

# Organizational empowerment and work engagement among full-time faculty and academic service personnel in selected higher educational institution

Mojado, Evadyn Gail R. ✉

Graduate School, Lyceum of the Philippines University - Batangas, Philippines



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## *Abstract*

Full-time faculty and Academic Service Personnel (ASPs) play a pivotal role in supporting the core functions of universities, including teaching, research, and administrative activities. Their contributions are critical to ensuring the smooth operation of institutions and the achievement of their academic goals. The study employed a quantitative methodology and utilized a descriptive research design. The study revealed that organizational empowerment significantly influenced various aspects of work engagement. Studies conducted during the period emphasized different facets of empowerment, including autonomy, skill development, meaningful work, and social support, as crucial factors in fostering employee engagement. A positive relationship existed between organizational empowerment and work engagement across various industries and cultural contexts. Researchers concluded that empowering leadership, supportive organizational climates, and participative decision-making processes served as key drivers of employee engagement.

**Keywords:** employee performance, human resource management, organizational empowerment, work engagement, workplace motivation

## **Organizational empowerment and work engagement among full-time faculty and academic service personnel in selected higher educational institution**

### **1. Introduction**

In the dynamic and competitive landscape of higher education, the success of institutions hinges on the effectiveness and engagement of their full-time faculty and Academic Service Personnel (ASPs). These individuals play a pivotal role in supporting the core functions of universities, including teaching, research, and administrative activities. Their contributions are critical to ensuring the smooth operation of institutions and the achievement of their academic goals. Organizational climate is the working environment of the organization that may affect the employees. A positive climate makes the employees happy, satisfied, and energized, and therefore employees are eager to work more for the company. It is an intangible aspect of the environment because it involves the emotional aspect of the employees. It is only the employees who feel it. Thus, organizational climate refers to employees' perceptions of organizational practices reported by people who work there. It is a situational characteristic that links to thoughts and feelings of workers that shape the common perception of employees as a result of organizational policies and procedures. It is a psychological and social dimension of the environment, including people's perceptions (Abun et al., 2021). Thus, the organizations recruit, train, and evaluate employees based on the set standards in the public's best interest (Boselie et al., 2019).

Organizational Empowerment (OE) and Work Engagement (WE) are two key factors that influence the performance and well-being of Academic Service Personnel. Organizational Empowerment refers to the extent to which employees feel empowered, in terms of Skills, Purpose, Autonomy and Community Engagement. Work Engagement, on the other hand, reflects the dedication and enthusiasm that employees bring to their work: vigor, dedication and absorption (Flores et. al., 2024). Work engagement can be characterized by absorption, vigor and dedication. When an employee has a high level of energy and mental peace, she/he then is said to have vigor to perform. An employee who has pride, inspiration and enthusiasm has the quality of dedication. The employee working for the organization and accepting challenges at work is marked as a dedicated employee. The third factor, that is absorption refers to being happy and fully concentrated in one's work so that time passes quickly, with difficulty detaching from work. Both have been shown to have positive effects on individual and organizational outcomes, such as job satisfaction, performance, and retention (Gera et al., 2019).

Employee empowerment is a critical element in creating a positive organizational climate. It stems from the concept of inclusion. The feeling of being empowered leads to several favorable consequences. Enriched work environments that provide access to authority, information, resources, support and opportunity to learn are empowering and can lead to improved performance (Le et al., 2021). In the context of higher education, a strong OE can foster a sense of autonomy, ownership, and involvement among ASPs, leading to increased motivation, creativity, and innovation. When ASPs feel empowered to make decisions and contribute their ideas, they are more likely to feel valued and engaged in their work. This can lead to improved performance, higher job satisfaction, and a reduced likelihood of turnover. Work Engagement is also essential for the success of full-time faculty and ASPs in higher education. Engaged faculty and ASPs are passionate about their work and committed to the success of their institutions. They are more likely to go the extra mile, provide excellent service, and contribute to a positive work environment. WE can lead to improved student outcomes, enhanced institutional reputation, and a more competitive edge in the higher education market.

Despite the importance of OE and WE in higher education, there is a dearth of research on these factors among full-time faculty and ASPs. Many studies on OE and WE have focused on employees in the private sector, with limited attention paid to the unique context of higher education. This gap in literature highlights the need for more research to understand the relationship between OE, WE, and the performance and well-being of full-time faculty and ASPs in higher education institutions.

This study addressed the gap by investigating the relationship between OE and WE among faculty and ASPs in a selected higher educational institution in Lipa City. The findings offered valuable insights for institutional leaders seeking to cultivate an empowering and engaging workplace. By fostering a strong OE and promoting WE, institutions can optimize the performance and well-being of their faculty and ASPs, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes, enhanced institutional reputation, and a more competitive edge in the higher education market. Aside from that, faculty members and academic service personnel play a crucial role in shaping students' learning experiences. The researcher also believed that empowered and engaged employees are more likely to be motivated, innovative, and committed to delivering high-quality education. They can also drive creativity and productivity, benefiting both the institution and the broader academic community.

