The role of motivation and empowerment of administrative faculty in achieving organizational commitment

Athanasia Soutloglou and Georgios Theriou
International Hellenic University, Kavala Campus, Agios Loukas, 654 04, Kavala, Greece, athsoutloglou@outlook.com
International Hellenic University, Kavala Campus, Agios Loukas, 654 04, Kavala, Greece, gtheriou@mst.ihu.gr

Abstract

__Purpose__-The present study investigates the relationship between the empowerment and motivation of administrative faculty and their organizational commitment. In particular, an effort is being made to empirically examine the impact of empowerment, motivation, but also its four dimensions (remuneration, co-workers, achievement, job attributes) in the organizational commitment of administrative staff at higher education. __Design/methodology/approach__- This is an explanatory and descriptive quantitative study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The final research sample consisted of 132 administrative employees from public universities in Northern Greece. __Findings__ – The results of the study revealed that empowerment has the greatest impact on organizational commitment of the administrative faculty. __Research limitations/implications__- The data of the study is almost limited to the administrative faculty of two public universities in Northern Greece. Therefore, it offers relatively limited generalization of results. __Originality/value__-Non-academic faculty in Higher Education has received little attention in the literature. In addition, there are very few studies in Greece focused on the motivation and empowerment of civil servants.

Keywords:

Organizational commitment, empowerment, motivation, Higher Education, administrative faculty, public sector.

Introduction

Today organizations from all around the world strive to respond to the daily challenges and improve the way they work. For this reason, they focus on the involvement, support and commitment of their human resources (Scott and Jaffe, 1991). In a competitive environment in which organizations must be more profitable and efficient, an empowered worker is thought to be essential (Melhem, 2004). Jorgensen and Becker (2015) argue that an employee is considered to be organizationally committed when he provides high quality services and has a significant impact on the image of an organization in terms of customer service. Additionally, committed and motivated employees with high levels of job involvement are considered as an important asset to an organization, because they are more productive and higher productivity usually leads to higher profits. Therefore, it is indisputable to develop strategies in order to enhance the motivation, which will then lead to commitment (Mohsan et al, 2011).

Zusman (2005) states that the twenty-first century has brought profound challenges to Higher Education. Reduced government funding and increasing privatization of universities are some of the challenges that Higher Education has to face with nowadays. As a result, it becomes necessary to seek for policies and practices in order to be able to meet its ever-increasing needs. Administrators are an essential component of Higher

Education Institutions and are integral to their vitality. They can significantly affect the style of the entire Institution and their daily performance levels can determine the quality of relationships with students, faculty and the public they serve (Conway 2000). Non-academic faculty are generally seen as a residual category (Gornitzka και Larsen, 2004). They think that their value to the organisation goes unrecognised by the academic staff and students, too (Pitman, 2000).

However, they are aware of their vital role in the processes of a University (Pitman, 2000) and they know that an Institution would find it difficult to operate successfully without their own administrative support and knowledge (Gornitzka και Larsen, 2004). Indeed, they are responsible for the important operations of a university (Lau 2010). Therefore, organizational strategies such as employee empowerment that encourage commitment and innovative behaviors may become crucial to the long-term survival of universities (Lau, 2010).

Strangely enough, non-academic faculty has received little attention in the literature (Lau, 2010). In addition, there are very few studies in Greece focused on the motivation of civil servants (Chatzopoulou et al 2015, Massaras et al 2014, Grammatikopoulos et al 2013, Stefanidis 2012, Akrivos και Koutras 2009, Manolopoulos, 2008) and only one of them examines the concept of commitment (Stefanidis 2012). Furthermore, none of the above studies was conducted in the field of Higher Education.

In that context, the main purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between the empowerment and motivation of administrative faculty and their organizational commitment. In particular, an effort is being made to empirically examine the impact of empowerment and motivation in the organizational commitment of administrative faculty. A survey was conducted in a sample of 132 administrative employees from two Public Institutions of Higher Education, the International Hellenic University and the Democritus University of Thrace. Empirical data were analyzed on SPSS, revealing interesting relationships between the factors of the conceptual framework.

Literature review and Research Hypotheses

Empowerment

Empowerment is a fundamental and important aspect for successful achievement, productivity, and growth in any business. Employee empowerment can be described as the act of providing decision-making authority to an employee and is often associated with the redistribution of responsibility from managers to their subordinates (Saif and Saleh, 2013). Empowerment often falls into two categories: a) the perception of competence/self-efficacy and b) the perceived control ability /decision-making authority (Men 2010, Chiles and Zorn 1995).

There are many benefits of empowerment applications to the employees and organizations. Thanks to empowerment, employees feel as if they owned their own job, their trust to their organization, personal development and job satisfaction increase (Celik et al, 2014). Furthermore, employee empowerment programs have been widely adopted in the public sector as a way to increase organizational performance by finding innovative methods of correcting errors in service delivery and redesigning work processes (Fernandez, 2012). Employee empowerment can be another strategy to satisfy employees with their working environment and job too, so as to earn their positive word of mouth, commitment and loyalty towards the organization (Raza et al (2015).

It is a fact that in the field of empowerment the majority of efforts by researchers have been made in private sector employees (Uzunbacak 2015, Raza et al 2015, Meyerson and Dewettinck 2012, Baird and Wang 2010). The lack of

contributions into civil servants' empowerment is evident. Further research is therefore necessary, in order to fill this research gap (Dimitriades and Maroudas 2007).

