaction* (Gazzoli et al., 2010; Avey et al., 2008; Bordin et al., 2007; Ugboro & Obeng, 2000) and *organizational commitment* (Dehkordi et al., 2011; Joo et al., 2010; Chen & Chen, 2008; Bhatnagar, 2005).

Empowerment is mainly concerned with the establishment of trust between employees and managers, which motivates them to participate in decision-making. Despite that, only a few researches have studied the relationship between these concepts, especially trust, to mediate the effects of psychological empowerment. Previous studies has concentrated mainly on the effects of empowerment on trust from the point of view of

managers (Gomez & Rosen, 2001; Laschinger & Finegan, 2005; Moye & Henkin, 2005). Therefore, these two notions should be tested from the perspective of employees to clarify their relationship with each other, and trust, as mediator variable, should be examined. In addition, research on psychological empowerment, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction has been conducted in various organizational settings, but very few studies pertaining to the identification of the level of commitment and job satisfaction of employees working in Kuwait Free Zone have been tackled.

The aim of this paper is to examine the effects of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Also, the role of organizational trust, as mediator variable, will be examined. This paper would support and extend existing psychological empowerment research and attempt to fill the gap in the literature considering the different relations between the perceptions of psychological empowerment, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and trust.

## 2. Psychological Empowerment

Empowerment concerns mainly in delegation of authority to a person to perform a specific job, so empowerment is the ability of employees who have the flexibility and the freedom to make organizational decisions (Greasley et al., 2008). The concept of empowerment here is in line with traditional management concepts which focus mainly on the lines of hierarchy authority in an organization (Greasley et al., 2005). Consequently, there are several researchers who defined empowerment as a way to improve the decision-making process at the low levels of the organization and enhance staff experience in the workplace (Moye & Henkin, 2005).

Bowen and Lawler (1992) define empowerment as a tool to help people make the best decision; while Conger and Kanungo (1988) define psychological empowerment as a motivational constructs. Empowerment as a motivational construct means understanding of individuals to their independence and possession of authority. If you enable these individuals, they feel empowered; they feel that they have power and control over their jobs. If they feel this, it is strengthening the power of self-determination, self-worth and self-efficiency (Dehkordi et al., 2011).

Thomas and Velthouse (1990) defined the norm of psychological empowerment as a set of four perceptions that reflects the employee's role in terms of meaning (the value of the work) and efficiency (the ability to perform the work), and freedom of choice (choice in initiating and organizing procedures) and effectiveness (the ability to influence the results regulatory). Moreover, Menon (2001) classified employee empowerment into three main categories: (1) as an act, the act is to give power to the people; (2) as a process, the process that leads to the practice of power; and (3) as a psychological condition, the perception of the individual which can be measured.

There are some internal and external factors, which cause an individual to be more dedicated and self-motivated at work. One of these internal factors is the sense of psychological empowerment as it enhances predictability, understanding of self-esteem, commitment, and job satisfaction. This integrative psychological approach to the concept of employee empowerment has been developed based on the hypothesis that the psychological experience of power is the reason for the employee's sense of empowerment (Jha, 2011). Psychological empowerment is seen as a motivational tool where power and control of internal work act as the stimuli of an individual, which eventually increases conviction about his effectiveness at work (Conger and Kanungo, 1988).

In the literature, there are more than one classification of the components of empowerment. One of the most significant classifications applied in scientific texts is by Spreitzer (1995). He identifies four dimensions of empowerment as follows: meaning, competence or self-efficacy, self-determination, and impact.

Despite having organizational benefits and individual advantages from empowerment, because of competitive environment and the efforts of organizations to achieve efficiency and effectiveness, most of the research nowadays focus on organizational benefits of empowerment that reflect the need for such empowerment. Research shows that organizations that have implemented empowerment have seen significant progress in the economic field (Applebaum et al., 1999).

### 2.1 Psychological Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is another important factor in career success as it increases employee efficiency in the organization. Researchers consider that job satisfaction may lead to organizational commitment and productivity. Many researchers have tried to identify the various elements of job satisfaction and study its effects on the productivity of individuals (Hong Lu et al., 2007). Job satisfaction is a phenomenon that transcends the borders of the organization or company, and its impact on the individual life outside the organization (Robbins, 2002). At the same time, job satisfaction is of great importance for the staff because it requires managers to pay attention to the effects of job satisfaction on the behavior of individuals. Achieving individual's job satisfaction will help

identify existing problems and difficulties in the organization and determine the cause of the absence of staff.

Seibert et al. (2004) believe that job satisfaction is one of the significant results of psychological empowerment. Research conducted in this area indicates that there is a relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction. Liden et al. (2000) believe that when individuals feel that their performance results effectively in their organization's activities, they are more likely to take part in activities and they are more comfortable in the work assigned to them. Moreover, the research on organizations that adopt Total Quality Management Model (TQM) pointed out that there is a positive relationship between the empowerment of individuals and employee satisfaction as well as customer satisfaction (Ugboro and Obeng 2000). There are also some researchers who found that psychological empowerment positively correlated with job satisfaction or had a positive impact on job satisfaction for employees (Bordin et al., 2007; Gazzoli et al., 2010)

Thomas and Tymon (1994) considered that the three dimensions of psychological empowerment, which are meaning, self-determination, and impact, are factors used to predict job satisfaction for employees. Holdsworth and Cartwright (2003) have conducted a study designed to examine the relationship between the dimensions of psychological empowerment, job stress and job satisfaction for staff of the contact center. Through the study, they found that the three dimensions of psychological empowerment have a positive relationship with job satisfaction for employees. Therefore, they considered these three dimensions as factors to predict job satisfaction. Thomas and Tymon (1994) believe that empowerment is more likely to appear with higher levels of job satisfaction. They also stressed that empowerment enhances the rewards system, and therefore empowerment should be linked positively with job satisfaction. Laschinger et al. (2005), in their study conducted in hospitals, pointed out that when hospital administrators implement empowerment plans, it leads to improved job satisfaction for staff and it increases their motivation. They said that the meaning dimension, which is one of the dimensions of psychological empowerment, is the determining factor for career satisfaction. They also found that there is a positive relationship between the choice, a dimension of empowerment, and job satisfaction as the increase in the freedom of choice granted to employees leads to an improvement in job satisfaction.

