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**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPOWERMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST: A RESEARCH ON HOTEL EMPLOYEES**

*İNSAN KAYNAKLARININ GÜÇLENDİRİLMESİ VE ÖRGÜTSEL GÜVEN İLE ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ: OTEL ÇALIŞANLARI ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA*

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**ABSTRACT**

Empowerment is the process of increasing the decision-making powers of the employees by means of cooperation, sharing, raising, training and teamwork (Vogt and Murrel, 1990). Conger and Kanungo recognize empowerment as a motivational concept and describe empowerment as enhancing self-efficacy empowerment of employees.

Organizational trust is seen as an element in both organizational and intra-organizational relationships. While intra-organizational trust expresses the level of confidence shared by the members of the organization, non-organizational trust reflects the trust of its customers, suppliers or partners. Intra-organizational trust is the climate of trust within an organization and positively predicts the behavior of organizational members based on organizational roles, associations, and experiences.

In the research, it is aimed to contribute to the practitioners and the related studies by investigating ways of better utilization of human physical, psychological and mental power by emphasizing the importance of employee empowerment and organizational trust in terms of human resources' productivity and effectiveness. The research is important in terms of attracting attention to the impact of empowerment perceptions on organizational trust, organizational efficiency, effectiveness and performance.

**Keywords:** Employee empowerment, organizational trust, efficiency, impact, hotel enterprise.

**ÖZ**

Güçlendirme; yardımlaşma, paylaşma, yetiştirme, eğitme ve takım çalışması gibi yollarla çalışanların karar verme yetkilerini artırma, iş yapabilme yeteneklerini ve genel anlamda onları geliştirme sürecidir (Vogt ve Murrel, 1990). Conger ve Kanungo ise güçlendirmeyi motivasyonel bir kavram olarak kabul etmekte ve güçlendirmenin işgörenlerin özyeterlilik duygularının artırılması olarak tanımlamaktadırlar.

Örgütsel güven, hem örgüt içi hem de örgütlerarası ilişkilerde yer alan bir unsur olarak görülmektedir. Örgüt içi güven, örgüt üyelerinin paylaştığı güven düzeyini ifade ederken, örgüt dışı güven örgütün müşterileri, tedarikçileri veya ortakları ile ilgili güveni yansıtmaktadır. Örgüt içi güven, örgüt içinde oluşan güven iklimi olup, örgütsel rollere, ilişkilere, deneyimlere dayanarak, örgüt üyelerinin davranışları hakkındaki olumlu beklentileri ortaya koymaktadır.

Araştırmada, işgören güçlendirme ve örgütsel güvenin, insan kaynaklarının verimlilik ve etkinlikteki önemi vurgulanarak, insanın fiziksel, psikolojik ve zihinsel gücünden daha iyi yararlanmanın yolları araştırılarak, uygulayıcılara ve söz konusu

alandaki çalışmalara katkı sağlamak amaçlanmıştır. Araştırma, güçlendirme algılarının örgütsel güven üzerindeki etkisine, örgütsel verimlilik, etkinlik ve performansa yönelik katkısına dikkat çekmek bakımından önem taşımaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İşgören güçlendirme, örgütsel güven, yetkinlik, etki, otel işletmesi.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Today, the importance of human resources approach basing on creativity, authorization, autonomy and empowerment is increasing each passing day. The empowerment reveals the behavioral dimension in the form of the development of organizational satisfaction, as well as the cognitive dimensions, as the development of work related skills of the employee in the organization.

While organizational trust introduces an approach based on the emergence of the organization, its culture, the environment it is in (Öğüt and Erbil, 2009), organizational trust is coming to the forefront as a notion with high level dimension, culture-based, communication-based, and changing in dynamic manner (Schockley-Zalabak, Ellis and Cesaria, 2000).

The research examines the relationship between organizational trust and employee empowerment, and shows the impact of employee empowerment on organizational trust. In this context, according to the findings obtained, employee empowerment practices are an important factor for the employees to be in the sense of organizational trust.