With considerable years of tenure, the researcher has reflected on the leadership style and its impact on the work environment. Understanding the organizational empowerment climate and work engagement could benefit the institution by creating a positive and supportive work environment that could be instrumental in navigating and facilitating positive transformations.

**Objectives of the Study** - This study assessed organizational empowerment and work engagement among full-time faculty and academic service personnel in selected Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in Lipa City. Specifically, it determined the organizational empowerment in the higher educational institution in terms of skills, purpose, autonomy and community engagement; described the work engagement of employees in terms of vigor, dedication and absorption; tested the significant relationship between organizational empowerment and work engagement; and proposed an action plan to enhance the organizational empowerment and improve work engagement based on the results of the study.

## 2. Methods

**Research Design** - This study utilized quantitative and descriptive methods. The relationship between organizational empowerment and work engagement of employees was described in this study. The researcher sought to gather information from the respondents through providing survey questionnaires and distributing these to them. This descriptive kind of research was helpful in collecting the respondents' data efficiently. Correlational research design was used because the researcher intended to draw the relationship between organizational empowerment and work engagement of employees.

**Participants of the Study** - The targeted respondents of the study were full-time faculty and academic service personnel from a higher educational institution. It included but not limited to teaching staff, administrative staff, technical staff, and librarians, with at least 6 months of tenure. According to its Human Resource Department, there were a total of 299 teaching staff and 210 non-teaching staff who were actively working at the said institution. Sampling ratio was used. Hence, the number of respondents is 118 full-time faculty, and 82 academic service personnel sampling ratio was determined by dividing the sample size by the total population.

**Instruments** - The researcher used an adapted and modified questionnaire in data gathering. It was validated by professionals in the field and was subjected to pilot testing. The questionnaire included two parts. Part 1 determined the organizational empowerment in the Higher Educational Institution in terms of skills, purpose, autonomy and community engagement. Part 3 consisted of the work engagement of employees in terms of vigor, dedication and absorption. The items in the questionnaire were given corresponding weights of 1 to 4, 1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Agree, 4 - Strongly Agree. The reliability test used the Cronbach Alpha with Acceptable results for all of the domains. Organizational empowerment has 0.944 with excellent marks. Skill has 0.772 with acceptable remarks, Purpose has 0.913 with excellent remarks, Autonomy has 0.918 with excellent remarks, Community engagement with 0.901 with excellent remarks. While work engagement has 0.876, vigor has 0.894, dedication has 0.861, and absorption has 0.896; all acquired good marks.

**Data Gathering Procedure** - The researcher presented the proposal for comments, and upon final approval

by the thesis adviser, the researcher started to adapt and modify the questionnaire. A validation process was conducted with assistance from the research adviser and a university statistician. The researcher asked permission from the Human Resource Department of the selected higher educational institution in Lipa City to distribute a questionnaire to the employees who were working in the different departments/offices. The researcher distributed the questionnaire through sending them the hard copy to their respective offices. An electronic questionnaire was generated through Google Forms which was sent via messenger or email of the employees. The responses to the survey items were tallied and sent to the university statistician for statistical analysis.

**Ethical Considerations** - Ethical considerations were applied during the study process to ensure that any information obtained was used solely for research purposes, preserving the research's quality and integrity. Prior to data collection, formal clearance was obtained from the participating universities, ensuring institutional approval for conducting the study. The researcher additionally sought consent through letter to ensure that the target respondents were prepared to answer the research's essential questions. It also protected the respondents' privacy and identity by not soliciting their names while they were filling out the surveys. The researcher also guaranteed that the respondents filled out the surveys willingly and in accordance with their wishes. Lastly, it guaranteed that no research participants were injured or harmed in the entire research process, and that their safety and security was a major concern.

**Data Analysis** - Weighted Mean was used to determine the organizational empowerment climate in a selected higher educational institution in terms of skills, purpose, autonomy, community and engagement and to describe the work engagement of employees in terms of vigor, dedication and absorption. Pearson's R Correlation was used to determine the relationship of organizational empowerment and work engagement of employees. To interpret the correlation value, the following classifications were used. A p-value of less than (<) .05 means that there was significant relationship with the dimensions of organizational empowerment and the dimensions of work engagement of employees. While those with p-value of or greater than (>) or equal to .05 means that there was no significant relationship.