There are a number of studies that reach the existence of evidence to support the relationship between the empowerment dimensions and job satisfaction. Carless (2004) concluded that among the four Aspects of empowerment, competence and meaning were more significant in predicting job satisfaction. There appear to be a powerful evidence of a positive relationship between job satisfaction and meaning dimension (Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Spreitzer et al., 1997; Thomas & Tymon, 1994). In addition, Liden et al. (2000) pointed out that the dimension of the meaning of empowerment has the robust argument for a positive relationship to work satisfaction. Regarding self-determination, the researchers suggested that satisfying a psychological need, will lead to job satisfaction (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Greenberger, et al., 1989; Parker, 1993). With regard to the relationship between impact dimension and satisfaction, there is a need for a strong and consistent evidence yet to emerge. On the other hand, Thomas and Tymon (1994) talked about the existence of a positive relationship between impact and job satisfaction. Finally, there is no agreement in the studies on the existence of a relationship between competence dimension and satisfaction. Carless (2004) stated that competence does not significantly affect job satisfaction, while Spreitzer et al. (1997) believe that the competence positively associates with job satisfaction between subordinates, but not between supervisors. Other research also reported that there is no relationship between these variables (Holdsworth & Cartwright, 2003; Siegall & Gardner, 2000; Thomas & Tymon, 1994).

In summary, the published research pointed the existence of a positive relationship between job satisfaction and the two dimensions (meaning and self-determination), but the results are less consistent with the relationship between satisfaction and other dimensions (impact and competence). There is, however, a possibility of interaction between the four dimensions that affect job satisfaction, which can be considered, at least partially, as the reason for the conflicting and contradictory results in some cases regarding the dimensions of impact and competence (Wang & Lee, 2009). Thus, the first hypothesis is:

**H1.** There is a significant positive relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction.

## *2.2 Psychological Empowerment and Organizational Commitment*

Organizational commitment is considered as one of the leading behavioral changes that is addressed in many of the studies, which focused on the growth of organizational commitment or the consequences of its availability and the relationship of commitment with other important variables such as organizational citizenship, organizational justice, leadership style, climate of communication, and other variables factors.

In an attempt to understand the complex relationship between the employees and the organizations they work for, the researchers focused on the organizational commitment in the workplace. Organizational commitment has

been defined as a psychological state that links an employee to an organization, thereby reducing the incidence of turnover (Allen & Meyer, 1990), and as a mindset that takes different forms and links an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Whilst Powell and Meyer (2004) believe that organizational commitment is the result of an individual commitment to the organization's goals and policies.

Meyer and Allen (1991) propose a three-dimensional model of organizational commitment comprised of affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. The employees who were empowered will see themselves as more capable to impact their work and their organizations more clearly. It is also expected to implement efforts more than what is required of them, and act independently for them to have a deeper commitment to their organization (Spreitzer, 1995). Employees who feel more empowered are more likely to gain focus by being more committed to their organizations (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Kraimer et al., 1999).

Thomas and Velthouse (1990) suggested that employees who have been empowered have higher levels of focus, initiative, and flexibility, which in turn improve the level of organizational commitment. In other words, when the staff feel that their work has meaning, they have higher levels of commitment to their organization and energy to perform the work.

Many studies investigating the relationship between psychological empowerment and organizational commitment can be found in the literature (e.g. Dehkordi et al., 2011; Joo et al., 2010; Chen & Chen, 2008; Bhatnagar, 2005). Research has proved the empirical relationship between these two variables with different group of respondents. The researchers argued that the changing nature of labor relations has increased the importance of understanding the nature of the organization commitment (Hislop, 2003). It is also generally assumed that the level of commitment is a key determinant of the results at the organizational level, such as organizational citizenship behavior (Colyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000), as well as the performance (De Cotiis & Summers, 1987), and control of absenteeism from work (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Most researchers believe that organizational commitment characterize the psychological state that describes an employee's relationship with his organization and that it has implications for their decision to stay with the organization (Allen & Grisaffe, 2001). According to Laschinger et al. (2004), psychological empowerment represents a response of employees to structural empowerment conditions. On the other hand, psychological empowerment reflects the ebb and flow of beliefs and orientations of individual people about their work environment and its impact on them (internal and external environment). Thus, greater psychological empowerment leads to an increase in the organizational commitment (Robbinson et al., 1994). Accordingly, the second hypothesis is:

**H2.** There is a significant positive relationship between psychological empowerment and organizational commitment.

### *2.3 Trust and Psychological Empowerment*

Trust is key element in the positive human relations since its existence provides a cooperative environment and gives people a sense of security and connection (Mishra and Morrissey, 1990). Trust is vital in the integration of management practices, such as empowerment, employee performance, efficiency and capability, and organizational commitment. Thus, high trust between employees and supervisors relations mainly constitutes mediator towards management practices, such as empowerment (Ertürk, 2012).

Many researchers tried to find a definition for trust as a concept (Lewicki et al., 2006). Mayer et al. (2005) believe trust is "The willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other party will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party". On the other hand, Rousseau et al. (1998) identified trust, as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviors of another". Based on the concepts of trust, most researchers agree on three dimensions of trust, which received considerable acceptance. These are trust in supervisors, trust in colleagues, and trust in organization. For the objectives of this study, it will be focused only on two dimensions, which are trust in supervisors and trust in organization.

### *2.4 Trust in Supervisors*

Trust in the supervisor would improve the employee's willingness to accept greater responsibilities through empowerment. When employees believe that they cannot trust their supervisor, it will limit the employee's desire to contribute to the organization. The successful results of psychological empowerment require raising the level of trust between the employee and the supervisor, as well as between staff and top management. When

subordinate trusts the supervisor, that leads to improved performance of the work and contribute to the improvement of organizational citizenship behavior, and encourages subordinate to maintain the relationship and stay with the organization (Colquitt et al., 2007; Brower et al., 2009); and the employee creates value for the organization through the extra efforts of subordinates (Mayer & Gavin, 2005).

Tan and Tan (2000) confirmed that there is a positive relationship between trust in the supervisor and factors of ability, integrity and charity. Moreover, when there is an environment based on trust, it can lead to a sense of responsibility among the subordinates (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) and improvement on their commitment (Brower et al., 2009). In addition, individuals who receive support from their direct supervisor will have greater sense of self-efficiency, which in turn supports a sense of their ability to influence and be independent (Spreitzer, 1996).