According to Hanaysha (2016b), empowerment is regarded as a practice of motivating employees that aims to increase their performance by offering opportunities of involvement and participation in decision making. It is mainly concerned with developing trust and removing any boundaries between the top management and employees (Meyerson & Dewettinck, 2012). Menon (2001) stated that employee empowerment, as a psychological state, constitutes a mediating relationship between empowerment actions and a variety of variables, one of which is employee commitment.

A lot of researchers have observed and supported the relevance and positive relationship between employee empowerment and organizational commitment (Hanaysha 2016b, Uzunbacak 2015, Meyerson and Dewettinck 2012, Baird and Wang 2010). Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is presented:

H1: "Empowerment" of administrative faculty in Higher Education has a positive impact on their organizational commitment.

Motivation

Between all the tasks a manager performs, employee motivation is arguably the most complex, since it is influenced by both financial and non-financial incentives (Paleologou et al, 2006). In Greece a number of studies have been conducted on motivation and its positive impact on the public organizations' operation (Manolopoulos 2008, Grammatikopoulos et al. 2013, Akrivos and Koutras 2009, Massaras et al. 2014, Chatzopoulou et al. 2015). In that context, employee motivation should be the top priority issue that the universities have to deal with nowadays (Zlate και Cucui, 2015).

It is worth noting that in the field of Higher Education some studies attempted to explore the significance of employee motivation (Rahman *et al*. 2017; Zlate and Cucui 2015; Arabaci 2010).

Overall, the literature reveals that employee motivation has an impact on some organizational factors, one of which is organizational commitment. Specifically, previous studies (Al-Sada *et al.* 2017; Nazir *et al.* 2016; Stephanides 2012) highlighted the positive relationship between employee motivation and organizational commitment in the public sector. Based on the discussion presented above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: "Motivation" of administrative faculty in Higher Education has a positive impact on their organizational commitment.

According to Paleologou et al (2006), motivation is separated in four dimensions (remuneration, co-workers, achievement and job attributes).

"Remuneration" is related with extrinsic work motivators, such as salary and benefits, insurance and pension. In Maslow's theory it reflects safety needs, such as stability and security, which are met by providing a safe working place, good benefits including insurance and retirement, all of which are motivators that advance employee welfare.

In the extended Greek public sector supervisors try to motivate their employees by emphasizing on extrinsic rewards and specifically increased job

security and the provision of fair wages (Manolopoulos, 2008). It is obvious that these practices play an important role in employees' recruitment, performance and commitment. In that context, a lot of researchers reveal the positive impact of remuneration on organizational commitment (Nieves and Osorio 2017, Nazir et al 2016, Okyere-Kwakye and Otibu 2016, Pasaoglu 2015, Stefanides 2012). Thus, the following hypothesis is presented:

H2a: "Remuneration" has a positive impact on the organizational commitment of administrative faculty in Higher Education.

"Achievement" refers to intrinsic motivators expressed through factors such as appreciation, pride, respect and social acceptance. There is an association with Maslow's highest level of needs, self-actualization. After meeting the previous levels of needs, someone will pursue self-actualization, learn new things, take risks and generally grow in the working environment (Paleologou et al, 2006).

Recent studies revealed that some of the most important motivating factors are interesting work (Chatzopoulou et al, 2015), feeling of being respected (Zlate και Cucui, 2015), achievement (Grammatikopoulos et al, 2013) and intrinsic work values (Pi et al, 2016). Moreover, intrinsic rewards seem to be related to better organizational outcomes in public sector in Greece (Manolopoulos, 2008). For example, task significance (Hsu και Liao 2016, Jung και Yoon 2016) and perceived personal importance to the organization (Steers, 1977), seem to have a positive effect on organizational commitment. As a result, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2b: "Achievement" has a positive impact on the organizational commitment of administrative faculty in Higher Education.

"Co-workers", refers to professional relationships with colleagues and supervisors as a source of potential motivation and satisfaction. It includes items related to social needs such as relationships, acceptance in work groups and belongingness. This is equivalent to the third level on Maslow's pyramid, and these necessities can be provided by a comfortable work environment and open communication (Paleologou et al, 2006).

According to Gornitzka and Larsen's (2004) study, administrative faculty felt that their role was insignificant in university life. Similarly, (Pitman, 2000) highlighted that administrative staff are more likely to find convergence in their value system with that of the students, rather than that of the academics.

A review in international literature, demonstrates that recognition opportunities given to the employees (Cicekli and Kabasakal 2017, Okyere-Kwakye and Otibu 2016), healthy superior-subordinate relationships, employees' support from supervisors (Nazir et al 2016), as well as from co-workers (Nazir et al 2016), the existence of fairness and respect for the employee (Dessler, 1999), teamwork (Hanaysha 2016b), as well as equal treatment and good working relationships (Chatzopoulou et al, 2015) enhance and increase levels of organizational commitment. Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is presented:

H2c: "Co-workers" has a positive impact on the organizational commitment of administrative faculty in Higher Education.

Finally, "job attributes" address motivators linked to particular job characteristics such as skill exploitation, participation in decision-making and creativity. These are intrinsic motivators and are associated with

accomplishment and growth, i.e. self-esteem according to Maslow's terminology (Paleologou *et al*, 2006).

