



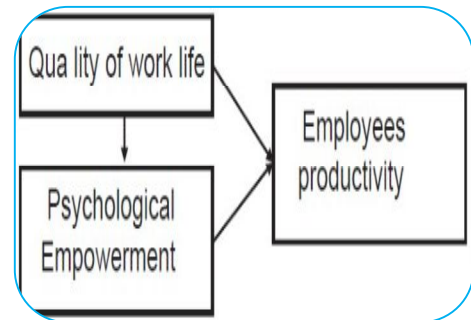
IMPACT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT ON WORK LIFE QUALITY

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ABSTRACT:

Psychological empowerment, work life quality levels and the impact of psychological empowerment on work life quality and its subdimensions which are work environment, working conditions and perception of the services provided. The psychological empowerment of the participant employees, their overall work life quality, work environment and level of the working conditions were found to be high, while level of the services provided to them was found to be moderate. It was also found that psychological empowerment was an explanatory factor for the change in the level of work life quality, working conditions and services provided.



KEYWORDS: *Psychological Empowerment, Structural Empowerment, Work Conditions, Work Life*

INTRODUCTION :

Psychological empowerment is a concept originating from industrial-organizational psychology. Empowerment is defined as the opportunity an individual has for autonomy, choice, responsibility, and participation in decision making in organizations. Psychological empowerment refers to an “intrinsic task motivation reflecting a sense of self-control in relation to one’s work and an active engagement with one’s work role.” Many studies on enterprise organizations have found that psychological empowerment can effectively stimulate individuals’ enthusiasm for work and promote the improvement of job performance. Psychological capital influences job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Whereas engagement seems to be contagious and may spread across members of work teams, leaders have a special role in fostering work engagement among their followers. Authentic leadership has been proposed as the root element of effective leadership needed to build healthier work environments because there is special attention to the development of empowering leader-follower relationships.

Since the 1980s, an increased interest in empowerment has been seen in diverse subject areas within psychology and management. Psychology empowerment linked empowering leadership to job satisfaction, work effort, and creativity. Structural empowerment had a direct positive effect on the areas of work life, which in turn had a direct negative effect on emotional exhaustion. Subsequently, emotional exhaustion had a direct negative effect on commitment. A survey of 258 respondents showed that psychological empowerment has an important role in positive work outcomes. Statistically

significant relationships were found between psychological empowerment, job insecurity and employee engagement. Employees were highly engaged when they had higher psychology capital, work empowerment partially mediated the relationship between psychology capital and work engagement. Research has demonstrated that psychological empowerment is positively related to employees' task, contextual, and innovation performance. Employees' perceptions of their leaders' empowering behavior and psychological empowerment predict employees' intention to leave organizations. Empowerment is a key variable in predicting positive organizational outcomes. At present, the concept of psychological empowerment and its structure have been recognized by most scholars. The conceptual structure of psychological empowerment proposed by Thomas et al is widely accepted. They believe that psychological empowerment is a combination of four cognitive components: a sense of impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice.

STRUCTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT

Structural empowerment refers to certain social workplace conditions and policies at work (Kanter, 1977) that facilitate access to opportunities, information, support and resources. Opportunities for learning and development include access to challenging work, new skills and knowledge that allow professional growth. The second empowering work condition involves having access to information regarding organizational aims, values, policies and decisions. Support entails getting feedback and help from colleagues, subordinates and management. Resources refer to acquiring temporary help when needed and time indispensable to carry out one's work, which help achieve organizational objectives.

Psychological empowerment, in contrast, is a motivational state involving four dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact (Spreitzer, 1995). Meaning indicates the degree to which individuals perceive their work is significant or meaningful. Competence refers to one's ability, skills and capabilities to accomplish their work. Self-determination is an employee's perception of having choice at work and freedom on how they do their job. Impact concerns the perceived influence of one's work on the organization or department. According to Spreitzer (1995), management may play a significant role in enhancing the four dimensions of psychological empowerment via work design in order to promote workforce empowerment.