Also, the presence of this kind of trust increases the subordinates' expectation of better future, which serves as an extra motivation for them and makes them do their best (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Chan et al. (2008) confirm that the effectiveness of the use of psychological empowerment to influence the behavior of workers depends on the level of subordinates' trust in their supervisors.

### *2.5 Trust in the Organization*

Trust in the organization plays a significant role in the organizational stability and well-being of the employee (Cook and Wall, 1980). Organizational trust can be expected to link to other factors important for the effective functioning of organizations in today's competitive business environment (Brashear et al., 2003; Parnell & Crandall 2003). Organizations that treat employees unfairly and do not appreciate their contributions could lead to reduced employee trust and commitment, job satisfaction, resulting in increased job turnover (Driscoll, 1978; Tan, 2000).

To create organizational trust, it is important that organizations make employees feel supported and provide them with rewards, such as increased income and independence at work (Tan, 2000; Kim et al., 2004). In addition, the creation of an environment of trust is a function of the organizations because they also improve organizational effectiveness and the individual's willingness to stay (Whitener et al., 1998; Gilbert & Tang, 1998). Covey (1998) believes that the only way to take advantage of empowerment is through the promotion of trust in the organization's culture. In addition, psychological empowerment is linked to organizational effectiveness when employees work in an environment of trust. Moreover, Andrews (1994) demands that shortage of trust within the organization may lead to failure, where the formation of subtle and invisible barriers prevents efforts to enable employees to achieve success.

There are number of studies that have discussed the relationship of trust to empowerment. One such study, Gomez and Rosen (2001), proved the existence of a positive relationship between trust level for supervisors and subordinates and the policies empowering subordinates, as the ability of trust that leads to improve the relationship and thus increasing the supervisor's attitudes towards the empowerment of their subordinates. Also, a study of Jian et al. (2009) showed that the relationship between supervisors and subordinates affect their performance levels as the availability of trust leads to improve the relationship and thus increasing the supervisors attitudes towards the empowerment of their subordinates.

In addition, former research emphasized mainly on the effects of empowerment on trust and the relationship between them from the point of view of managers (Gomez & Rosen, 2001; Laschinger & Finegan, 2005; Moye & Henkin, 2005). Therefore, these two concepts should be tested from the perspective of subordinates. It is also important to know the nature of empowerment and how it works and its relationship to the trust in the success of empowerment efforts. In order to promote the positive results of psychological empowerment, employees must be confident that the organization really wants to empower them, and be prepared to recognize and exploit the empowerment opportunities that is given to them (Ertürk, 2010).

Consequently, the researcher expects that the relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction and organizational commitment will be stronger for employees who have more trust in their supervisors and organizations. Thus, the existence of a higher level of trust in the employees toward their supervisors and organizations would strengthen the impact of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The third hypothesis of the study can be formulated as follows:

**H3.** "The level of trust-as a mediator variable-significantly affects the relationship between psychological empowerment on one hand and job satisfaction and organizational commitment on the other hand."

This main hypothesis divided into sub-hypothesis are as follows:

**H3.a.** "Subordinate trust in direct supervisor-as a mediator variable-significantly affects the relationship between

psychological empowerment on one hand and job satisfaction and organizational commitment on the other hand.”

**H3.b.** “Subordinate trust in organization-as a mediator variable-significantly affects the relationship between psychological empowerment on one hand and job satisfaction and organizational commitment on the other hand.”

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1 Sample and Procedure

In order to test the proposed hypotheses empirically, a simple random sampling was used to collect data from Kuwait trade free zone. Data was obtained through a questionnaire. 300 Questionnaires were sent. Of the 300 questionnaires sent, 210 completed the questionnaires and returned it with a response rate of 70%. Some demographic data was collected, such as gender, age, level of educational and experience at work. The sample was 57.1% male and the average respondent was 36 years old (standard deviation of 7.3 years) with ages ranging from 23 to 53 years old. Educational level of respondents shows that 47.1% of them have a university degree, and had worked for their companies for an average of 13 years (standard deviation of 7.6 years) with a range of 1 year to 30 years.

#### 3.2 Measures

All items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1 indicates “strongly disagree” and 5 indicates “strongly agree”. In this study, *Psychological empowerment* was measured with (12) items and (4) dimensions namely meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Spreitzer, 1995). *Organizational Commitment* scale included (18) items and (3) dimensions namely Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, and Normative Commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). *Organizational trust* was measured with a questionnaire adapted from Nyhan and Marlowe’s (1997). This questionnaire has eight items which measure employees’ trust in the immediate supervisor and 4 items which measure employees’ attitudes towards their internal organization. Finally, *Job Satisfactions* was measured with a questionnaire adapted from Fernand and Awamleh (2006). This questionnaire has seven items to assess the level of job satisfaction among employees. It is worth to mention here that a conversion for the negative statements were created using SPSS V.23.

### 4. Results

#### 4.1 General Information

Table 1 below represents the profile of the sample members who participated in the study.

Table 1. Profile of the sample members who participated in the study

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	120	57.1%
	Female	90	42.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100%</b>
Age	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	Less than 24 Years	12	5.7%
	25 to 30 Years	60	28.6%
	31 to 35 Years	30	14.3%
	36 to 40 Years	39	18.6%
	41 to 45 Years	51	24.3%
	Older than 46	18	8.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100%</b>	
Educational Level	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	High school or less	36	17.1%
	Diploma degree	72	34.3%
	University degree	99	47.1%
	Higher degree	3	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100%</b>	
Experience at Work	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>

Less than 5 years	36	17.1%
5 to 10 years	63	30.0%
11 to 15 years	33	15.7%
16 to 20 years	33	15.7%
21 to 25 years	33	15.7%
More than 25 years	12	5.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### 4.2 Reliability Analysis

Table 2 below illustrates the reliability indices of the dimensions of Psychological Empowerment, Organizational Commitment, Trust, and Job Satisfaction.