According to Cicekli and Kabasakal (2017) opportunity at work and alternative job opportunities undoubtedly lead to increased organizational commitment. Specifically, forms of career growth, such as career goal progress, promotion speed and professional ability development positively influence affective organizational commitment (Weng *et al*, 2010). Furthermore, clear roles and duties can have a significant impact on organizational commitment (Stefanides, 2012). Based on the above discussion, there is an obvious relationship between job attributes and organizational commitment (Hsu and Liao 2016, Steers 1977). Hence, the following hypothesis is presented:

H2d: "Job attributes" has a positive impact on the organizational commitment of administrative faculty in Higher Education.

Organizational Commitment

Organizations cannot withstand today's competitive market unless their employees are highly committed to its vision and mission. Time has passed since committed employees were considered as those who came to the workplace every day and worked independently. In contrast, employees nowadays have to be "intrapreneurs" to prove their worth (Okyere-Kwakye and Otibu, 2016). According to Hanaysha (2016), highly committed employees are marked by their greater support to the organization so as to reinforce its global success.

Diab and Ajlouni (2015) defined organizational commitment as the internal desire for working in an organization and making the utmost possible effort for its benefit. Additionally, organizational commitment is considered as a strong link between the organization and employees when their values and goals are compatible with the organization's goals and values (Diab and Ajlouni 2015, Amdan et al 2016).

A previous study revealed that training, promotion, choice, rewards, job security and human resources management system affect organizational commitment (Pasaoglu, 2015). According to Okyere-Kwakye and Otibu (2016), individual employees will be committed to the organization only when managers begin to recognize employees' efforts, create a friendly working environment and also a good leadership style. Another study showed that human resource practices such as rewards, decision-making, staff development and training increase employees' commitment to the organization (Nieves and Osorio 2017, Cicekli and Kabasakal 2017). Furthermore, job characteristics such as feedback, task significance and autonomy influence organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Hsu και Liao, 2016). Pi et al (2016) argue that job satisfaction and work values result in higher level of organizational commitment.
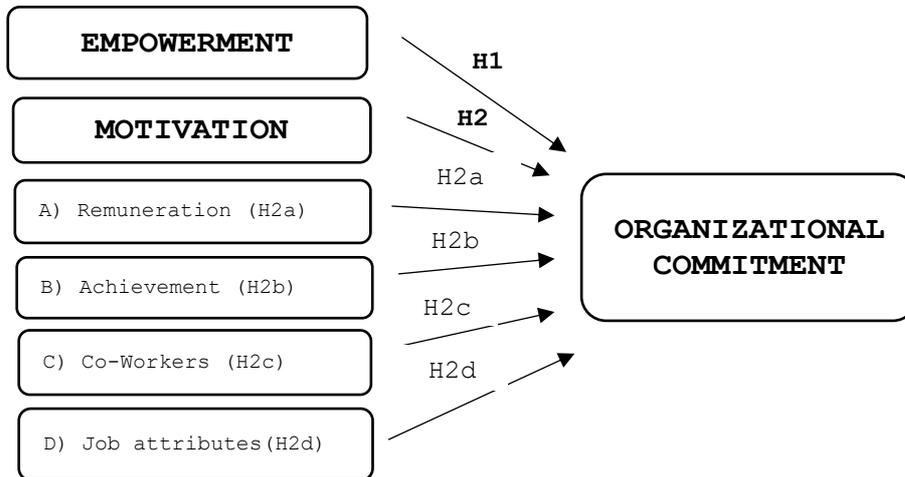
Finally, studies which were conducted at public universities in northern Malaysia showed that employee empowerment, training, engagement, teamwork, work environment and organizational learning have a significant positive effect on organizational commitment (Hanaysha 2016α, Hanaysha 2016b).

Research Methodology

The present study aims to develop and empirically examine a conceptual framework which investigates the impact of empowerment, motivation and its

four dimensions (remuneration, co-workers, achievement, job attributes) in the organizational commitment of administrative faculty at Higher Education. The development of the research model was based on the literature review that identified the factors which were used by previous studies as antecedents of organizational commitment.

Figure 1: The proposed conceptual framework

Population of the study – Data collection

The targeted population was comprised of the administrative employees serving at public universities in northern Greece. However, researchers were only able to obtain access for data collection from two universities, the International Hellenic University and the Democritus University of Thrace. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire through an online survey. The final research sample consisted of 132 administrative employees. A total of 596 questionnaires were sent to the Universities mentioned above. It is worth noting that in an effort to maximize the sample, follow up emails were sent approximately three weeks after the initial mailing. In total, 132 valid questionnaires were collected with an overall response rate 22.15%.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the sample

Question		Frequency	%
Genre	Male	44	33,3%
	Female	88	66,7%
	Total	132	100,0%
Age	-34	2	1,5%
	35-44	38	28,8%
	45-54	67	50,8%
	55 and more	25	18,9%
	Total	132	100,0%
Education	High School	30	22,7%
	Technological	28	21,2%
	University	30	22,7%
	Master's	37	28,0%
	PhD	7	5,3%
	Total	132	100,0%
Job level	Employee	83	62,9%

	Head of Department	30	22,7%
	Head of Division	5	3,8%
	Other	14	10,6%
	Total	132	100,0%
Work experience (in the institution)	-2	16	12,1%
	2-5	1	0,8%
	5-10	12	9,1%
	10 and more	103	78,0%
	Total	132	100,0%
Organization	International Hellenic University	51	38,6%
	Democritus University of Thrace	81	61,4%
	Total	132	100,0%

Measurement

A structured questionnaire was used in order to collect the appropriate data. The questionnaire included four different sections: (a) Measurement of "employee motivation" (sixteen items) and specifically its four dimensions "reward" (four items), achievement (three items), "co-workers" (five items) and "job attributes" (four items) , (b)Measurement of "employee empowerment" (five items), (c)Measurement of "organizational commitment" (five items), (d)Demographic information (seven items).