## 2. EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment is put forward as a function of providing appropriate responsibilities and skills to employees (Klagge, 1998). The spreading of the power from the upper levels to the lower levels reveals the behavioral dimension of empowerment, while the increase of the employees' access to organizational resources and knowledge raises the cognitive dimension of empowerment. The psychological dimension that forms another dimension of empowerment is accepted as a perception of power, competence and responsibility to the employee.

Power is a need for employees, and people perceive this need as an internal condition (Conger and Kanungo, 1988). Two dimensions of power are mentioned here. First one is the removal of all negative conditions that would cause the business environment to feel powerless, and the second is to ensure that one feels stronger in the working environment. In order to achieve this, the strengthening practices would be the dimensions like meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Furthermore, in addition to having an understanding of empowerment in organizations in order to empower the employees, this process should be institutionalized and transformed into organizational culture.

It will be useful to acknowledge that empowerment has more meaning than the ones mentioned, besides concepts such as empowerment, distribution of responsibilities, participatory management, and authorization.

## 3. ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST

Hosmer (1995) points out organizational trust as a phenomenon based on expectation that the trusted side will act morally correct (Tüzün, 2007). The sense of trust is an abstract and invisible concept that is difficult to put into words, but the absence or presence of this feeling makes itself felt in every moment of life. The sense of trust has three dimensions; to be self-confident, to be trustworthy and to trust others (Baltaş, 2000).

For a person to be described as trustworthy; he/she has to keep his/her word, to show integrity, to have the knowledge and skill required by the task to be performed, and to reflect honest behavior. The trust of the person to others is defined as a complex process basin on expectations, personal characteristics, worldviews, risks and interests (Asunakutlu, 2002).

It is seen that the organizations that create high level organizational trust are more harmonious in organizing structures, are effective in forming teams, and have successfully implemented crisis management. It is observed that organizations with high trust are more successful and innovative organizations than those with low trust.

In the realization of organizational success, the sense of trust comes as an important factor. Trust is an important issue both in increasing the cooperation resulting from a positive relationship system, and also in transforming the relationship between the manager and the employee into organizational success (Brehm and Scott, 2002).

High trust level between the members of the organization leads to a decline of centralization. As a result, the decision-making process is accelerating and the quality of the decisions taken is increasing. If there is a lack of trust, it increases centralization and introduces solid external control (Sargut, 2001).

In organizations where there is no sense of trust, employees blame each other, constantly develop defense mechanisms, refrain from taking responsibilities, become skeptical and jealous, gossip, constantly escaping from work, and not adopting the goals of the organization (Büyükdere and Solmuş, 2007).

#### 4. METHOD

##### 4.1. Population and Sample

The population comprises of the employees of four and five star hotel enterprises operating in Ankara. According to the data obtained from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, four and five star hotels in Ankara were requested to support the survey study. It was not necessary to determine the number of samples as it was possible to reach all of the employees in population. However, some hotels have refused to participate in the survey because they do not want to provide information to third parties, due to their work intensity, and the fact that they are confronted with too many requests to fill out questionnaires. A direct counting method was applied by preferring the questionnaire practice via direct interviews with the employees in the hotels. 158 of the 169 returned questionnaires were evaluated.

##### 4.2. Data Collection Method

The data required for the research were obtained through the questionnaire technique. Employee empowerment and organizational trust scales were used to collect data. In the first part of the survey's scale, the information form in which the researchers' demographics are included was used. The scale developed by Spreitzer (1995; 1996) was used to determine the perceptions of psychological empowerment as a data collection tool; the scale developed by Bromiley and Cummings (1996) was used for organizational trust perception. The employee empowerment scale consists of 12 questions in 4 dimensions (meaning, efficacy, autonomy and impact) and organizational trust scale consists of 12 questions in 3 dimensions (cognitive, affective and behavioral).

