

Influence of teacher empowerment on teachers' organizational commitment, professional commitment and organizational citizenship behavior in schools

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Abstract

The present study focuses on the relationship between teacher empowerment and teachers' organizational commitment, professional commitment (PC) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). It examines which subscales of teacher empowerment can best predict these outcomes. The data were collected through a questionnaire returned by a sample of 983 teachers in Israeli middle and high schools. Pearson correlations and multiple regression analyses indicated that teachers' perceptions of their level of empowerment are significantly related to their feelings of commitment to the organization and to the profession, and to their OCBs. Among the six subscales of empowerment, professional growth, status and self-efficacy were significant predictors of organizational and PC, while decision-making, self-efficacy, and status were significant predictors of OCB. Practical implications of the study are discussed in relation to teachers, principals and policy-makers.

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Without question empowerment is THE topic of the day (Ford & Fottler, 1995, p. 21).

During the past decade, teacher empowerment has received a great deal of attention from researchers who studied its relationship to various organizational outcomes. In their extensive literature review, Sweetland and Hoy (2000) state that though a thorough examination has been conducted to study the relationship between teacher empowerment and various organizational and personal characteristics, "[t]he results are confusing" (p. 710). The current study aims to examine

teacher empowerment in relation to outcomes that reflect the behavior of teachers in school. These outcomes—teachers' organizational commitment (OC), professional commitment (PC), and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)—are key factors in their performance in a school setting (Howell & Dorfman, 1986; Diefendorff, Brown, Kamin, & Lord, 2002).

1. Theoretical framework

1.1. Teacher empowerment

Research on teacher empowerment began to appear in the literature in the late 1980s (Edwards,

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Green, & Lyons, 2002). Empowerment, as perceived by Short, Greer and Melvin (1994) is defined as “a process whereby school participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems” (p. 38). It is individuals’ belief that they have the skills and knowledge to improve a situation in which they operate. In their national study on empowerment of teacher leaders, Rinehart and Short (1991) found that reading recovery teacher leaders were more highly empowered than reading recovery teachers or classroom teachers. This finding was explained as a result of reading recovery teacher leaders’ having more opportunities to make decisions and grow professionally, having control over daily schedules and feeling a high level of teaching competency. According to Maeroff (1988), teacher empowerment consists of improved status, increased knowledge and access to decision-making. Short and Rinehart (1992) identify six dimensions of teacher empowerment: decision-making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy and impact. In a study devoted to the concept of teacher empowerment, Short (1994a) describes the six dimensions in detail. *Decision-making* refers to teachers’ participation in critical decisions that directly affect their work, involving issues related to budgets, teacher selection, scheduling, and curriculum. To be effective, teachers’ participation in decision-making must be genuine, and the teachers need to be confident that their decisions actually impact real outcomes. *Professional growth* refers to the teachers’ perception that the school provides them opportunities to grow and develop professionally, to continue to learn, and to expand their skills during their work in school. Status refers to the professional respect and admiration that the teachers perceive that they earn from colleagues. Respect is also granted for the knowledge and expertise that the teachers demonstrate, resulting in support of their actions from others. *Self-efficacy* refers to the teachers’ perception that they are equipped with the skills and ability to help students learn, and are competent to develop curricula for students. The feeling of mastery, in both knowledge and practice, that results in accomplishing desired outcomes is critical in the teachers’ sense of self-

efficacy. *Autonomy* refers to the teachers’ feeling that they have control over various aspects of their working life, including scheduling, curriculum development, selection of textbooks and planning instruction. This type of control enables teachers to feel free to make decisions related to their educational milieu. Impact refers to the teachers’ perception that they can affect and influence school life.

