



PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON CRITICAL WORK OUTCOMES SUCH AS ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT, JOB - SATISFACTION AND SELF-EVALUATED PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore and measure psychological empowerment and its components and also assess the impact of psychological empowerment on three critical work outcomes such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction and self-appraised performance among the Indian bank employees belonging to the clerical cadre. The research strategy used was a survey design and through self-administered questionnaires, data was collected from 123 subjects working in 15 bank branches in the city of Chennai, India comprising of both public and private sector banks. Psychological empowerment and its components, meaning, competence, self-determination and impact were measured using Spreitzer's Psychological Empowerment scale.(1995) Simple, bivariate regression analysis was conducted in order to examine the relationship between the independent variable psychological empowerment and the three dependent variables, organisational commitment, job satisfaction and self-appraised performance. The findings of the study have revealed that the respondents have reported moderate levels of psychological empowerment, with reportedly higher levels of the two dimensions, meaningfulness and competence and lower levels of self-determination and impact. The regression analysis has proved that psychological empowerment had a significant positive relationship with organisational commitment and job satisfaction but was negatively related to self-appraised performance. The research reveals that that psychological empowerment is not an universal construct that can be generalised across all work situations, but is specific to the work domain.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The concept of employee participation has taken different forms, from which employee involvement and participative decision making concepts evolved which later gave rise to the contemporary employee empowerment perspective (Bryman et al, 2004). Employee empowerment is considered crucial to the success and the continued existence of an organisation in this era of globalisation which requires employees to make quick decisions and respond spontaneously to any changes in the environment (Ongori, 2008). The concept of employee empowerment is being viewed with increasing interest by organisational theorists and practitioners. This concept has been the focus for research and practice for many years and the reasons for its significance have been identified by Conger and Kanungo (1988). This increased interest may be partly because, many of the findings in management and leadership research suggests that empowering subordinates is an essential component which may serve objectives linked to managerial and organisational effectiveness , or because, the analysis of power and control within organisations have revealed that the total productive forms of organizational power and effectiveness is directly proportional to the sharing of power and control between the leader and the sub-ordinates , and experiences in team building suggest that empowerment techniques play a significant role in the effective functioning and development of the teams and finally because, though there has been a lot of research and literature about empowerment , the understanding and the perceptions of the employees of the construct remains confusing and inadequate (Conger and Kanungo,1988). Hence researchers and practitioners have embraced empowerment as a way to stimulate decision making at lower levels in an organisation and simultaneously enrich the work experience of the employees (Moye and Henkin, 2004).

The term empowerment which literally means to enable,or give power to, has been defined in many ways and in various perspectives .After an extensive review of literature , two types of empowerment could be identified,structural empowerment which views empowerment as a power sharing concept and psychological empowerment which views empowerment as a motivational construct . Since this research essay focusses on the aspects of psychological empowerment and its outcomes, these two definitions form the basis of the research:

Conger and Kanungo(1988:474), defined empowerment as a, “ process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organisational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organisational practices and informal techniques of providing self efficacy information”.

Thomas and Velthouse (1990), defined empowerment as “increased intrinsic task motivation manifested in a set of four cognitions reflecting an individual's orientation to his or her work role:meaning, competence,..... self-determination, and impact” (Spreitzer, 1995, p1995).

This piece of research explores the concept of psychological empowerment in detail and aims to measure the extent of psychological empowerment in the workplace using Spreitzer's Psychological Empowerment Scale (1995) , so that each of the four components of empowerment as stated by Thomas and Velthouse (1990) could be measured and analysed separately.

Most of the literature on employee empowerment is written from a normative perspective, which identifies the functions that empowerment should serve in organisations (Lashley, 2004). According to these researchers, empowered organisations will become more competitive and will gain more productivity and profitability when compared with the traditional, bureaucratic, disempowered organisations. The common benefits which are expected from a empowered workforce are commitment to the organisational goals and mission, satisfied employees which in turn lead to satisfied customers and improved performance of individual employees. Hence this piece of research, in addition to measuring the components of psychological empowerment, aims to analyse the impact of psychological empowerment on these critical work outcomes in the Indian Banking sector to provide the corrective to the more evangelical claims of many commentators.