Validity studies of the scales used in the research were made and Cronbach Alpha coefficient was determined for their reliability. For the employee empowerment scale it was detected to be  $\alpha = 93$ ; and  $\alpha = 0.87$  for organizational trust scale.

##### 4.3. Data Analysis Method

SPSS 21.0 (Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences) was used for the analysis of the research data. Percent frequency values are given for the individual characteristics of the participants in the survey. It is necessary to check first whether the data given is categorical or continuous in the research. While non-parametric statistics are used in categorical data, parametric statistics are used in continuous data (Kalaycı, 2008). After entering the data into the SPSS program, the distribution is normalized and it was determined that the Kruskal-Wallis H test analysis with the Mann Whitney U Test from non-parametric tests should be applied.

##### 4.4. Findings

The demographic characteristics of the employees involved in the survey are as follows:

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Working Group

Personal Info		f	%	Personal Info		f	%
Gender	Female	66	41,8	Marital Status	Married	49	31,0
	Male	92	58,2		Single	109	69,0
Age	21-25	52	32,9	Working Department	F&B	47	29,7
	26-30	53	33,5		Front Office	36	22,8
	31-35	41	25,9		Housekeeping	28	17,7
	36-40	10	6,3		Accounting	17	10,8
	41-45	2	1,3		Sales and Marketing	9	5,7

Table 1 (continuation). Descriptive Statistics of Working Group

<b>Education</b>	Primary Sc.	28	17,7	<b>Working Term</b>	Human Resources	4	2,5
	High Sc.	62	39,2		Technical Serv.	8	5,1
	Associate	47	29,7		Fitness & Spa	9	5,7
	Bachelor	21	13,3		Less than 1 year	52	32,9
<b>Stars</b>	4 Stars	103	65,2	1-5 years	77	48,7	
	5 Stars	55	34,8	6-10 years	20	12,7	
				11-15 years	9	5,7	

Percent distribution and frequency values of the personal characteristics of the employees of the participating hotel enterprises are given in Table 1. Accordingly, the vast majority of the participants are male. 69% of them are single; 31% are married. When the education levels are examined, 39.2% are high school graduates; 29.7% are associate degree graduates. 29.7% of the employees participating in the survey are working in the F&B department; 22,8% of them are working in the front office department. When the working terms in enterprises are examined, the rate of those who work less than 5 years is determined as 86.7%. According to the rate of stars in terms of the number of employees in the enterprises supporting the research, 103 people (65.2%) are working in 4 star enterprises and 55 people (34.8%) are working in 5 star enterprises.

When the frequency values of the survey participants are examined, it is seen that the vast majority of the employees are in young age and single; and have middle level of education. The problem of qualified staff in the tourism sector has also been revealed in our work. However, it is seen that the rate of employee turnover is also high. It is argued that the employees in the tourism sector have a low commitment to the business and that the employees are not employed for a long time in the enterprises for various reasons or they do not want to be employed. Departments where the highest number of employees is employed in the tourism sector are food and beverage (F&B), front office and housekeeping departments in contact with the customer face to face. When the obtained frequency values are considered, it is seen to correspond to this fact.

Table 2. Mann-Whitney U Test Results Regarding Participants' Perceptions of Employee Empowerment and Organizational Trust Showing a Significant Difference in terms of Number of Stars of the Enterprises

	Number of Stars	N	Rank Average	Median	Z	Mann Whitney U	P
<b>Employee Empowerment</b>	4 stars	103	90,34	2,91	-4,078	1716,00	<b>0,000</b>
	5 stars	55	59,20	2,33			
<b>Organizational Trust</b>	4 stars	103	67,10	2,75	-4,674	1555,00	<b>0,000</b>
	5 stars	55	102,73	3,33			

Table 2 shows the results of the Mann Whitney U test on whether hotel enterprise employees who participated in the survey show a significant difference in employee empowerment and organizational trust perceptions compared to the star rating of the enterprises. At the 0,05 significance level, the organizational trust perceptions are significantly different ( $p= 0,000$ ) when compared to the number of stars of the enterprise. Looking at the median values, it is seen that those working in the five stars have less employee empowerment than those working in the four stars. In terms of organizational trust, it is seen that those working in the five stars enterprises are in a higher sense of organizational trust.