Teacher empowerment has been studied in relation to job satisfaction (Rinehart & Short, 1994), participation in decision-making (Gruber & Trickett, 1987; White, 1992), commitment (Wu & Short, 1996), conflict (Johnson & Short, 1998; Rinehart, Short, & Johnson, 1997; Short, 1994b), instructional practice and student academic achievements (Marks & Louis, 1997; Smylie, 1994), and principal leadership (Blasé & Blasé, 1996; Johnson & Short, 1998; Kirby & Colbert, 1994; Rinehart, Short, Short, & Eckley, 1998). Previous research (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000), supports four assumptions regarding teacher empowerment: first, teacher empowerment is most effective when it is oriented to increase teacher professionalism; second, empowerment has at least two dimensions: organizational and classroom; third, empowering teachers has its greatest impact on student achievement when the emphasis is on the core technology of teaching and learning in schools; fourth, to be effective, teacher empowerment needs to be authentic (pp. 710–711). Teacher empowerment is, therefore, perceived as a crucial factor that affects school effectiveness (Wall & Rinehart, 1998). In the present study, we chose three variables that the literature found as related to school effectiveness: organizational commitment, PC and OCB. Teachers’ commitment to the organization—the school—has been found to predict school effectiveness (Howell & Dorfman, 1986; Rosenholtz, 1991). A positive relationship has been found between organizational commitment and regular employee attendance, and an inverse relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention (Balfour & Wechsler, 1996; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). Employees who are highly committed to both the profession and the organization were found to perform better than the less committed

ones, a behavior which results in improved overall effectiveness of the organization (Aranya & Ferris, 1984). Teachers' PC has been found to be critical to good instruction (Firestone & Pennell, 1993). Finally, the impact of OCB on the school organization is "dramatic"; it "contributes to the overall effectiveness of the school and reduces the management component of the administrator's role" (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2001, p. 434). OCB promotes organizational performance because it presents effective measures to manage the interdependencies between members of a work group, and consequently increases the outcomes achieved by the collective (Organ, 1990, Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983). This study aims to investigate the relationship between teacher empowerment and these three outcomes: teachers' organizational and PC and their OCB. More specifically, we attempt to determine which subscales of teacher empowerment can best predict these outcomes.

1.2. The relationship between teachers' empowerment and their organizational and PC

Organizational commitment, as defined by Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979), is "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (p. 226). This concept is based on three factors: the acceptance of the organization's goals and values (identification), the willingness to invest effort on behalf of the organization (involvement), and the importance attached to keeping up the membership in the organization (loyalty). These characteristics imply that the members of the organization wish to be active players in the organization, have an impact on what is going on in it, feel that they have high status within it, and are ready to contribute beyond what is expected of them. This is especially true when the leaders of the organization are perceived as adopting consultative or participative leadership behavior, where shared decision-making is prevalent (Yousef, 2000). In this case, when leaders are perceived as participative, employees feel more committed to the organization, express higher levels of job satisfaction, and their performance is high.

Among the empowerment subscales, the literature refers to a number of dimensions that relate to organizational commitment. In a number of studies (reviewed by Firestone & Pennell, 1993), teachers' autonomy in making classroom decisions, their participation in school-wide decision-making, and their opportunities to learn were among the organizational conditions that showed a strong association with teacher commitment to the organization. A positive relationship was also found between organizational commitment and job involvement (Blau and Boal, 1989).

PC is "the degree to which a person's work performance affects his self-esteem" (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965, p. 25). For a person who is professionally committed, work is a vital part of life. This means that both the work itself and the co-workers are very meaningful to the employee, in addition to the importance s/he attaches to the organization as a whole. Active participation in decision-making increases involvement and PC, which result in a higher level of acceptance and satisfaction. Evers (1990) suggested that teachers' successful participation in decision-making could be explained by the feeling of ownership that comes from initiating ideas rather than responding to others' proposals. Gaziel and Weiss (1990) claimed that teachers' participation, based on establishing a strong voice in decisions and policies, was a characteristic of "professional orientation", and fostered better working relations among staff members. With regard to self-efficacy, studies have shown that teachers with a greater sense of efficacy are more enthusiastic about teaching (Guskey, 1984), report a higher level of commitment to teaching (Coladarci, 1992; Evans & Tribble, 1986), and are more likely to remain in teaching (Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982).