Table 2: Questionnaire design

Factors	Number of questions	Measurement scales
Motivation (independent factor)	16 items (total number) Section A´	
a) **Remuneration** (independent factor)	4 items	Paleologou et al (2006)
b) **Achievement** (independent factor)	3 items	
c) **Co-workers** (independent factor)	5 items	
d) **Job attributes** (independent factor)	4 items	
Empowerment (independent factor)	5 items Section B´	Hanaysha (2016a)
Organizational commitment (dependent factor)	5 Section C´	Hanaysha (2016b)
Demographic information	7 Section D´	

The measurement scales of constructs were taken from previous studies. Motivation was measured using a scale consisting of sixteen items adapted from Paleologou et al (2006). As mentioned above, motivation is separated in four dimensions (remuneration, achievement, co-workers and job attributes). This instrument was based on Herzberg και Maslow theories and was used successfully by other researchers, too (Grammatikopoulos et al, 2013). It is worth noting that from total nineteen items only sixteen were used because three of them which were included in dimension "Job attributes", refer to the factor of empowerment, which is measured at Section B. Five-point Likert scale was used (1=not at all, 5=extremely).

Employee empowerment was measured using five items adapted from Hanaysha (2016a), on the basis of the model which was developed by Men (2010).Hanaysha's (2016) study focuses at the administrative faculty of public universities in northern Malaysia. Similarly, five-point Likert scale which ranges from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree" was used.

Section C includes five questions related to the measurement of the dependent factor, which is organizational commitment. The measurement of organizational commitment was also based on Hanaysha' s (2016a) study. Hanaysha (2016a) adapted the measurement scale of Modway et al (1979), Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ).

The final questionnaire included thirty-three (33) items. All questions were translated into Greek and then back again to English.

Reliability and validity

The questionnaire that was used in the present study was tested for both its construct and content validity. As mentioned above, the content of the questionnaire (items) was adopted from an extensive review of the international literature. A number of variables and factors influencing the organizational commitment of employees were identified and those factors that were consistent with the purpose and `needs of the present study were selected. Subsequently, all questions were carefully translated into Greek in order to avoid any mistakes.

To control for the construct validity, each of the seven factors was evaluated for its reliability and unidimensionality. This was achieved by the use of Explanatory Factor Analysis. Moreover, the statistical measure Cronbach Alpha was used, through the statistical package SPSS, in order to estimate the reliability of the factors.

Table 3: Construct validity and reliability

Construct/Factor	Items	Factor loadings	Cronbach Alpha	K.M.O	Bartlett's Test Sig.	TVE
Motivation	16	0,793; 0,703; 0,777; 0,887; 0,663; 0,534; 0,700; 0,664; 0,656; 0,628; 0,557; 0,762; 0,750; 0,800; 0,722; 0,790	0,940	0,930	,000	69,163%
Remuneration	4	0,830; 0,774; 0,856; 0,710	0,801	0,783	,000	63,116%
Achievement	3	0,788; 0,893; 0,756	0,735	0,608	,000	66,320%
Co-workers	5	0,761; 0,858; 0,854; 0,862; 0,828	0,889	0,856	,000	69,431%
Job attributes	4	0,845; 0,885; 0,807; 0,860	0,870	0,766	,000	72,215%
Empowerment	5	0,911;0,915; 0,768;0,751; 0,862	0,758	0,689	,000	75,348%
Organizational commitment	5	0,722; 0,895; 0,890; 0,811; 0,747	0,872	0,792	,000	66,593%

All tests revealed that all the scales used are reliable and valid. For the appropriate statistical analysis, the following measures have been examined:

- In order to determine the appropriateness of the factor analysis a) the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was examined (it is statistically significant at the 0,05 level) and b) the test of Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) was examined (values lower than 0,6 are not acceptable, while values over 0,8 are satisfactory)
- In order to test the significance of the items (questions), their factor loadings were examined. For a sample size of about 150 observations a loading over 0,5 is considered to be significant.
- In order to test the reliability of the factors the measure of Cronbach Alpha was used. Specifically, values over o,7 are considered valid.