Table 3. Mann-Whitney U Test Results Regarding Participants' Perceptions of Employee Empowerment and Organizational Trust Showing a Significant Difference in terms of Marital Status

	Marital Status	N	Rank Average	Median	Z	Mann Whitney U	P
<b>Employee Empowerment</b>	Married	49	54,16	2,33	-4,671	1429,00	<b>0,000</b>
	Single	109	90,89	2,91			
<b>Organizational Trust</b>	Married	49	90,27	3,00	-1,988	8138,00	<b>0,047</b>
	Single	109	74,66	2,83			

In Table 3, a statistical analysis is conducted to determine whether the perceptions of employee empowerment and organizational trust of the hotel management employees who participated in the survey are significantly different in terms of the marital status. It is determined that organizational trust perceptions differed significantly with respect to marital status at significance level of 0.05. Looking at Median value, it is seen that the employee empowerment perception of single employees is higher and organizational trust perception is higher among married ones.

Table 4. Mann-Whitney U Test Results Regarding Participants' Perceptions of Employee Empowerment and Organizational Trust Showing a Significant Difference in terms of Gender

	Gender	N	Rank Average	Median	Z	Mann Whitney U	P
Employee Empowerment	Female	66	86,36	2,83	-1,598	2583,00	0,110
	Male	92	74,58	2,66			
Organizational Trust	Female	66	70,31	2,83	-2,144	2429,50	<b>0,032</b>
	Male	92	86,09	3,00			

Table 4 gives the results of the Mann-Whitney U test on whether hotel employees who participated in the survey show significant differences in employee empowerment and organizational trust perceptions in terms of gender. At the 0.05 level of significance,  $p = 0.110$  is found between employee empowerment and gender perception. There is no significant difference between employee empowerment and gender. At the significance level of 0.05,  $p = 0.032$  is between organizational trust and gender. A significant difference is found between organizational trust and gender. Looking at median value, it is found that the male workers have more confidence in their organization.

Table 5. Kruskal-Wallis H Test Regarding Participants' Perceptions of Employee Empowerment and Organizational Trust Showing a Significant Difference in terms of Working Term

	Working Term	N	Rank Average	Median	$\chi^2$	P
Employee Empowerment	Less than 1 year	52	102,14	3,00	26,082	<b>0,000</b>
	1-5 years	77	75,32	2,66		
	6-10 years	20	54,38	2,33		
	11-15 years	9	40,22	1,33		
Organizational Trust	Less than 1 year	52	65,18	2,79	22,220	<b>0,000</b>
	1-5 years	77	80,79	3,00		
	6-10 years	20	83,65	3,00		
	11-15 years	9	142,00	5,00		

Within the scope of the study, whether the employee empowerment and organizational trust perceptions differ significantly in terms of working term is statistically investigated at the 0.05 significance level. There is a significant difference ( $\chi^2 = 26,082$  and  $p = 0,000$ ) between employee empowerment and working term. When looking at the average, the highest level of employee empowerment perception is seen in those who are working less than 1 year. A significant difference ( $\chi^2 = 22,200$  and  $p = 0,000$ ) is also found between organizational trust and working term. Looking at the average, it is seen that the perception of organizational trust increases as the duration of work increases. It is statistically investigated which binary groups the differences are caused by, and there is a significant difference among those working for less than 1 year and 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years; and between the employees for 1-5 years and for 11-15 years.