Wu and Short (1996), who studied the relationship between teacher empowerment and teacher job commitment and job satisfaction, found that among the six subscales that compose the teacher empowerment scale (SPES), professional growth, self-efficacy and status were significant predictors of job commitment. We were interested to see whether similar results would be found in this study with regard to other outcomes, such as organizational commitment and OCB.

1.3. *The relationship between teacher empowerment and OCB*

The concept of OCB, derived from Katz's (1964) conception of extra-role behavior, was first introduced by Organ (1977) who defined it as behavior that is "discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (Organ, 1988, p. 4). Researchers have recognized the significant impact of OCB on the success of an organization (e.g., Chen, Hui, & Sego, 1998; Karambayya, 1989). As several scholars have noted (e.g., George, 1996; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Organ & Konovsky, 1989), OCBs are important to the organization because through formal job descriptions, organizations cannot anticipate the whole range of behaviors needed for the achievement of organizational goals (Vanuyperen, van den Berg, & Willering, 1999). OCB provides the organization with additional resources and eliminates the need for expensive formal mechanisms otherwise crucial to successful restructuring processes. Today, as schools move into a new era of reorganization (Blasé & Blasé, 1996; Clement & Vandenberghe, 2000; Reitzug, 1994; Wall & Rinehart, 1998), performance-defined as prescribed by task roles—is necessary but not sufficient for predicting school effectiveness. Therefore, schools will have to be more dependent on teachers who are willing to exert considerable effort beyond formal job requirements, namely, to engage in OCB. (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2000).

OCB refers to various dimensions such as altruism, conscientiousness (also termed "generalized compliance"), sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue (Organ, 1988); obedience, loyalty, and various types of participation (Van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994); and helping and voice (Stamper & Van Dyne, 2001; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

The notion of behaviors directed towards the individual and the organization was first introduced by Williams and Anderson (1991), and in the educational setting, it corresponds to behaviors directed towards students, teacher colleagues, and to the whole school. OCBs operate

indirectly; they influence the social and psychological environment of organizations, which in turn influence the technical core (Diefendorff et al., 2002). OCB affects the technical core since it involves extra role behaviors of some teachers toward students and teachers. These teachers help students with class materials, acquire expertise in new areas that contribute to their work, prepare special assignments for higher- or lower-level students, volunteer for school committees, set up learning programs for substitute teachers, help absent colleagues by assigning learning tasks to their classes, and work collaboratively with others. All these OCBs relate to the technical core of the organization. However, in the case of teachers who exhibit OCBs, they also help to achieve organization goals. This is reflected through extra role behaviors toward the organization, expressed by teachers organizing social activities for the school, volunteering for roles and tasks that are not part of their jobs, providing innovative suggestions to improve the school and by organizing joint activities with parents above the norm. Research on OCB in schools is very limited (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2001). In this study, we have adopted the concept of OCB as investigated in educational settings. Based on Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988) who view the concept of empowerment as a "sense of civic duty" involving democratic participation and affecting community life and social issues (p. 136), one can expect to find a relationship between empowerment and OCB. Participation in decision-making, one of the characteristics of teacher empowerment, has been found to lead to engagement in OCB in various contexts (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1996). Self-efficacy has been found to be related to OCB toward the team and the organization, but not related to the student (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2000).

To date, limited research has been conducted on the relationship between teachers' commitment to the organization, their PC, OCB, and teacher empowerment. Since the current literature cannot lead to definite hypotheses regarding the relationship between the subscales of teacher empowerment and school outcomes, it is our goal to determine which subscales best predict the three outcomes: teachers' organizational commitment,