Table 2. Reliability indices of factors of psychological empowerment, organizational commitment, trust, and job satisfaction

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Meaning	3	0.81
Competence	3	0.92
Self-Determination	3	0.73
Impact	3	0.87
Psychological Empowerment (overall)	12	0.86
Affective Commitment	6	0.80
Continuance Commitment	6	0.77
Normative Commitment	6	0.81
Organizational Commitment (overall)	18	0.87
Trust in Supervisors	8	0.95
Internal Organizational trust	4	0.91
Organizational Trust (overall)	12	0.94
<b>Job Satisfaction (overall)</b>	7	0.74
<b>Valid n</b>	70	

Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the dimensions of Psychological Empowerment consisted of a range of (0.73 to 0.92), for the dimensions of Organizational Commitment consisted of a range of (0.77 to 0.81), while these coefficients for the dimensions of Organizational Trust consisted of a range of (0.91 to 0.95), and finally for the Job Satisfaction the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.74. It is clear that the Cronbach's alpha scale reliability values for the variables constructed in the model consisted of a range of 0.71 to 0.94, which was beyond the minimum acceptable level of 0.70 (George & Mallery, 2003).

#### 4.3 Descriptive Statistics among the Variables

Table 3 below represents means, standard deviations, and percentages among the variables.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics among the variables

	<b>Variables</b>			
	Psychological Empowerment	Organizational Commitment	The Level of Trust	Job Satisfaction
Means	3.7	3.4	3.8	3.6
St.Dev.	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1
HD	5.4%	8.1%	5.0%	6.7%
D	15.5%	18.6%	11.9%	13.7%
IK	13.6%	18.4%	16.9%	14.1%
A	36.7%	36.0%	32.4%	44.5%
HA	28.8%	18.9%	33.8%	21.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

HD=Highly Disagree, D= Disagree, IK= I don't know, A= Agree, HA= Highly Agree.

## 5. Correlations Tests

### 5.1 Correlations between the Variables under the Study

The following Table 4 represents the correlation matrix of the main variables.

Table 4. Correlation matrix of the IV, DVs and the mediator

<b>Variables</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Psychological Empowerment	1			
Job Satisfaction	0.587**	1		
Organizational Commitment	0.474**	0.517**	1	
Organizational Trust	0.528**	0.634**	0.579**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 revealed a highly significant correlation of 0.597 and 0.474 (p-value <0.01) between Psychological Empowerment as IV and Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment as DVs. Moreover, Psychological Empowerment has a highly significant correlation of 0.528 (p-value <0.01) with the Mediator variable (i.e. Trust). The next path of the model (i.e. Mediator and DVs) consists of a highly significant correlation of 0.634 and 0.579 (sig. <0.01) respectively.

### 5.2 Correlations between the Dimensions

The following Table 5 represents the correlation matrix of the dimensions.

Table 5. Correlation matrix of the dimensions of the variables

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
ME	1								
CO	0.579**	1							
SED	0.409**	0.478**	1						
I	0.308**	0.103	0.385**	1					
JS	0.526**	0.320**	0.424**	0.434**	1				
AC	0.545**	0.340**	0.275*	0.311**	0.539**	1			
CC	0.243*	0.224	0.109	-0.093	0.219	0.282*	1		
NC	0.500**	0.448**	0.227	0.210	0.490**	0.690**	0.439**	1	
TS	0.407**	0.508**	0.395**	0.229	0.600**	0.378**	0.298*	0.486**	1
IT	0.405**	0.394**	0.295*	0.078	0.530**	0.458**	0.327**	0.651**	0.611**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

ME= Meaning, CO= Competence, SED= Self-Determination, I= Impact, JS =Job Satisfaction, AC= Affective Commitment, CC= Continuance Commitment, NC= Normative Commitment, TS= Trust in supervisors, IT= Internal Organizational Trust.



The data were analyzed using an intercorrelation matrix to show the correlations between the dimensions of the dependent variable and each dimension of independent variables as well as the correlations between the dimensions of independent variables. The correlation matrix shows that there are significant positive correlations under significance level set at the 5% between three dimensions of the IV namely Meaning, Competence, Self-determinations and the dimensions of the mediate variable (MV) ( $p$ -value  $< 0.01$ ), while the fourth dimension of Psychological Empowerment (i.e. Impact) is not correlated with the dimensions of the MV ( $p$ -value  $> 0.05$ ). The two dimensions of the MV (i.e. Trust) were correlated positively with DVs (Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment) since  $p$ -value  $< 0.01$  (high significance), as shown in the above table.

## 6. Testing Hypothesis

We will use the data illustrated in Table 5 to discuss hypotheses 1 and 2 of the study.

**H01:** There is a significant positive relationship between Psychological Empowerment and job satisfaction.

**H02:** There is a significant positive relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Organizational Commitment.

Table 6. Regression analysis for testing H1 and H2

IV	DV	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	Unstandardized Coefficients	$\beta$
Model 1: PE	JS	0.345	0.335	35.8**	a 10.08 (2.6) b 0.341 (0.06)	0.587**
Model 2: PE	OC	0.224	0.213	19.7**	a 30.63 (7.0) b 0.69 (0.155)	0.474**

\*\* The direct effect (Beta) is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

IV= Independent Variable, DV= Dependent Variable, PE= Psychological Empowerment, JS= Job Satisfaction, OC=Organizational Commitment, a= Constant (unstandardized), b= slope (unstandardized).

Figure between the brackets refers to Standard Error of the coefficient:

In Model 1, “Psychological Empowerment” explains about 33.5% of the variation in the dependent variable, “Job Satisfaction”. From the coefficient value, it also suggests that these two variables were highly positively correlated. In Model 2, “Psychological Empowerment” explains about 21.3% of the variation in the dependent variable, “Organizational Commitment”. A brief look at the F ratios (35.8, and 19.7) reveals that the significant value is less than 0.01, thus, the regression model is significant, as shown in Table 5. It is clear from the above table that Psychological Empowerment is significantly and positively related to Job Satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.587^{**}$ ) and Organizational Commitment ( $\beta = 0.474^{**}$ ). From this discussion, both of H01 and H02 are supported by the data.

Using simple regression model and the results of Table 6, Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment could be predicted with the following linear equations respectively:

$$\text{Eq. (1): Organizational Commitment} = 10.08 + 0.341(\text{Job Satisfaction}).$$

$$\text{Eq. (2): Organizational Commitment} = 30.63 + 0.69(\text{Organizational Commitment}).$$

To investigate the relationships between dimensions of Psychological Empowerment and Job Satisfaction, the data illustrated in Tables 7 and 8 will be used.