From the "empowerment" factor analysis, two new factors emerged. According to the content of the questions, but also to the theoretical approach already mentioned above, the first factor was labeled "feeling of competence" while the second one was labelled "feeling of control". These new factors are undoubtedly identified with the literature review and in particular with the approach of Men (2010), as well as Chiles and Zorn (1995). Additionally, "motivation" factor analysis shows that the structure of the questionnaire was adjusted and 3 factors emerged, instead of 4 which were used to measure motivation. It might be worth pointing out that the original questionnaire separation was made according to the measurement instrument of Paleologou et al (2006), who implemented it in the Greek health sector. The present study focuses on the field of education and may therefore be subject to differentiation. As mentioned before, this instrument was based on Herzberg and Maslow's theories. Hence, an effort was made to link the new categorization with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory. As a result, the three new factors were labeled "physiological and safety needs", "social needs" and "esteem needs and self-actualization".

Empirical results

Table 4 includes the mean scores for every research factor. Specifically, organizational commitment of administrative faculty is significant (mean score=4,03). Similarly, the level of empowerment is relatively high (mean score=4,04). Additionally, the results show that the level of overall motivation of the administrative staff of Higher Education seems to be the highest and the most significant one (mean score=4,22). Between the four dimensions, "co-workers" (mean score=4,32) seem to motivate most the administrative faculty. On the contrary, the lowest mean score corresponds to "remuneration" (mean score=4,05), which means that employees are not highly motivated by it.

Table 4: Mean factor scores

Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation
Motivation	4,22	0,52
Remuneration	4,05	0,79
Achievement	4,21	0,72
Co-workers	4,32	0,75
Job attributes	4,25	0,74
Empowerment	4,04	0,62
Organizational commitment	4,03	0,72

Correlation analysis was used to test the research hypotheses. This statistical method examines the possible relationship between two or more variables. In addition, Correlation Analysis helps to measure the intensity of that relationship, as well as to determine its direction. Pearson, Spearman and Kendall correlation coefficients are used for this calculation, according to the type of variables (Dimitriades, 2016).

In the present study, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to control the level of correlation of organizational commitment with empowerment, motivation and its four dimensions. These causal relationships are examined by testing the following six hypotheses:

H1: *"Empowerment" of administrative faculty in Higher Education has a positive impact on their organizational commitment.*
H2: *"Motivation" of administrative faculty in Higher Education has a positive impact on their organizational commitment.*
H2a: *"Remuneration" has a positive impact on the organizational commitment of administrative faculty in Higher Education.*
H2b: *"Achievement" has a positive impact on the organizational commitment of administrative faculty in Higher Education.*
H2c: *"Co-workers" has a positive impact on the organizational commitment of administrative faculty in Higher Education.*
H2d: *"Job attributes" has a positive impact on the organizational commitment of administrative faculty in Higher Education.*

According to Dimitriades (2016), the Pearson linear coefficient r shows values from -1 to +1. Specifically, when the values approach -1, there appears to be a strong negative correlation between two variables, whereas when they are close to +1 they show a strong positive correlation as well as the same direction of two variables. In addition, values close to 0 indicate no relationship between the two variables, whereas in practice correlations greater than 0.7 are considered satisfactory. The results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis

Organizational commitment			
	Pearson Correlation	**Sig. (2-tailed)**	**N**
Empowerment	0,479**	0,000	132
Motivation	0,280**	0,001	132
Remuneration	0,172*	0,048	132
Achievement	0,305**	0,000	132
Co-workers	0,297**	0,001	132
Job attributes	0,268**	0,002	132

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

In general, the following remarks can be made:

- The first hypothesis is accepted because the data provided in the table above reveal the existence of a positive relationship (r=0.479) between empowerment and organizational commitment at 0.01 (1%) significance level.

- The second hypothesis refers to the overall "motivation" experienced by higher education administrative faculty. Table 5 shows the positive, relatively weak (r=0.280) relationship between motivation and organizational commitment at 0.01 (1%) significance level.
- According to the third hypothesis, "remuneration" has a positive impact on the organizational commitment of the administrative faculty. The data presented above show that this factor has a statistically significant correlation (r=0.172) with the organizational commitment at the 0.05 significance level (5%). However, between all factors, "remuneration" seems to have the least impact on organizational commitment of administrative faculty.
- According to the fourth hypothesis, "achievement" has a positive impact on the organizational commitment of administrative faculty. The results in Table 5 confirm this hypothesis by having a positive, relatively weak relationship (r=0.305) between the two aforementioned variables at a significance level of 0.01 (1%).
- The fifth hypothesis is accepted because, the data in the table above present the positive, relatively weak relationship (r=0.297) between co-workers and organizational commitment at the significance level of 0.01 (1%).
- Finally, the sixth hypothesis that "job characteristics" has a positive effect on organizational commitment of administrative faculty is fully verified. In particular, table 5 reveals a positive, relatively weak relationship (r=0.268) between the two variables mentioned at significance level 0.01 (1%).

Overall, all six research hypotheses discussed in the present study are empirically confirmed.

Table 6: Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Path	Result
H1	Empowerment – Organizational commitment	Accepted
H2	Motivation – Organizational commitment	Accepted
H2a	Remuneration – Organizational commitment	Accepted
H2b	Achievement – Organizational commitment	Accepted
H2c	Co-workers – Organizational commitment	Accepted
H2d	Job attributes – Organizational commitment	Accepted

Conclusion

There are plenty of studies on the antecedents of organizational commitment (e.g. Al-Sada et al 2017, Nieves and Osorio 2017, Cicekli and Kabasakal 2017, Hanaysha 2016a, Hanaysha 2016b, Okyere-Kwakye and Otibu 2016, Jung and Yoon 2016, Pi et al 2016, Hsu and Liao 2016, Amdan et al 2016, Nazir et al 2016). Some of them are empowerment (e.g. Hanaysha 2016b; Uzunbacak 2015), but also motivation (e.g. Al-Sada et al. 2017, Nazir et al. 2016, Stephanides 2012) with its dimensions. Specifically, literature review reveals that reward (e.g. Nieves and Osorio 2017, Nazir et al. 2016, Okyere-Kwakye and Otibu 2016), achievement (e.g. Hsu and Liao 2016, Pi et al. 2016), co-workers (e.g.