PC and OCB. The findings of the study may have important implications for teachers and principals, and consequently for the entire school.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The teachers in this study were sampled from a random sample of schools located in the northern and central parts of Israel. The sample consisted of 983 teachers in 25 middle schools (grades 7–9) and 27 high schools (grades 10–12). Although it was not possible to reach a random sample of all schools in Israel, care was taken to select urban, suburban and rural schools from diverse populations that represent the composition of teachers in Israel with regard to gender and religion, age and education. Seventy-two percent were women; 73 percent Jewish and the rest Arab. Of the Jewish teachers, 78 percent were female, and of the Arab teachers, almost half (46 percent) were male. The average age was 38.5, with an average of 10 years of seniority in the current school, and 13.5 years of seniority as teachers. Sixty-four percent had a Bachelor's degree, 26 percent had a Master's degree and 10 percent had a "professional" degree (equivalent to a junior college diploma, with teaching credentials). These demographic characteristics were similar to those found in comparable studies on teachers in Israel (Rosenblatt, 2001; Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2000).

2.2. Research instrument

A quantitative questionnaire, combining four Likert scales measuring OC, PC, OCB and teacher empowerment, was mailed in 2001 to teachers in 52 middle and high schools. The respondents were asked to refer to their current school, and to answer a range of questions about their feelings of empowerment, their commitment to the school and the profession, and their OCB in school.

Teacher empowerment was measured using the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) (Short & Rinehart, 1992). The SPES measures teachers' overall perception of empowerment. It is

a 38-item instrument on a 5-point scale (scored from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Factor analysis of the SPES revealed six dimensions at the basis of the construct. The dimensions and their internal consistency estimates (coefficient alphas) are: involvement in decision-making (0.89); opportunities for professional growth (0.83); status (0.86); self-efficacy (0.84); autonomy (0.81); and impact (0.82). The overall scale has reliability of 0.94 and the same reliability level of alpha was found in the current study. Examples of items are: "I make decision about the implementation of new programs in the school" (decision-making), "I am treated as a professional" (professional growth), "I believe that I have earned respect" (status), "I believe that I am empowering students" (self-efficacy), "I have the freedom to make decisions on what is taught" (autonomy), and "I believe that I have an impact" (impact).

Organizational commitment was measured using Mowday et al.'s (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). This 15-item instrument measures affective rather than normative or continuance commitment, by asking the respondents to refer to their identification with and involvement in a particular organization. Examples of items are: "I tell my friends that this school is a great school to work for" and "I feel very little loyalty to this school" (reverse coded). A 7-point scale (scored from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) was used. Scores on the 15 items were averaged to yield a summary score representing organizational commitment. The internal reliability estimates for the OCQ scores were strong across Mowday et al.'s (1979) six samples (ranging from 0.82 to 0.93) and resulted in a single-factor solution. In the current study, the reliability level of alpha was 0.87.

Professional commitment was measured using Lodahl and Kejner's (1965) 20-item scale, specifically adjusted to the educational setting. This instrument focuses on teachers' job involvement and on the importance of work to them in general. Examples of items are: "I live my job as a teacher 24 h a day" and "Most things in my life are more important than my work" (reverse coded). A 5-point scale (scored from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), was used. Scores on the 20

items were averaged to yield a summary score representing PC. The reliability level of alpha in this study was 0.87.

Organizational citizenship behavior was measured using a 23-item scale developed and validated in the school context (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2000). This instrument refers to discretionary behaviors that go beyond existing role expectations and are directed toward the individual, the group, or the organization as a unit. The OCB scale consists of three subscales: (a) eight items relate to students (e.g., “I stay after school hours to help students with materials covered in class”), with a reliability level of alpha of 0.80; (b) seven items relate to colleagues (e.g., “I help an absent colleague by assigning learning tasks to the class”), with a reliability level of alpha of 0.77; and (c) eight items relate to the school as a unit (e.g., “I make innovative suggestions to improve the school”), with a reliability level of alpha of 0.87. A 5-point scale (scored from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), was used. Scores on the 23 items were averaged to yield a summary score representing OCB. The reliability level of alpha in the current study was 0.92.

3. Results

Preliminary analyses of *t*-tests were performed to determine whether there were gender and type

of school (secondary/high schools) differences with regard to the research variables (i.e., teacher empowerment, organizational commitment, PC and OCB). The results revealed no significant differences ($p > 0.05$). In addition, the correlations between the other demographic variables (education and length of tenure) and the research variables were marginal (below 0.09); hence, we treated the participants as one group.