The main research questions identified from the literature review which the actual research attempts to answer are

- 1.To what extent can psychological empowerment be achieved in a work place?
- 2.To what extent the four dimensions of empowerment: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact contribute to the overall construct of psychological empowerment?

3. Does psychological empowerment have a positive relationship with the organisational commitment of an individual?
4. Does psychological empowerment have a positive relationship with the Job Satisfaction of an individual?
5. Does psychological empowerment have a positive relationship with the self-appraised performance of an individual?

Hence, based on the literature review, three hypotheses were formulated for study.

H1-Psychological Empowerment is positively related to Organisational Commitment.

H2- Psychological Empowerment is positively related to Job-Satisfaction.

H3-Psychological Empowerment is positively related to Performance(Self-reported).

.Data was collected from 123 subjects from 15 bank branches working in the clerical cadre in the city of Chennai, India. The research strategy used was analytical survey design, the data collection method was through self-administered questionnaires. A pilot study was conducted with a small sample prior to the actual research to determine how the respondents will interpret the data and also to identify the potential flaws in the formulated questionnaires. Data was analysed using simple regression analysis using the SPSS software and the hypotheses were tested and findings were reported.

The main research findings from the data analysis was found to be that the sample surveyed showed moderate levels of psychological empowerment . The respondents reported higher levels of the first two dimensions meaningfulness and impact and lower levels of self-determination and impact. The reasons for this were discussed . The testing of the hypotheses with the help of simple linear regression analysis revealed that psychological empowerment was found be positively related to organisational commitment and job satisfaction but the third hypothesis which stated that psychological empowerment was positively related to self-appraised performance was not supported.

Summary

The report starts with the literature review which analyses employee empowerment in a historical context, followed by the representation of various viewpoints and perspectives on employee empowerment prevalent in the literature. After the review on various viewpoints, the two types of empowerment identified are discussed, a brief introduction of the concept of structural empowerment is provided. Then the entire focus is shifted towards psychological empowerment. Components of psychological empowerment is studied and the antecedents of psychological empowerment are discussed in subsequent chapters. The psychological empowerment process proposed by Conger and Kanungo(1988) is explained in detail in the next section followed by the expected outcomes of empowerment. Then the three organisational variables organisational commitment, job-satisfaction and self-appraised performance are discussed separately. The review concludes with the existing drawbacks and continuities of concerns in the field of employee empowerment.

Literature review is followed by the research methodology which presents all the approaches that have been used for collection and analysis of data. Under data collection it covers information about the pilot study, sample, the background, the research instruments used, the validity and reliability of the instruments and also the research ethics. In addition the methodology chapter covers the data analysis techniques used along the limitations of the research. The methodology chapter is followed by the computation of results and data analysis which covers the descriptive statistics of all the variables involved and also the testing of the three hypotheses stated above. The final chapter presents the discussion and conclusion based on the research findings and recommendations are provided based on the literature review followed by a discussion of the implications for future research and practise in the field of psychological empowerment. The major purpose of this research was to contribute to the better understanding of the extent to which psychological empowerment motivates employees to experience high levels of organisational commitment, job satisfaction and improved performance.

EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT.

This chapter provides a critical review of the existing literature in the field of employee empowerment, with the special focus on psychological empowerment, analysing its components, antecedents, the process which leads to the empowered state and expected outcomes of psychological empowerment. In addition to it, three important organisational outcomes organisational commitment, job satisfaction and self-appraised performance are studied and discussed in relation to the psychological empowerment construct.