Cicekli and Kabasakal 2017, Okyere-Kwakye and Otibu 2016), as well as job characteristics (e.g. Hsu and Liao 2016) have an impact on organizational commitment.

Nowadays, the need for continuous education is definitely increasing. Thus, the existence and effective operation of Universities is becoming extremely important. In that context, employee motivation appears to be a necessary administrative practice, which can be achieved by providing financial but also non-financial benefits, too. After all, employees tend to be motivated mainly when they receive respect, recognition and appreciation from colleagues, but also when they are personally developed (Zlate and Cucui, 2015). In addition, adopting a culture based on employee empowerment will undoubtedly lead to a number of positive outcomes and ultimately to the success of an organization (Meyerson and Dewettinck 2012; Baird and Wang, 2010).

As mentioned above, all six research hypotheses discussed in the present study are empirically confirmed. Specifically,

- "Empowerment" of Higher Education administrative employees has a positive effect on their organizational commitment. Empowerment seems to have the greatest impact on organizational commitment. This means that the traditional management system with managers having control over employees is no longer considered effective. Management has to adopt a number of practices in order to keep its staff engaged. Some of these are the continuous and complete informing of staff, enhancing their autonomy and education.
- "Overall motivation" of Higher Education administrative employees positively affects organizational commitment. Its implementation in a public organization is of great scientific interest, as it offers the opportunity to address essential issues such as reduced work interest, corruption, low efficiency, and low employee satisfaction.
- "Remuneration" is positively related to organizational commitment of Higher Education administrative employees. However, administrative faculty's commitment does not appear to be highly influenced by extrinsic incentives, such as insurance, remuneration, retirement and working environment. According to the Herzberg Two Factor Theory, factors such as remuneration prevent dissatisfaction but neither substantially motivate employees nor increase their desire for work. Moreover, economic incentives that may be beneficial to the private sector may not lead to the same results in the public sector. It is worth noting that in his research Manolopoulos (2008) argued that intrinsic rewards appear to be associated with better organizational outcomes. Additionally, according to Zlate and Cucui (2015), employees tend to be more motivated when they receive respect, recognition and appreciation from colleagues, but also when they develop personally. The conclusion that could be drawn is that due to the security and stable salaries enjoyed by civil servants, "remuneration" is not considered as a key determinant of their organizational commitment.
- "Achievement" has a positive impact on the organizational commitment of Higher Education administrative employees. The importance of work (Jung and Yoon 2016), as well as the employee's perception of how important he or she feels about the organization (Steers, 1977, significantly influence the level of organizational commitment. Pi et al (2016) also demonstrate the positive relationship between intrinsic work values (achievement) and commitment to the organization.
- "Co-workers" has a positive effect on organizational commitment of Higher Education administrative faculty. This means that faculty is

interested in relationships with colleagues and supervisors, and also need to feel accepted and part of a team.

- Finally, "job characteristics" has a positive effect on organizational commitment of Higher Education administrative faculty. Administrative employees in Higher education are influenced by intrinsic motivating factors that stem from each other's intrinsic values. For example, creativity opportunities, goals and clear tasks are factors that have a positive impact on organizational commitment.

Managerial implications

The findings of the present study, in addition to their contribution to existing theory, may also have practical implications for Higher Education Institutions. Specifically, bearing in mind that empowerment, as well as motivation, have an impact on the organizational commitment of administrative faculty and the fact that Higher Education in Greece is facing profound challenges, a series of practices and policies are proposed in order to have increased levels of organizational commitment:

A) "Empowerment" (the most important factor influencing commitment)
- More coaching/ mentoring between managers and subordinates.
- Increased levels of information/knowledge sharing to all employees.
- Active participation and expression of faculty's opinion.
- Scheduled group discussions and full briefing of administrative faculty by managers (for example at the end of the week).
- Setting specific goals and planning for their implementation (for example every month).
- Creating teams to come up with innovative proposals.
- Creating lifelong training and education programs for all employees.
- Encouraging staff to attend seminars, conferences, and workshops in the field of their work and in general in order to upgrade their knowledge.

B) "Remuneration"
- Improvement of building facilities, in order to improve the mood and attitude of the staff (for example, well-decorated and pleasant meeting and work areas).
- Providing state-of-the-art technological equipment that results in an easier, less costly, hour-long process of employee work.
- Opportunity for all administrative employees to travel abroad (for example through Erasmus programs).

C) "Achievement"
- Recognizing and rewarding the day-to-day efforts of faculty, using praising / thank you verbal expressions.
- Expressing gratitude to all employees irrespective of hierarchical level (for example through thank-you letters and / or awards).
- Providing a variety of important tasks that determine the meaning and importance of the job and make employees feel important.