Means, standard deviations and intercorrelations for the research variables are shown in Table 1.

An examination of the means of the subscales of the SPES revealed that the subscales that received the highest scores were status ($M = 4.1$), professional growth ($M = 3.8$), impact ($M = 3.7$) and self-efficacy ($M = 3.7$). The lowest average score was ascribed to decision-making ($M = 3.1$). The Pearson correlation matrix revealed that all six subscales were significantly ($p < 0.0001$) and positively correlated with organizational commitment (ranging from 0.34 to 0.65), PC (ranging from 0.37 to 0.68) and OCB (ranging from 0.21 to 0.61). The more the teachers perceived themselves as practicing any of the teacher empowerment components, the more they expressed commitment towards the organization, the profession, and OCBs. In addition, the correlation between organizational commitment and PC was positive and significant ($r = 0.68$).

Multiple regression analysis was employed to identify which empowerment dimensions best

Table 1
Descriptive statistics and correlations

Variable	Mean	s.d.	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Decision-making ¹	3.1	0.73	0.54	0.34	0.60	0.63	0.63	0.34	0.41	0.61
2. Professional growth ¹	3.8	0.69		0.72	0.74	0.55	0.73	0.65	0.60	0.36
3. Status ^a	4.1	0.62			0.62	0.44	0.67	0.58	0.51	0.21
4. Self-efficacy ^a	3.7	0.65				0.56	0.77	0.53	0.58	0.50
5. Autonomy ^a	3.3	0.84					0.61	0.37	0.37	0.39
6. Impact ^a	3.7	0.72						0.50	0.54	0.44
7. OC ^b	4.3	0.83							0.68	0.41
8. PC ^a	3.4	0.59								0.20
9. OCB ^c	3.1	0.72								

Variables 1–6 are subscales of “teacher empowerment”.

All correlations are statistically significant, $p < 0.0001$.

^a Rating scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree

^b Rating scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree

^c Rating scale: 1 = Very seldom; 5 = Very often

predict teachers’ organizational commitment, PC and OCB (see Tables 2–4).

Tables 2–4 show the results of the multiple regression analysis for each of the outcomes: organizational commitment, PC and OCB, respectively. For each regression, all six components of teacher empowerment were included in the equation. Table 2 shows that three predictor variables—professional growth, status, and self-efficacy—were statistically significant predictors of organizational commitment and explained 44 percent of its variance ($F(3674) = 173.65, p < 0.0001$). Results of the second multiple regression analysis (Table 3) indicate that the same three predictors—self-efficacy, professional growth, and status—were statistically significant predictors of PC and explained 40 percent of its variance ($F(3665) = 148.1, p < 0.0001$). Results of the third multiple regression analysis (Table 4) indicate that

Table 2
Regression coefficients and *F*-test value for organizational commitment

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE	β	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Professional growth	0.62	0.07	0.44***	87.69	0.44 (6,671, $p < 0.0001$)
Status	0.36	0.07	0.22***		
Self-efficacy	0.23	0.07	0.15		
Autonomy	0.01	0.05	0.01		
Decision making	0.03	0.06	0.02		
Impact	0.12	0.07	0.09		
Constant	0.63	0.20			

*** $p < 0.0001$.

Table 3
Regression coefficients and *F*-test value for professional commitment

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE	β	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Self-efficacy	0.25	0.05	0.29***	75.47	0.41 (6,662, $p < .0001$)
Professional growth	0.19	0.05	0.23***		
Status	0.11	0.04	0.12*		
Autonomy	0.05	0.03	0.07		
Decision making	0.06	0.04	0.08		
Impact	0.05	0.04	0.06		
Constant	1.08	0.12			

* $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.0001$.