Historical context of empowerment

Much of the literature on employee involvement and participation, refer to employee empowerment as a entirely new phenomenon and fail to consider its historical context (Wilkinson, 1997). After the industrial revolution, in the 1920s, when traditional forms of work organisation like bureaucracy and Taylorism which was characterised by division of labour, and workers performing fragmented and repetitive jobs, were popular in terms of increasing productivity, there was concern over the dissatisfaction and alienation of workers reflected in conflicts, high rates of absenteeism and high labour turnover (Wilkinson, 1997). During the 1950s and 1960s, many writers and management theorists like Douglas McGregor (1960), Chris Argyris(1957), Rensis Likert(1967) criticised the autocratic and hierarchical systems of traditional corporate management which were based on worker compliance and insisted on the provision of greater autonomy and involvement in decision making to the corporate employees (Potterfield, 1999).

Theories like the theory X and theory Y constructs proposed by Douglas McGregor, Maslow's model of hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory justified the benefits of empowerment by stating that participation and empowerment of employees satisfy human growth needs of self-actualisation and fulfilment and hence increase motivation and performance (Wilkinson, 1997). The job enrichment theory was established in the 1960s as a alternative work paradigm to provide meaningful work for employees so that some degree of control and decision making would be exercised by them (Wilkinson, 1997). The introduction of the Organisational Development (OD) concepts in the 1960s which stressed on the importance of the individual employees to develop to their fullest potentials so that it facilitates the growth of the individual as well as the organisation also had a

tremendous impact on the development of the empowerment construct (Vogt and Murrell, 1990).

The 1980s witnessed empowerment emerging in its modern form as developments in the broader political and social environment which included more educated workers led to higher levels of expectations regarding the quality of working life (Wilkinson, 1997). Employee empowerment became an underlying principle of continuous improvement and hence became an essential component of management concepts such as TQM (Total Quality Management) and BPR (Business Process Re-engineering) which were followed not only in Japanese firms but were also very popular in the west (Wilkinson, 1997). Now in this era of globalisation, characterised by dynamic and complex changes, empowerment is considered critical for the survival and growth of an organisation.

Various viewpoints on empowerment

The meaning of the term empowerment still remains a clarity lacking concept and has been a subject of great debate, since empowerment is always found attached to management concepts such as TQM (Total Quality Management) and BPR (Business Process Re-engineering) (Bryman et al, 2004). Employee empowerment has been defined in various ways and from different viewpoints. Some definitions identify the core element of the empowerment function as the delegation of authority or providing the employees with discretion over certain task related activities (Ongori, 2008). However, the meaning of 'to empower' in the Oxford English Dictionary is ' to invest legally or formally with power:to authorize,license which means to enable or to permit' (Jenkins, 1996 p37). Hence a clear distinction has been identified between empowerment which is much more than mere delegation of authority. Nancy Foy (1994:4), explains this distinction by using a practical example, 'If you give your 12-year old daughter money to buy jeans, that's delegation.....if you give her a clothes allowance which she can spend as she chooses, that's empowerment'. This example underpins some definitions of empowerment, that the empowerer is in a more powerful position than the empowered and that the empowered have empowerment done to them and they operate within the boundaries set.

Nancy Foy (1994) states that 'Organisations are not empowered, people are.' Conger and Kanungo (1988) defined empowerment as a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification and removal of conditions

that foster powerlessness. In short they viewed empowerment as the motivational concept of self- efficacy. Thomas and Velthouse(1990) and Spreitzer(1995) defined empowerment in a broader perspective as increased intrinsic task motivation manifested in a set of four cognitions reflecting an individual's orientation to his/her work roles: Meaning, Competence, Self-determination and Impact. Spreitzer(1995) concurred with the definition of empowerment as given by Thomas and Velthouse(1990) and pointed out that the definition of empowerment was based on certain assumptions.

1. Empowerment is not an enduring personality trait that can be generalized across situations, but it was more a set of cognitions shaped by a work environment (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990).
2. Empowerment is a continuous variable and people need to be viewed as more or less empowered rather than as empowered or not empowered.
3. Empowerment is specific to the work domain and is not a global construct that can be generalized across different life situations and roles.