Table 6. Kruskal-Wallis H Test Regarding Participants' Perceptions of Employee Empowerment and Organizational Trust Showing a Significant Difference in terms of Educational Status

	Education	N	Rank Average	Median	$\chi^2$	P
Employee Empowerment	Primary Sc.	28	98,66	2,91	11,439	<b>0,010</b>
	High Sc.	62	79,06	2,70		
	Associate	47	80,04	2,83		
	Bachelor	21	54,05	2,41		
Organizational Trust	Primary Sc.	28	73,61	2,83	0,744	0,863
	High Sc.	62	79,53	3,00		
	Associate	47	80,79	3,00		
	Bachelor	21	84,38	2,83		

In Table 6, the Kruskal-Wallis H test is used to statistically investigate the significance level of employee empowerment and organizational trust in terms of educational status. A significant difference ( $\chi^2 = 11,439$  and  $p = 0,010$ ) is found between employee empowerment and educational status. Between organizational trust and education, it is found to be  $\chi^2 = 0.7444$  and  $p = 0.863$ . It is seen that organizational trust does not



differ according to the education level. Looking at the average for employee empowerment, it is seen that those at primary school level have a high level of employee empowerment perception. It is seen that the test, which is carried out in order to find out what kind of difference is caused by which binary groups, the difference is caused by the employees at the primary school level and those at the bachelor level.

Table 7. The Regression Analysis regarding the Relationship between Participants' Employee Empowerment and Organizational Trust Perception

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B <sub>j</sub>	S(b <sub>j</sub> )	t	p	R <sup>2</sup>
Organizational Trust	Stable	4,320	0,224	19,296	0,000	0,224
	Employee Empowerment	-0,507	0,075	-6,719	0,000	

For the research, Spearman's correlation test is conducted with the aim of determining whether there is a significant relationship between two variables. A negative moderate power ( $r = -0.380$  and  $p = 0.000$ ) relationship is found between employee empowerment and organizational trust.  $R^2$  values are used in regression analysis to find out what percentage of the total change in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables. In the study, employee empowerment is considered as an independent, organizational trust as dependent variable. The determinant is found to be  $r^2 = 0.22$ . According to the research conducted, it can be said that 22% of the organizational trust perceptions of the employees in the hotel enterprises are due to employee empowerment practices.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSIONS

Employees need to be empowered to meet the demands of hotel enterprises quickly. An empowered employee will provide customer satisfaction. Employee empowerment practices need to be carried out to ensure that the employees' trust in the organization is ensured.

It has been researched whether the number of stars in hotel enterprises makes a significant difference for employee empowerment and organizational trust. According to the findings, employee empowerment practices are more common in four stars enterprises. When organizational trust is considered, it is determined that organizational trust perception in five stars enterprises is higher than four stars enterprises.

When the marital status of the employees of the hotels is evaluated, it is seen that the perceptions of empowerment of the single employees are on a higher level. In terms of organizational trust, hotel employees who are married also seem to have a higher level of trust in the organization. Consequently, it is thought that different factors have emerged here. Especially, married employees are subject to the positive discrimination of in their organizational policies. When the perceptions of the employees participating in the research are evaluated according to gender, it is seen that male employees have higher perception of trust in the enterprise.

It has been researched whether there is a significant difference between the working term and the employee empowerment and organizational trust. It is seen that the perception level related to employee empowerment decreases as the working term increases. As the working hours of the workers are extended, they think that they are not empowered by the enterprises. A significant difference is also found between organizational trust and working term. According to this, as the working term increases, the trust in the organization seems to increase. A consequence of the dependence on middle and senior managers working longer in enterprises is the emergence of a trust environment.

Within the scope of the research, a difference is found between the organizational trust and the educational status. Employee empowerment is found to vary according to the education received, whereas organizational trust does not differ according to the educational status.

In the hotel enterprises in operation, employees may need to take initiative and make quick decisions in the face of possible emergencies in order to ensure customer satisfaction. For this, it is important to establish an environment of trust based on empowerment of employees and empowerment.

It is thought that the researches to be conducted in different hotel classes and travel agencies will contribute to the literature and tourism sector. It is also thought that it is useful to investigate the relationship between factors such as transfer of authority, feedback, job enrichment, rewarding, motivation and communication, which affect behavioral empowerment, with organizational trust.

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