Table 4
Regression coefficients and *F*-test value for organizational citizenship behavior

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE	β	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Decision-making	0.46	0.04	0.46***	71.88	0.40 (6,637, $p < .0001$)
Self-efficacy	0.39	0.06	0.35***		
Status	0.17	0.05	0.14***		
Autonomy	0.002	0.04	0.002		
Impact	0.003	0.06	0.003		
Professional growth	0.04	0.06	0.03		
Constant	1.04	0.16			

*** $p < 0.0001$.

three predictors—decision-making, self-efficacy, and status—were statistically significant predictors of OCB and also explained 40 percent of its variance ($F(3640) = 144.23, p < 0.0001$). An evaluation of the assumptions of each of the three regression models yielded no violations of assumptions of linearity, normality, and homoscedasticity of residuals.

4. Discussion

The findings regarding the means of the six dimensions of teacher empowerment appear to be consistent with previous studies. Wall and Rinehart (1998), for example, found that the most frequent dimensions of empowerment, amongst high school teachers, were in descending order: status ($M = 4.14, s.d. = 0.51$), self-efficacy, impact, professional growth, autonomy and decision-making ($M = 2.94, s.d. = 0.72$). In the present study, we found very similar results: status ($M = 4.10, s.d. = 0.62$), professional growth, impact, self-efficacy, autonomy and decision-making ($M = 3.06, s.d. = 0.73$). These findings imply that teachers feel that they are respected (status), have opportunities for professional growth, are effective at their job (impact) and perform well (self-efficacy). Yet, in both the American sample and in our population, teachers did not feel that they were involved in the process of decision-making. We can speculate that either teachers are not aware of their involvement, or that they really

were not given the opportunity to participate in various forms of school decision-making. (Wall & Rinehart, 1998 suggest these considerations in their discussion about the role of the school councils in the schools they sampled).

The results of the present study showed that two of the six subscales, self-efficacy and status, significantly predicted all three outcomes: organizational commitment, PC and OCB. Another subscale, professional growth, predicted two of the outcomes: organizational and PC. Participation in decision-making predicted OCB. The results regarding the criterion variable, organizational commitment, correspond with earlier findings that investigated the SPES subscales (Wu & Short, 1996). In their study, Wu and Short found that professional growth, self-efficacy and status predicted organizational commitment and explained 45 per cent of its variance. These same subscales were found to explain 44 per cent of the variance of organizational commitment in the present study.

Self-efficacy is one's perception of one's competence and ability to act. In educational settings, it was found that when teachers believe that they can make a difference with their students, they do (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). The importance of self-efficacy as a predictor of all three outcomes can be understood if we relate to the original concept of self-efficacy developed by Bandura (1977). According to Bandura, self-efficacy is based on two dimensions that he labeled "outcome expectancy" and "efficacy expectancy" (p. 79). "Outcome expectancy" implies that an individual estimates that a given behavior will result in certain outcomes. "Efficacy expectations" refer to behaviors toward the expected outcomes. Not surprisingly, where teachers report higher levels of self-efficacy, they exhibit more organizational behaviors. Teachers who have high expectations of themselves to perform effectively and successfully in school will carry out extra functions beyond the formal ones and will feel more committed to their school and to the teaching profession.

With regard to *status*, our findings demonstrate that teachers who have a high sense of status in their work tend to invest in more OCBs and to feel more committed to the organization and to the

teaching profession than teachers who do not express that level of status recognition. Teachers who perceive that they have the professional respect and admiration of their colleagues, in addition to acknowledgement of their expertise and knowledge, will be more inclined to contribute to their schools. Their contribution will be exhibited in the expression of greater commitment to the profession and the organization and in practicing OCBs that reflect helping others (students, colleagues, and the organization as a whole).

Professional growth, one's belief that one works in a supportive and nurturing environment that stimulates professional growth and development, may impact one's feeling of commitment to the organization and the profession. The more teachers perceive that they have opportunities for professional growth, the more they will strive to act for the good of the organization and the profession. According to Firestone and Pennell (1993), the knowledge demands of the new teaching strategies have stimulated the need to bring about the professionalization of teaching, of which professional growth is one measure. Teachers' commitment depends on their drive and will to grow professionally, a fact that has implications for the quality of instruction that the teachers will maintain.