Table 7. Model summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	p-value
0.617 <sup>a</sup>	0.381	0.343	10.0 <sup>b</sup>	0.0000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Impact, Competence, Self Determination, Meaning.

In Table 7, the four dimensions of Psychological Empowerment namely Meaning, Competence, Self-Determination, and Impact explains about 34.3% of the variation in the dependent variable, “Job Satisfaction”. From the coefficient value, it also suggests that these five variables were highly positively

correlated (Multiple R correlation coefficient is 0.617). As shown in Table 8, the F ratio is highly significant (p-value < 0.01), and the regression model is significant.

Table 8. Coefficients<sup>a</sup> in the model

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	11.224	2.649		0.000
Meaning	0.632	0.207	0.384	0.003
Competence	-0.021	0.229	-0.012	0.926
Self Determination	0.310	0.212	0.177	0.148
Impact	0.403	0.178	0.249	0.027

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction.

Two dimensions of Psychological Empowerment namely Meaning, and Impact are significant and positively related to Job Satisfaction ( $\beta_{Meaning} = 0.384^{**}$ ,  $\beta_{Impact} = 0.249^{**}$ ). The other two dimensions of Psychological Empowerment (Competence and Self-Determination) are statistically not contributed to Psychological Empowerment, since their effects are not significant (p-value > 0.10).

To further investigate the relationships between dimensions of Psychological Empowerment and dimensions of Organizational Commitment, the data illustrated in Tables 9 and 10, with help of multiple regression with three steps, will be used.

Table 9. Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F <sup>d</sup>	p-value
1	0.567 <sup>a</sup>	0.322	0.280	7.72	0.000
2	0.314 <sup>b</sup>	0.099	0.043	1.78	0.143
3	0.547 <sup>c</sup>	0.299	0.256	6.92	0.0000

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment.

b. Dependent Variable: Continuance Commitment.

c. Dependent Variable: Normative Commitment.

d. Predictors: (Constant), Impact, Competence, Self Determination, Meaning.

In Model 1, the four dimensions of Psychological Empowerment namely Meaning, Competence, Self-Determination, and Impact explains about 28.0% of the variation in the dependent variable, "Affective Commitment". From the coefficient value, it also suggests that these five variables were highly positively correlated (Multiple R correlation coefficient is 0.567). As shown in Table 9, the F ratio is highly significant (F= 7.72, p-value < 0.01), thus, the regression Model 1 is significant. In Model 2, the F ratio is insignificant (p-value > 0.10), and only 4.3% of the variation in the dependent variable "Continuance Commitment" was explained by the four dimensions of Psychological Empowerment. In Model 3, the four dimensions of Psychological Empowerment explain about 25.6% of the variation in the dependent variable, "Normative Commitment". From the coefficient value, it also suggests that these five variables were highly positively correlated (Multiple R correlation coefficient is 0.547). As shown in Table 9, the F ratio is highly significant (F= 6.92, p-value < 0.01), thus, the regression Model 3 is significant.

Table 10. Coefficients in the models

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Model 1 <sup>a</sup> :				
(Constant)	8.108	2.827		0.006
Meaning	0.779	0.221	0.464	0.001
Competence	0.103	0.244	0.057	0.676
Self Determination	-0.010	0.226	-0.006	0.963
Impact	0.272	0.190	0.165	0.157
Model 2 <sup>b</sup> :				
(Constant)	15.895	3.310		0.000
Meaning	0.394	0.259	0.232	0.133
Competence	0.162	0.286	0.088	0.574
Self Determination	0.083	0.265	0.046	0.755
Impact	-0.320	0.222	-0.191	0.155
Model 3 <sup>c</sup> :				
(Constant)	6.638	2.966		0.029
Meaning	0.585	0.232	0.338	0.014
Competence	0.526	0.256	0.283	0.044
Self Determination	-0.165	0.237	-0.089	0.490
Impact	0.190	0.199	0.112	0.344

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment.

b. Dependent Variable: Continuance Commitment.

c. Dependent Variable: Normative Commitment.

In Model 1, only one dimension of Psychological Empowerment, Meaning, is significant and positively related to Affective Commitment ( $\beta_{Meaning} = 0.464^{**}$ ), while the other three dimensions of Psychological Empowerment (Competence, Self-Determination, and Impact) are statistically not contributed to Affective Commitment since their effects are not significant ( $p$ -value > 0.10). In Model 2, all the dimensions of Psychological Empowerment are statistically not contributed to Continuance Commitment since their effects ( $\beta$ 's) are not significant ( $p$ -value > 0.10). In Model 3, the first two dimensions of Psychological Empowerment namely Meaning and Competence are significant and positively related to Normative Commitment ( $\beta_{Meaning} = 0.338^{**}$ ,  $\beta_{Competence} = 0.283^{**}$ ), while the other two dimensions of Psychological Empowerment (Self Determination, and Impact) are statistically not contributed to Normative Commitment; since their effects are not significant ( $p$ -value > 0.10).

**H03.** “The level of Organizational Trust-as a mediator variable-significantly affects the relationship between Psychological Empowerment on one hand and Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment on the other hand.”

To gain a better understanding of the role of level of Organizational Trust in this model, its potential mediating effect on the linkage between Psychological Empowerment on one hand and Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment on the other hand is shown in Figure 1. This can be accomplished by following the Preacher and Hayes (2008) procedure. This procedure involves the use of bootstrapping in a 2-step procedure. (i) The significance of direct effect is first checked using bootstrapping without the presence of the mediator level of Organizational Trust in the model; and (ii) the significance of indirect effect and associated T-Values are then checked using the path coefficients when the mediator level of Organizational Trust included in the model.

Table 11. Regression analysis for testing H03

Outcome Variable	Predictor(s)	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	$\beta$ 's	p-value
Organizational Trust	Psychological Empowerment	0.53	0.28	26.2**	0.53	0.000
	Organizational Trust				0.45	0.000
Job Satisfaction	Psychological Empowerment	0.70	0.49	32.2**	0.35	0.001
	Organizational Trust				0.46	0.000
	Psychological Empowerment				0.23	0.044

\*\* Significant at 0.001.