### 3. Results and discussion

**Table 1**  
*Summary Table of Organizational Empowerment*

	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Skills	3.64	Very High	1
Purpose	3.61	Very High	3
Autonomy	3.35	High	4
Community Engagement	3.61	Very High	2
<i>Overall</i>	<i>3.55</i>	<i>Very High</i>	

Legend:3.50-4.00=Very High ;2.50-3.49=High;1.50-2.49=Low;1.00-1.49=Very Low

Table 1 shows the assessment of organizational empowerment across multiple dimensions offered a comprehensive overview of the institution's effectiveness in fostering a conducive environment for its members. The indicators encompassed skills development, clarity of purpose, autonomy in decision-making, and community engagement, reflecting various facets of organizational empowerment. With a composite mean score of 3.55 and a verbal interpretation of very high, it suggests that the organization is well-positioned to thrive, with a competent workforce aligned with its mission and values, actively engaged in community initiatives, and equipped with the necessary skills to succeed. Knowing that people are engaged and equipped to succeed brings a sense of confidence in the organization's future and its positive impact beyond its immediate environment.

Skills with a composite mean of 3.64 and a verbal interpretation of very high. This indicates a competent and capable workforce equipped with the necessary skills to effectively perform their roles. Community Engagement ranked second, with a composite mean of 3.61 and a verbal interpretation of very high, indicating a highly engaged workforce committed to making a positive impact on the local community. Purpose ranked 3rd,

with a composite mean score of 3.61 and a verbal interpretation of very high indicating a strong alignment between individual roles and the broader mission and goals of the organization. Employees who find purpose in their work are more engaged, motivated, and committed, leading to higher levels of performance and well-being (Bailey et al., 2020).

Autonomy ranked 4th, with a composite mean of 3.35 and a verbal interpretation of high. It reflects a moderate level of autonomy in decision-making and work arrangements within the organization. While autonomy can empower employees and foster innovation and creativity it's essential to balance autonomy with organizational goals and guidelines to ensure alignment and effectiveness. This balance suggests that while the organization trusts its people enough to give them some independence, it also maintains necessary structures to keep everyone aligned with broader goals. Autonomy can be a powerful motivator, encouraging creativity and innovation, but it works best when paired with clear guidelines that help employees channel their efforts effectively and contribute to the organization's success.

Self-determination theory explains that when employees have autonomy, it satisfies their basic need to feel in control of their work, which naturally boosts their motivation, engagement, and overall well-being (Deci et al., 2019). When people feel trusted to manage their own tasks, they tend to take greater ownership, often leading to more creativity and satisfaction in their roles. However, autonomy alone isn't enough. It needs to be balanced with clear organizational goals and guidelines to make sure everyone is moving in the same direction and working efficiently. This balance helps maintain consistency and alignment with the institution's broader mission, allowing autonomy to foster innovation without sacrificing focus or cohesion (Parker et al., 2020).

**Table 2**  
*Work Engagement*

	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Vigor	3.62	Very High	2
2. Dedication	3.70	Very High	1
3. Absorption	3.27	High	3
<i>Overall</i>	<i>3.53</i>	<i>Very High</i>	

Legend: 3.50-4.00=Very High ; 2.50-3.49=High; 1.50-2.49=Low; 1.00-1.49=Very Low

The table presents an assessment of work engagement in terms of absorption with the composite mean of 3.53 and verbal interpretation of high. Dedication with a composite mean of 3.70 and verbal interpretation of very high, indicating employees' profound sense of purpose and investment in their work. This kind of dedication reflects more than just completing tasks; it shows a true emotional investment in the organization's mission and values. When employees are connected, they are motivated to perform at their best and find personal meaning in their daily responsibilities. Such profound dedication has been linked to increased job satisfaction, higher productivity, and stronger organizational loyalty (Nguyen, 2021). It also reflects employees' strong commitment, engagement, and emotional attachment to their work roles (Bakker et al., 2019).

Vigor is characterized by sustained levels of energy, enthusiasm, and resilience that employees bring to their work, enabling them to engage actively and persistently with their tasks. Recent research continues to emphasize vigor as a critical component of work engagement that fosters both well-being and high performance (Breevaart et al., 2020). It has a composite mean of 3.62 and verbal interpretation of very high, suggesting a robust level of vigor among employees, contributing positively to their performance and well-being. Ranked the last, Absorption has a composite mean of 3.27 with a verbal interpretation of high is slightly lower compared to Vigor and Dedication, suggesting a relatively lower level of absorption among employees. This suggests that, although they bring energy and commitment to their roles, moments of deep focus or "flow" might be less frequent. It highlights an opportunity for the organization to explore ways to create work environments that better support concentration and sustain attention, helping employees feel more connected and absorbed in their tasks.