Lastly, participation in *decision-making*, the subscale of teacher empowerment that was one of the predictors of OCB, was found in previous research to be linked to OCB (e.g., Vanypere et al., 1999). Participation in decision-making is joint decision-making or decision-making that is a product of shared influence by a superior and his or her employee (Koopman & Wierdsma, 1998). It was found to affect job satisfaction (Rice & Schneider, 1994) and as such, it is reasonable to assume that teachers satisfied with their jobs will, among others, exhibit more OCBs. A number of studies have shown a positive relationship between participation in decision-making and organizational commitment (e.g., Hoy, Tartar, & Bliss, 1990; Louis & Smith, 1991). In the present study, there was significant positive correlation between the two; however, decision-making was not found to be a predictor of organizational commitment

but rather of OCB. One might expect that teachers who report that they participate in decision-making processes in their school will show more OCBs that are reflected in activities beyond their existing role expectations. However, it was surprising that participative decision-making was not found to be a predictor of organizational commitment. One explanation for this finding may be the fact that decision-making was treated as a one-dimensional construct rather than a two-dimensional one. Decision-making in the school setting involves participation in decision-making in the technical domain (i.e., dealing with students and instruction), and in the managerial domain (i.e., dealing with school operations and administration). By combining these two dimensions, which may sometimes conflict, we may have caused cancellation out of both. In another study, [Somech and Bogler \(2002\)](#) found that teachers' participation in technical decisions did not predict organizational commitment; however, teachers' participation in managerial decisions was found to predict organizational commitment.

Findings regarding the significant positive correlation between organizational commitment and PC confirm previous research (e.g., [Cohen, 2000](#)), and contradict other research that asserted that there may be a conflict between the two concepts (e.g., [Wallace, 1993](#)). The results of the present study may imply that there is no inherent conflict between organizational commitment and PC, although a tension between the two may exist ([Aranya & Ferris, 1984](#)).

Teacher's perceived autonomy and impact were the least effective predictors of any of the outcomes examined, since both these variables were excluded from the regression equation. Although these findings are consistent with other research which examined the predictors of job satisfaction and organizational commitment among the six dimensions of teacher empowerment ([Wu & Short, 1996](#)), they are somewhat surprising. One would expect teachers who experience a high level of autonomy and feel that they have great impact on what is going in school, to report higher levels of commitment to the school and to their profession and to contribute

more than expected of them to the school. The current results imply that the two constructs, autonomy and impact, may not be directly related to the outcomes examined here since individuals who feel that they are autonomous and have impact in their workplace do not necessarily translate these feelings into behaviors that reflect great commitment to the organization, to the profession, or to OCB.

It is interesting to relate OCB to the concept of a teacher professional community or a teacher learning community ([Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999](#)). A professional community of teachers is characterized by three key features: a common set of activities that provide frequent face-to-face interaction, specific organizational structures to assist in developing common understandings, values and expectations for behavior to evolve, and a core of shared values regarding what students should learn, how faculty and students should behave and the shared goals to maintain and support the community ([Louis, Kruse, & Bryk, 1995](#)). Obviously, such a professional learning community involves the establishment of a school-wide culture that makes collaboration expected, wide-ranging, authentic, continuing, and focused on student outcomes ([Toole & Louis, 2002, Chapter 8](#)). In order for such a community to exist, it is expected that extra-role behaviors, in addition to in-role behaviors, should be implemented in the school setting. Without applying discretionary behaviors that go beyond the existing role expectations, and that are directed to the students, the teachers and the school organization as a unit, it would be almost impossible for a community of teachers to become a professional learning community. [Kruse, Louis and Bryk \(1995\)](#) indicate that one of the "preconditions" for the development of a professional learning community is the openness to improvement, trust and respect, access to expertise, supportive leadership and socialization. To achieve these human and social resources, it is crucial that teachers demonstrate OCB, since this affects the social and psychological environment of the organization reflected in shared norms and values, a focus on student learning, reflective dialogue with colleagues, and peer collaboration.