It is clear from the table above that Psychological Empowerment is significantly and positively related to Job Satisfaction through the mediator variable (Organizational Trust) since ( $\beta = 0.45, p - value < 0.001$ ). In addition, Psychological Empowerment is significantly and positively related to Organizational Commitment through the mediator variable (Organizational Trust) since ( $\beta = 0.46, p - value < 0.05$ ). From this discussion, H03 is highly supported by the data.

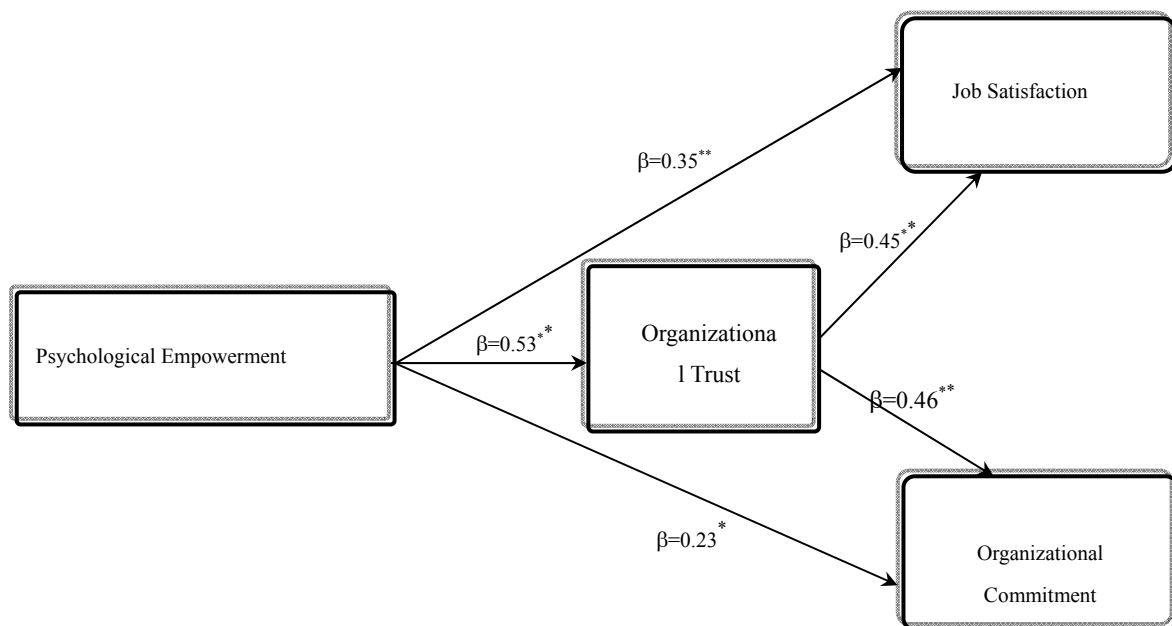


Figure 1. Framework

**H3.a.** “Subordinate Trust in direct supervisor-as a mediator variable-significantly affects the relationship between Psychological Empowerment on one hand and Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment on the other hand.”

The data illustrated in Table 12 will be used to discuss the hypothesis H03.a.

Table 12. Regression analysis for testing H03.a

Outcome Variable	Predictor(s)	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	β's	p-value
Trust in Supervisors	Psychological Empowerment	0.52	0.27	25.7**	0.52	0.000
Job Satisfaction	Trust in Supervisors	0.68	0.46	28.8**	0.40	0.000
Satisfaction	Psychological Empowerment				0.38	0.001
Organizational Commitment	Trust in Supervisors	0.55	0.30	14.3**	0.32	0.009
Commitment	Psychological Empowerment				0.31	0.013

\*\* Significant at 0.001.

It is clear from the table above that the Psychological Empowerment is significantly and positively related to Job Satisfaction through the mediator variable (Subordinate Trust in direct supervisor) since ( $\beta = 0.40, p - value < 0.001$ ). In addition, Psychological Empowerment is significantly and positively related to Organizational Commitment through the mediator variable (Subordinate Trust in direct supervisor) since ( $\beta = 0.32, p - value < 0.01$ ). From this discussion, H03.a is highly supported by the data.

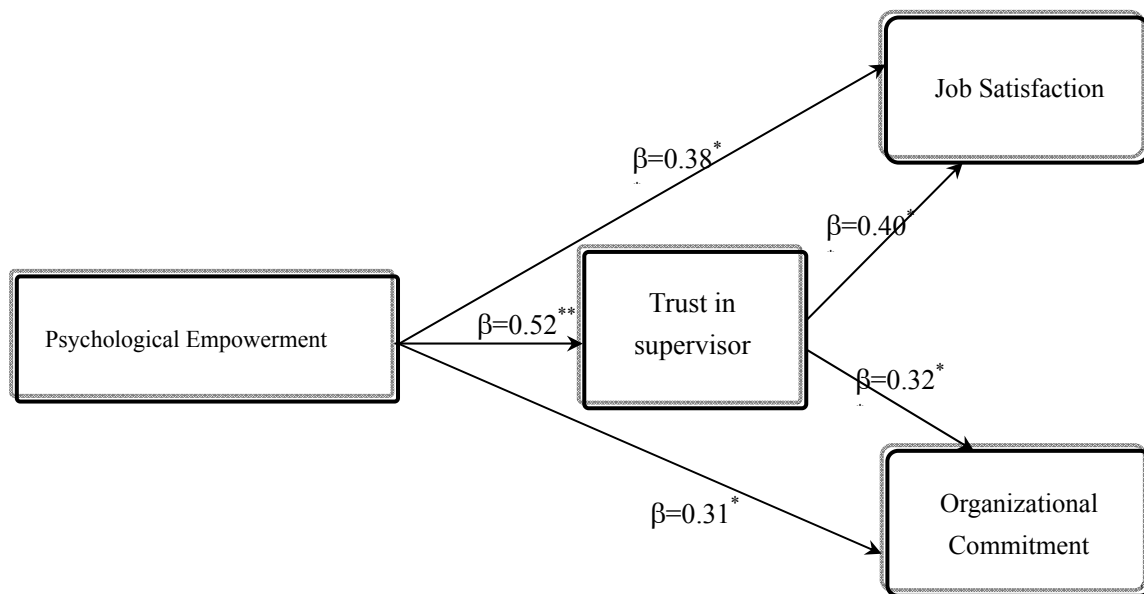


Figure 2. Framework

**H3.b.** “Subordinate trust in organization-as a mediator variable-significantly affects the relationship between psychological empowerment on one hand and job satisfaction and organizational commitment on the other hand.”