D) "Co-workers"
- Supporting working relationships, either between employees, or between managers and subordinates (for example through events).
- Guidance and support of administrative staff by the Heads of Departments.

E) "Job attributes"
- Ensure that the right people are placed in the right positions, taking into account their qualifications and with a view of balancing the University's organizational needs with the employees' personal needs.
- Job rotation after discussing with the employee and in order to enrich his/her field of knowledge.

Research Limitations

Like all empirical studies, the present study is subject to some limitations. The population of the study is limited to the administrative faculty of two public universities in Northern Greece. The workload of the administrative faculty as well as their suspicion regarding the purpose and necessity of the present study are the main reasons behind this limitation. Therefore, the study offers relatively limited generalization of results.

References

1. Akrivos, C. and Koutras, G. (2009), "*Leadership Effectiveness: The case of Athens Municipality*", *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference: Quantitative and Qualitative Methodologies in the Economic and Administrative Science, TEI of Athens, Greece.*
2. Al-Sada, M., Al-Esmael, B. and Faisal, M.N. (2017), "Influence of organizational culture and leadership style on employee satisfaction, commitment and motivation in the educational sector in Qatar", *EuroMed Journal of Business,* **12** (2), pp.163-188.
3. Amdan, S., Rahman, R.A., Shahid, S.A., Bakar, S.A., Khir, M.M. and Demong, N.A.R. (2016), "The Role of Extrinisic Motivation on the Relationship between Office Environment and Organizational Commitment", *Procedia Economics and Finance,* **37**, pp. 164-169.
4. Arabaci, I.B. (2010), "Academic and administration personnel's perceptions of organizational climate (Sample of Educational Faculty of Firat University), *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences,* **2**, pp. 4445-4450.
5. Baird, K. and Wang, H. (2010), ¨Employee empowerment: extent of adoption and influential factors", *Personnel Review,* **39** (5), pp. 574-599.
6. Celik, A., Iraz, R., Cakici, A.B. and Celik, N. (2014), "The Effects of Employee Empowerment Applications on Organizational Creativity and Innovativeness in Enterpriseses: The Case of Oiz", *European Scientific Journal*, **10** (10).
7. Chatzopoulou, M., Vlachvei, A. and Monovasilis, T. (2015), "Employee's Motivation and Satisfaction in light of Economic Recession: Evidence of Grevena Prefecture-Greece", *Procedia Economics and Finance*, **24**, pp. 136-145.
8. Chiles, A.M. Zorn, T.E. (1995), "Empowerment in Organizations: Employees' Perceptions of the Influences on Empowerment", *Journal of Applied Communication Research,* **23**, pp. 1-25.
9. Cicekli, E. and Kabasakal, H. (2017), "The opportunity model of organizational commitment: Evidence from white-collar employees in Turkey", *International Journal of Manpower,* **38** (2), pp. 259-273.
10. Conway, M. (2000), "What' s in a name? Issues for ATEM and Administrators", *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, **22** (2), pp. 199-201.
11. Dessler, G. (1999), "How to Earn Your Employees' Commitment", *The Academy of Management Executive,* **13** (2), pp. 58-67.
12. Diab, S.M. and Ajlouni, M.T. (2015), "The Influence of Training on Employee's Performance, Organizational Commitment, and Quality of Medical Services at Jordanian Private Hospitals", *International Journal of Business and Management,* **10** (2), pp. 117-127.
13. Dimitriades, E. (2016), "Business Statistics with SPSS and Lisrel Applications", Kritiki SA Publications, Athens.
14. Dimitriades, Z.S. and Maroudas, T. (2007), "Internal service climate and psychological empowerment among public employees: An exploratory study in Greece", *Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy,* **1** (4), pp. 377-400.