Structural empowerment concerns social structures that facilitate the employees' work, whereas psychological empowerment refers to the positive experiences that individuals obtain directly from tasks when the cognitions of meaning, competence, self-determination and impact are satisfied (Spreitzer & Quinn, 2001). Structural empowerment has similarities with the concept of job resources, since both refer to aspects in the work environment that facilitate goal attainment. The value added in testing structural empowerment is that it may be seen as a higher-order construct that incorporates specific types of job aspects (e.g., information and opportunities for development) that may be relevant for all employees (Kanter, 1977) irrespective of the occupational context they work in. Similarly, despite the fact that both psychological empowerment and personal resources refer to individual qualities that are motivational in nature, the difference between the two concepts is that personal resources are individual characteristics (e.g., optimism, self-efficacy and hope), while psychological empowerment refers to positive individual experiences (e.g., meaning) that derive from the task itself. Therefore, structural and psychological empowerment have certain, unique aspects when compared to job and personal resources which explain the relevance of testing them as drivers of work engagement.

STRUCTURAL EMPOWERMENT AND WORK ENGAGEMENT

Kanter (1977, p. 166) describes power as "the ability to get things done, to mobilize resources". She contends that empowering work conditions (i.e., opportunities, information, support and instrumental resources) influence employee work attitudes and behaviors in achieving organizational goals in meaningful ways. When these social structures are present, employees are more likely to be engaged. For example, Boamah and Laschinger (2015) revealed that structural empowerment -together with psychological capital-were positively associated with work engagement. Further, Laschinger et al.

(2009) showed that structural empowerment related to higher effectiveness and work engagement among nurses.

JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) adopts the main assumptions of self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985) to explain why resources that form structural empowerment promote work engagement. Accordingly, empowering work conditions may enhance work engagement by stimulating employees' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In contexts where employees have access to development opportunities, support or necessary material to perform their tasks, they are more likely to be intrinsically motivated as these fulfil the basic human needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence (Deci & Ryan, 1985). For instance, opportunities for development increase employees' growth and learning, thus fostering job competence. Such work environments may also promote extrinsic motivation since the availability of empowering work conditions may directly facilitate work goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Prior empirical evidence (e.g., Laschinger et al., 2001; Saks & Gruman, 2014; Salmela-Aro & Upadhyaya, 2018; Schaufeli, Martínez, Pinto, Salanova, & Bakker, 2002; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009) demonstrated that the factors that form structural empowerment such as performance feedback, opportunities for development, organizational and social support cultivate work engagement.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND WORK ENGAGEMENT

Despite the burgeoning interest in the favorable role of psychological empowerment for work outcomes such as job satisfaction or organizational commitment, only a few studies have examined its relationship with work engagement (Bhatnagar, 2012; Macinga et al., 2015; Ugwu et al., 2014; Wang & Liu, 2015). Previous research has demonstrated that psychological empowerment partially mediated the positive relationship between professional nursing practice environment and work engagement (Wang & Liu, 2015). Macinga et al. (2015) highlighted the incremental value of psychological empowerment -along with extraversion and conscientiousness- in explaining work engagement. In the same vein, Bhatnagar (2012) found that psychological empowerment related positively to work engagement that, in turn, associated positively with innovation and negatively with turnover intention.

Based on JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) and SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985), it can be argued that when employees believe that their work is important (meaning), are able to do their job (competence), have choice (self-determination) and their work has significant influence in their department (impact), they will be more likely to exhibit autonomous motivation resulting in more energy, dedication and absorption in their work.

CONCLUSION

The Relation Between Psychological Empowerment and Work Life Quality

Psychological empowerment increases the perception of justice in the employees, and the perception of justice, in turn, influences the levels of psychological empowerment in a positive way.

Employee empowerment is an important management approach that will improve the work life quality. Ensuring that employees work in their workplaces with higher motivation, providing them a job satisfaction, giving them an opportunity to have a word in the decisions about themselves or the work they do, making them feel secure and increasing their commitment levels towards the organization and the work they perform can be achieved through employee empowerment.

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