The data illustrated in Table 13 will be used to discuss the hypothesis H03.b.

Table 13. Regression analysis for testing H03.b

Outcome Variable	Predictor(s)	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	β's	p-value
Internal Organizational Trust	Psychological Empowerment	0.40	0.16	12.8**	0.40	0.001
Job Satisfaction	Internal Organizational Trust	0.67	0.45	27.3**	0.35	0.001
	Psychological Empowerment				0.45	0.000
Organizational Commitment	Internal Organizational Trust	0.65	0.42	24.4**	0.48	0.000
	Psychological Empowerment				0.28	0.007

\*\* Significant at 0.001.

It is clear from the table above that the Psychological Empowerment is significantly and positively related to Job

Satisfaction through the mediator variable (Internal Organizational Trust) since ( $\beta = 0.35, p - value < 0.01$ ). In addition, Psychological Empowerment is significantly and positively related to Organizational Commitment through the mediator variable (Internal Organizational Trust) since ( $\beta = 0.48, p - value < 0.01$ ). From this discussion, H03.b is highly supported by the data.

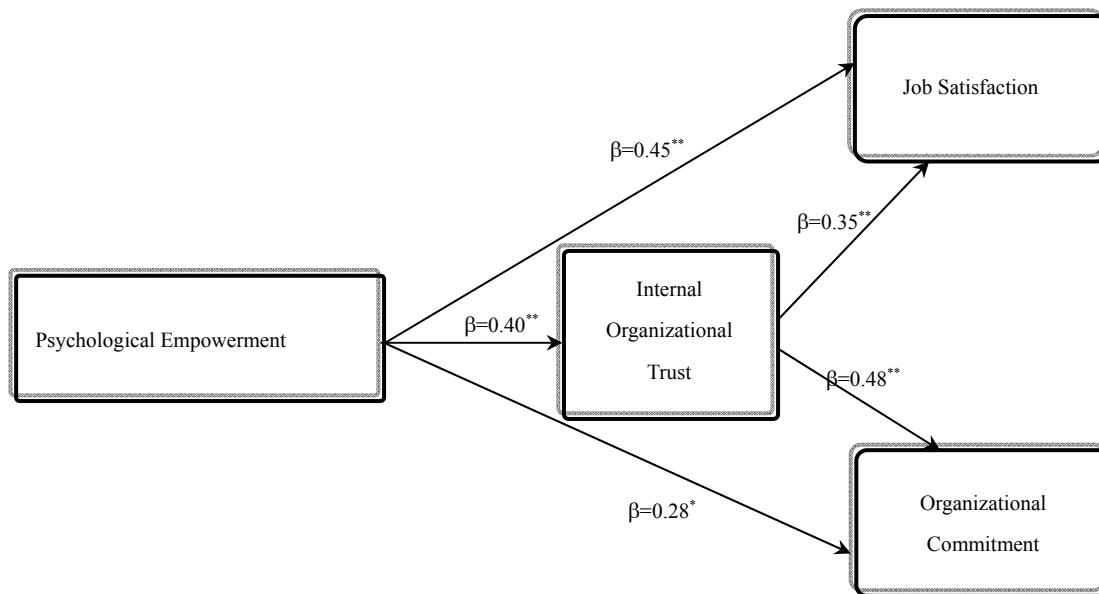


Figure 3. Framework

To measure the impact of the mediator variable, the method of Fairchild et al. (2009) has been followed. They derived a measure of effect size for the indirect effect in simple mediation analysis which is an attempt to quantify the proportion of the variance in Y (Dependent Variable) attributable to the indirect effect of X (Independent Variable) on Y through M (Mediator Variable). Their measure, which they label  $R^2_{med}$ , is calculated as

$$R^2_{med} = r^2_{MY} - (R^2_{Y.MX} - r^2_{XY})$$

where  $r^2_{MY}$  and  $r^2_{XY}$  are the squared correlation between M and Y and X and Y, respectively, and  $R^2_{Y.MX}$  is the squared multiple correlation estimating Y from both X and M.

Table 14 illustrates the required measurements needed to evaluate the mediation effect for Model 1.

Table 14. Values of R2 in model 1

Outcome Variable	Predictor(s)	R <sup>2</sup>
Model 1:		
Job Satisfaction (Y <sub>1</sub> )	Psychological Empowerment (X)	0.345
Organizational Commitment (Y <sub>2</sub> )	Psychological Empowerment (X)	0.224
Job Satisfaction (Y <sub>1</sub> )	Organizational Trust (M)	0.402
Organizational Commitment (Y <sub>2</sub> )	Organizational Trust (M)	0.335
Job Satisfaction (Y <sub>1</sub> )	Organizational Trust (M) Psychological Empowerment (X)	0.490
Organizational Commitment (Y <sub>2</sub> )	Organizational Trust (M) Psychological Empowerment (X)	0.375

In the first model (where the dependent variable is Job Satisfaction (Y<sub>1</sub>)), simple mediation analysis,  $r^2_{MY_1} = 0.402, r^2_{XY_1} = 0.345, \text{ and } R^2_{Y_1.MX} = 0.490$ , and so

$$R^2_{med} = r^2_{MY_1} - (R^2_{Y_1.MX} - r^2_{XY_1}) = 0.402 - (0.490 - 0.345) = 0.257$$

In contrast (where the dependent variable is Organizational Commitment (Y<sub>2</sub>)), simple mediation analysis,  $R^2_{med} = r^2_{MY_2} - (R^2_{Y_2.MX} - r^2_{XY_2})$ , and so:

$$R_{med}^2 = 0.335 - (0.375 - 0.224) = 0.184$$

As we have seen, and if we consider that approximately 49% and 38% of the total variance in Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment are explained ( $R^2 = 0.490, 0.375$  respectively), we can say that about 52% and 49% ( $0.257/0.490$  and  $0.184/0.375$  respectively) of the explained variance in Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment was due to the mediated effect. Similarly, about 53% and 52% of the explained variance in Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment respectively was due to the mediated effect measured by Trust in Supervisors, while about 39%, 37% of the explained variance in these two variables respectively was due to the mediated effect measured by Internal Organizational Trust.