15. Fernandez, S. and Moldogaziev, T. (2012), "Using Employee Empowerment to Encourage Innovative Behavior in the Public Sector", *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory,* **23** (1), pp. 155-187.
16. Gautam, D.K. and Ghimire, S.B. (2017), "Psychological empowerment of employees for competitive advantages: An empirical study of Nepalese service sector", *International Journal of Law and Management,* **59** (4), pp. 466-488.
17. Gornitzka, A. and Larsen, I.M. (2004), "Towards professionalization? Restructuring of administrative work force in universities", *Higher Education*, **47** (4) pp. 455-471.
18. Grammatikopoulos, I., Koupidis, S., Moralis, D. and Sadrazamis, A. (2013), «Job motivation factors and performance incentives as efficient management tools: A study among mental health professionals», *Archives of Hellenic Medicine,* **30** (1), pp. 46-58.
19. Hanaysha, J. (2016b), "Examining the Effects of Employee Empowerment, Teamwork and Employee Training on Organizational Commitment", *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, **229,** pp. 298-306.
20. Hanaysha, J. (2016α), "Testing the Effects of Employee Engagement, Work Environment and Organizational Learning on Organizational Commitment", *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences,* **229**, pp. 289-297.
21. Hsu, L. and Liao, P. (2016), "From Job Characteristics to Job Satisfaction of Foreign Workers in Taiwan' s Construction Industry: The Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment", *Human Factors and Ergonomics in Manufacturing & Service Industries,* **26** (2), pp. 243-255.
22. Jorgensen, F. and Becker, K. (2015), "Balancing organizational and professional commitments in professional service firms: the HR practices that matter", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, **26** (1), pp. 23-41.
23. Jung, H.S. and Yoon, H.H. (2016), "What does work meaning to hospitality employees? The effects of meaningful work on employees' organizational commitment: The mediating role of engagement", *International Journal of Hospitality Management,* **53**, pp. 59-68.
24. Lau, W.K.J. (2010), *Empowerment of non-academic personnel in higher education: exploring associations with perceived organizational support for innovation and organizational trust,* Doctoral dissertation, University of Iowa, Educational Policy and Leadership Studies.
25. Manolopoulos, D. (2008), "An evaluation of employee motivation in the extended public sector in Greece", *Employee Relations,* **30** (1), pp. 63-85.
26. Massaras, P., Sahinidis, A. and Polychronopoulos, G. (2014), "Organizational Culture and Motivation in the Public Sector. The case of the City of Zografou", *Procedia Economics and Finance*, **14**, pp. 415-424.
27. Melhem, Y. (2004), "The antecedents of customer-contact employees' empowerment", *Employee Relations,* **26** (1), pp. 72-93.
28. Men, L.R. (2010), *Measuring the Impact of Leadership Style and Employee Empowerment on Perceived Organizational Reputation*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, School of Communication.
29. Menon, S. T. (2001), "Employee Empowerment: An Integrative Psychological Approach", *Applied Psychology: An International Review,* **50** (1), pp. 153-180.
30. Meyerson, G. and Dewettinck, B. (2012), "Effect of Empowerment on Employees Performance", *Advanced Research in Economic and Management Sciences,* **2**.
31. Mohsan, F., Nawaz, M.M., Khan, M.S., Shaukat, Z. and Aslam, N. (2011), "Are Employee Motivation, Commitment and Job Involvement Inter-related: Evidence from Banking Sector of Pakistan", *International Journal of Business and Social Science,* **2** (17), pp. 226-233.

32. Nazir, S., Shafi, A., Qun, W. Nazir, N. and Tran, Q.D. (2016), "Influence of organizational rewards on organizational commitment and turnover intentions", *The International Journal,* **38** (4), pp. 1-25.
33. Nieves, J. and Osorio, J. (2017), "Commitment-based HR systems and organizational outcomes in services", *International Journal of Manpower,* **38** (3), pp. 432-448.
34. Okyere-Kwakye, E. and Otibu, F. (2016), "Organizational Factors and Employees Commitment", *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal,* **3** (5), pp. 62-69.
35. Paleologou, V., Kontodimopoulos, N., Stamouli, A., Aletras, V. and Niakas, D. (2006), "Developing and testing an instrument for identifying performance incentives in the Greek health care sector", *BMC Health Services Research,* **6** (118), pp. 1-20.
36. Pasaoglu, D. (2015), "Analysis of the Relationship Between Human Resources Management Practices and Organizational Commitment from a Strategic Perspective: Findings from the Banking Industry", *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences,* **207**, pp. 315-324.
37. Pitman, T. (2000), "Perceptions of Academics and Students as Customers: a survey of administrative staff in higher education", *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, **22** (2), pp. 165-175.
38. Rahman, M.S., Daud, N.M. and Hassan, H. (2017), "Generation X and Y knowledge sharing behaviour: The influence of motivation and intention on non-academic staff of higher learning institutions", *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education,* **9** (2), pp. 325-342.
39. Raza, H., Mahmood, J., Owais, M., and Raza, A. (2015), "Impact of Employee Empowerment on Job Satisfaction of Employees in Corporate Banking Sector Employees of Pakistan", *Journal of Applied Environmental and Biological Sciences*, **5** (2), pp. 1-7.
40. Rossidis, I., Aspridis, G., Blanas, N., Bouas, K. και Katsimardos, P. (2016), "Best Practices for Motivation and their Implementation in the Greek Public Sector for Increasing Efficiency", Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 5 (3), pp. 144-150.
41. Saif, N. I. and Saleh, A. S. (2013), "Psychological Empowerment and Job Satisfaction in Jordanian Hospitals", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science,* **3** (16).
42. Scott, C. και Jaffe, D. (1991), "Empowerment: Building a committed workforce", Crisp Publications, Los Altos.
43. Steers, R.M. (1977), "Antecedents and Outcomes of Organizational Commitment", *Administrative Science Quarterly,* **22** (1), pp. 46-56.
44. Stefanides, D. (2012), «*Motivation, motivators, job satisfaction and organizational commitment of air force's officers*».
45. Uzunbacak, H.H. (2015), "The Impacts of Employee Empowerment on Innovation: A Survey on Isparta and Burdur Organized Industrial Zones", *The Journal of International Social Research*, **8** (37), pp. 977-989.
46. Weng, Q., McElroy, J.C., Morrow, P.C. and Liu, R. (2010), "The relationship between career growth and organizational commitment", *Journal of Vocational Behavior,* **77** (3), pp.391-400.
47. Zlate, S. and Cucui, G. (2015), "Motivation and performance in higher education", *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences,* **180**, pp. 468-476.
48. Zusman, A. (2005), "*Challenges Facing Higher Education in* the Twenty-First Century", Available online: http://www.educationanddemocracy.org/Resources/Zusman.pdf *(*06/12/2017*)*