Fostering an environment that supports absorption involves creating conditions where employees can deeply focus and fully engage with their work tasks. Key factors in this process include offering task variety, which

prevents monotony and keeps employees mentally stimulated by providing diverse challenges that capture their interest. Minimizing the distractions through physical workspace design, clear communication protocols, or supportive management practices helps employees maintain concentration without frequent interruptions. Together, these elements create a workplace atmosphere conducive to flow experiences, where individuals feel fully absorbed, energized, and connected to their work, ultimately leading to improved job satisfaction, creativity, and productivity (Bakker et al., 2019).

**Table 3**  
*Relationship Between Organizational Empowerment and Work Engagement*

Variables	rho	p-value	Interpretation
<b>Vigor</b>			
Skills	.545**	0.000	Significant
Purpose	.504**	0.000	Significant
Autonomy	.514**	0.000	Significant
Community Engagement	.457**	0.000	Significant
<b>Dedication</b>			
Skills	.539**	0.000	Significant
Purpose	.543**	0.000	Significant
Autonomy	.472**	0.000	Significant
Community Engagement	.533**	0.000	Significant
<b>Absorption</b>			
Skills	.421**	0.000	Significant
Purpose	.373**	0.000	Significant
Autonomy	.427**	0.000	Significant
Community Engagement	.305**	0.000	Significant

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level/\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

The table presents the correlations between organizational empowerment and different dimensions of work engagement, namely vigor, dedication, and absorption. These dimensions are assessed through variables such as skills, purpose, autonomy, and community engagement. The correlation coefficients (rho) and their associated p-values indicate the strength and significance of the relationships. In terms of Vigor, there were statistically significant positive correlations between the variables such as skills, purpose, autonomy, and community engagement. This suggests that when employees perceive higher levels of empowerment in terms of these dimensions, they tend to exhibit more energy, enthusiasm, and resilience in their work. Similarly, all dimensions of organizational empowerment (Skills, Purpose, Autonomy, and Community Engagement) showed significant positive correlations with dedication. Employees who feel empowered in these aspects are more likely to demonstrate strong commitment, loyalty, and involvement in their work tasks.

Skills, purpose, and autonomy exhibit significant positive correlations with absorption, indicating that employees who perceive empowerment in these dimensions are more likely to become deeply engrossed and fully concentrated in their work. However, the correlation with community engagement, while still significant, is relatively weaker compared to the other dimensions. The consistent findings across all dimensions suggested that organizational empowerment significantly influences various aspects of work engagement. Studies during this period have emphasized different facets of empowerment, including autonomy, skill development, meaningful work, and social support, as crucial factors in fostering employee engagement.

**Table 4**  
*Action Plan*

Key Result Areas	Objectives	Strategies	Persons Involved
Increase organizational empowerment in terms of autonomy from high to very high	Enhance employee autonomy and decision-making authority.	Implement empowerment training programs to educate employees on decision making processes and encourage autonomy in their roles.	Human Resource Department Employees
	Foster a culture of continuous learning and skill development.	Establish a mentorship program to facilitate knowledge sharing and skill development among employees.	Human Resource Department Employees

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	Promote a sense of purpose and meaningfulness in work tasks.	Align organizational goals with individual employee.	Human Resource Department
	Strengthen community engagement and social support networks within the organization.	Create opportunities for team building activities, cross departmental collaboration, and social events to strengthen interpersonal relationships and foster a sense of belonging.	Human Resource Department
Improve work engagement in terms of absorption from high to very high	Increase over all levels of work engagement among employees.	Recognize and reward employees for their contributions and achievements to boost morale and motivation.	Human Resource Department
	Enhance specific dimensions of work engagement, including vigor, dedication, and absorption.	Provide opportunities for professional development and career advancement to promote a sense of progress and growth.	Human Resource Department
	Create a supportive work environment that fosters employee well-being and satisfaction.	Foster open communication channels and solicit feedback from employees to address concerns and to improve the work environment.	Human Resource Department Employees

### 4. Conclusions and recommendations

The respondents exhibited a strong agreement on organizational empowerment in terms of skills, purpose, autonomy, and community engagement. The respondents demonstrated strong agreement on work engagement in terms of vigor, dedication, and absorption. A significant relationship was found between organizational empowerment and work engagement. An action plan was developed to enhance organizational empowerment and improve work engagement. Human Resource Department may build upon the existing empowerment initiatives within the institution by further enhancing programs related to skill development, clarifying organizational purpose, providing opportunities for autonomy, and fostering community engagement. Human Resource Department may extend the mentorship program to emphasize continuous learning and development opportunities for employees. Leaders may encourage faculty and academic service personnel to take an active role in planning and organizing community engagement activities. Organizational leaders and managers may engage as champions of empowerment and engagement initiatives by providing leadership training and with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively support and empower their teams. The proposed action plan may be implemented by higher academic institutions to enhance organizational empowerment and enhance work engagement of full-time faculty and academic service personnel. Further researchers may explore underlying variables regarding the organizational empowerment and work engagement of higher educational institutions that would help enhance work engagement.

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