5. Conclusions and implications

This study primarily investigated the relationship between teacher empowerment and organizational commitment, PC and OCB. The findings demonstrate that a number of teacher empowerment dimensions have an impact on these outcomes in the school setting, but a number of limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. First, since all measures used are self-reports, common method variance is a problem, as well as social desirability effects. Although self-report data are commonly used to measure individual self-perception (Spector, 1994), one should bear in mind that they may not reflect the actual performance of the respondents. Second, although in selecting the sampled schools, care was taken with regard to the representation of urban, suburban and rural schools serving diverse populations that represented the composition of teachers in Israel with regard to gender, religion, age and education, we cannot generalize from this sample to all middle and high schools in Israel since the schools were located in the northern and central parts of Israel. Related to the issue of sampling is our 41 percent response rate, a rate not unusual in social science studies (e.g., Bogler, 1994; Kidder, 2002; Williams & Shiaw, 1999), but a factor which should be kept in mind when attempting to generalize to a larger population. A study that randomly and representatively samples all the middle and high schools in the country could allow such generalization. In addition, this study viewed each variable as a single scale rather than as a multi-faceted one. In contrast, organizational commitment was studied elsewhere (Hartmann & Bambacas, 2000) as a multi-method scale with three dimensions: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. This multi-level method may provide a better understanding of the phenomenon than using a single scale.

One of the important contributions of the present study is that it underscores the relative effects of four teacher empowerment dimensions on the important outcomes of organizational commitment, PC and OCB in the school. These outcomes have been found to be beneficial to

organizations. PC is considered a major determinant of organizational effectiveness (Pfeffer, 1994) and individual motivation (Hackman and Lawler, 1971). Organizational commitment has been found to affect employee identification with the organization, level of effort, and turnover (Stroh & Reilly, 1997). OCB has been linked to increased performance (Brief & Motowidlo, 1989). Two of the teacher empowerment dimensions, self-efficacy and status, appear to be crucial in predicting all three organizational outcomes and should therefore be strongly acknowledged by school principals who strive to raise teachers' commitment to the organization and to the profession and to increase teachers' motivation toward OCB for the benefit of the school. Principals need to establish working conditions that will bring teachers to perceive themselves as having a high level of competency, and experiencing high status and self-esteem.

Second, teachers who view themselves as professionals or perceive opportunities to grow professionally may contribute more to the school as their commitment to the organization and to the profession increases. Principals need to recognize that the feelings and perceptions of teachers about their schools, and their desire to attain opportunities for professional growth, are beneficial to the organization itself. Finally, based on the finding that participation in decision-making is a predictor of OCB, school principals should acknowledge the significance of the extra-role, rather than the in-role, nature of OCB since it carries great advantages for other members in the organization, including other teachers, students and the school as a whole. Thus, principals' practice of joint-decision-making should be recognized as highly important to the organization and its members. The findings of the study should also be acknowledged by policy-makers outside the school on the assumption that achieving high levels of organizational commitment, PC and OCB are important to them. Thus, the Ministry of Education, as the centralized office, and its operational units on the local level, should encourage participation of teachers in seminars and programs that stress teachers' professional growth and self-efficacy. It is assumed that once the teachers experience

greater opportunities for professional growth and acquire greater trust in their ability to achieve high-order goals (i.e., greater self-efficacy), their status will rise as well. As a result, and in addition to participating in shared decision-making with the principal, teachers may feel empowered at school, a fact that will reflect on their feelings of commitment toward the organization, the profession and their extra-role behavior.

Possible extensions of this study could be to examine the effects of other variables, such as perceived supervisory support (Vanypere et al., 1999) or job satisfaction, as mediating variables in the relationship between teacher empowerment (or its subscales) and school outcomes (either those that were examined in the present study or others). In addition, since the current study was conducted in middle and high schools, it may be worthwhile to investigate elementary schools to determine whether the results presented here reflect the general situation of teachers on all levels.

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