## 7. Discussion

In general, the results provide support for almost all the hypotheses of the study. The results indicate that the chosen independent, dependent, and mediate variables have significant relationships. The discussion in respect of each of the minor hypothesis is given below.

For the first hypothesis, the study concludes that Psychological Empowerment is a significant predictor of employee's Job Satisfaction. The results show that Psychological Empowerment explains about 33.5% of the variation in the Job Satisfaction. This can go with Seibert et al. (2004) and Avey et al. (2008) who believe that job satisfaction is one of the most important results of psychological empowerment. It also good with what other researchers' findings about the relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Job Satisfaction (Laschinger et al., 2000; Liden et al., 2000; Ugboro & Obeng, 2000; Bordin et al., 2007; Gazzoli et al., 2010). Regarding the relationships between dimensions of Psychological Empowerment and Job Satisfaction, the results show that two dimensions of Psychological Empowerment, Meaning and Impact, are significant and positively related to Job Satisfaction. The other two dimensions of Psychological Empowerment (Competence, and Self Determination) were statistically not contributed to Psychological Empowerment, since their effects are not significant. Comparing with the previous research, it can be concluded that meaning dimension can go along with these research findings which emphasize the importance of this dimension to Job Satisfaction. (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Spreitzer et al., 1997; Thomas & Tymon, 1994; Liden et al., 2000; Carless, 2004). Regarding the impact dimension, there was some different evidence about its relationship with Psychological Empowerment, as shown previously in the literature review. The results support other research findings about the existence of a positive relationship between the impact and job satisfaction (Thomas & Tymon, 1994). Liden et al. (2000) claimed that when employees have a feeling that the work they do can affect the outcomes within their organization, they will feel actively involved and therefore build a sense of job satisfaction (Abdullah et al., 2015). Regarding Self-Determination, the researchers suggested that it is a psychological need, and satisfying this need will lead to job satisfaction (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Greenberger et al., 1989; Parker, 1993), but the results of this study did not confirm this conclusion. Finally, regarding Competence, there is no agreement in the studies on the existence of a relationship between Competence dimension and satisfaction and the results show no relationship with psychological empowerment.

As for the influence of psychological empowerment on organizational commitment (second hypothesis), the study found that there is a positive relation between psychological empowerment, affective commitment, and normative commitment; while there is no relation between psychological empowerment and continuance commitment, which is consistent with the findings of Dehkordi et al. (2011). In addition, these results can be interpreted in accordance with the argument of Liden et al. (2000) who assert that empowerment may cause a sense of organizational commitment through a process of exchange. It was also supported by the findings of the Joo and Shim (2010), who found that psychological empowerment, is a predictor of organizational commitment. This is a logical consequence because when employees see that their work is meaningful to them, that their jobs help them acquire the skills and competencies required for the job, and they feel they can affect the results of their work, they would be more attached to their organizations (Abdullah et al. 2015). When the study investigates the relationships between dimensions of Psychological Empowerment and dimensions of organizational Commitment, it was found that only one dimension of Psychological Empowerment, Meaning, is significant and positively related to Affective Commitment, while the other three dimensions of Psychological Empowerment (Competence, Self Determination, and Impact) are statistically not contributed to Affective Commitment. Also, it was found that the two dimensions of Psychological Empowerment, Meaning and Competence, are significant and positively related to Normative Commitment; while the others two dimensions of Psychological Empowerment (Self Determination, and Impact) are statistically not contributed to Normative Commitment. For Continuance Commitment, no dimensions of Psychological Empowerment are statistically contributed to Continuance Commitment.

The results of the study showed that the psychological empowerment as a whole has a positive impact on organizational commitment. However, in this study only two of the dimensions namely the meaning and competence predicted two dimensions of organizational commitment, namely the Affective Commitment and Normative Commitment. Compared with previous studies, these results are consistent only with the importance of meaning dimension as predictor of Affective Commitment and Normative Commitment. Cultural differences may be a possible reason why psychological empowerment does not significantly affect the organizational commitment and should be investigated in further research.

Regarding the role of Organizational Trust-as a mediator variable - between Psychological Empowerment on one hand and Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment on the other hand (third hypothesis), where in this study, Organizational Trust was looking at it in this study as consisting of two related, but separate, namely, internal organizational trust and trust in immediate supervisors (Nyhan & Marlowe, 1997). The study found that Psychological Empowerment is significantly and positively related to Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment through the mediator variable. In this regard, the study has found that trust as a mediator variable has enhanced the influence of psychological empowerment, where the variance in Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment which is explained by psychological empowerment have risen from 33.5% to 52% for Job Satisfaction and 21.3% to 49% for Organizational Commitment. A significant contribution of this study is to provide empirical evidence of the importance of trust in the promotion of psychological empowerment. The results of the study clarify that trust in supervisor is more important than Internal Organizational Trust. Therefore, supervisors who display trust will create high levels of Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment with their subordinates. This result is agrees with Chan et al. (2008) that the effectiveness of the use of psychological empowerment to influence the behavior of workers depends on the level of subordinates trust in their supervisors. Also, its agreement with the previous researches (Jian et al., 2011; Gomez & Rosen, 2001), have stated that there is a correlation between trust in the supervisors and the empowerment of workers. In addition, the availability of trust leads to improve the relationship and thus developing supervisor's attitudes towards the empowerment of their subordinates.

## 8. Limitations and Future Research

There are a number of limitations that should be noted here. First, this study examined psychological empowerment affecting organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and organizational trust in the context of free trade zone alone. As a result, there may be differences in the findings between this sample and other sample from government and private organizations, therefore, generalizing the findings to other organizations must be cautiously. Research in the future seeking to determine a relationship between psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and trust may want to expand of the present study to include a larger sample size, both public and private organizations.

Also, this paper has not addressed the influence of demographic variables like age and years of experience. Future research should aim to explore the link between psychological empowerment and demographics variables which would help in revealing the change or shift in the employee perception of psychological empowerment. Lastly, this research concentrates on the effects of psychological empowerment on two job outcome variables, those are, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Future research should examine other workplace outcome variables such as performance, innovation, team work, and creativity. Antecedents of psychological empowerment should also be investigated which will allow researchers to gain a better understanding of psychological empowerment in the workplace.

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