McConnel(1995) argues that empowerment and delegation are no different from each other and that empowerment is 'simply delegation done properly'. The study says that both have failed because both delegate only authority and not responsibility, as often claimed. The emphasis should be, the study says on the sense of 'task ownership' on the part of the empowered employee. Task ownership is possible only when an employee is willing to take on a new task and that employee should be properly instructed, encouraged and involved in deciding what and how it should be done.

There are different other perspectives of empowerment envisaged by other researchers. There were nine types of power identified by Umiker(1992), authority, expertise, knowledge, alliance, charisma, fiscal, physical, supported and persuasive, prevalent in organisations. He concluded that there is a direct correlation between the amount and the kind of external control of employees and the severity of their sense of powerlessness. Garfield (1993) observed that employee participation will be achieved in an organization if and only if the employee has a compelling personal reason to do so.

Empowerment is also defined as the act of persuading employees to take complete responsibility for their own job satisfaction by certain writers(Senge et al, 1999). Mallak &

Kurstet Jr(1996) attempted to define and differentiate empowerment from participative management. Their definition of empowerment embodies the concept of intrinsic motivation, internal justification for decision making, shared responsibilities, and integration for problem solving. The study argues that empowerment is more than participative management. It further argues an organization's level of empowerment is related to its culture. A strong culture supports the empowerment process in many ways, the study says.

According to Mohammed et al (1998), empowerment is a state of mind and the empowered employee experiences feelings of '1. control over the job to be performed, 2. awareness of the context in which the work is performed, 3. accountability for personal work output 4. shared responsibility for unit and organisational performance and 5.equity in the rewards based on individual and collective performance'(Ongori, 2008 p 10.)

Ford and Fottler (1995) argue that empowerment process is one of directed autonomy' and (1) sharing of information and knowledge with employees to enable them to understand and contribute to organizational performance (2) rewarding them based on organization's performance and (3) giving the employees the authority to make decisions. They have argued that more of empowerment is not always right and that empowerment is a matter of degree rather than an absolute.

Hirshhorn and Gilmore(1992) had identified three boundaries (authority boundaries, task boundaries and political boundaries) that an individual needs to be clear in order to be able to work effectively together. Now with the introduction of empowerment these boundaries are no longer rigid and binding and must be negotiated now on a relationship by relationship basis by employees (Bushe et al 1996). They have based their definition of the empowerment concept on the work of Thomas and Velthouse (1990) but they have also identified a few other facts of empowerment (choiceness, effort, impact, self-system control, meaningfulness and universal justice).

Studying the issue of leadership and empowerment from a social exchange perspective, Keller & Dansereau (1995), proposed that the receipt of negotiating latitude and support for self-worth from superiors empowers subordinates by increasing their perceptions of control.

The question of empowering middle managers to be transformational leaders was taken up by Spreitzer and Quinn (1996). The study suggests that middle mangers are capable

of making both transformational and transactional changes targeted at themselves, their work unit, and their organization.

The cognitive model of empowerment defines the term based on four components, 'choice providing employee with genuine job enrichment and opportunities to have their voice heard, having real power for control and influence over work processes, which makes employees to be confident in discharging their duties' (Ongori, 2008,p 10). The model suggests, the employees have to be empowered for the organisation's survival, motivation, job satisfaction, increased efficiency and to be globally competitive(Ongori, 2008).

Dwivedi(1995) states that empowerment is not new to Indian culture and it has been implemented in various forms in India. He calls empowerment as a continuous process that replaces the old order with the new. Empowerment is an indispensable device that redesigns roles and, builds empowering leadership, empowering attitudes and skills of empowerment.

While there are various conflicting definitions and meanings for the term empowerment, two key aspects of empowerment could be identified, the psychological dimension which explains how an individual perceives empowerment and secondly the structural perspective which focusses on the role of managers and the process of redistribution of power between the management and employee (Bryman et al, 2004). In this particular piece of research, the definitions given by Thomas and Velthouse(1990) and Spreitzer (1995) form the basis to explain psychological empowerment.

Structural Empowerment

After an extensive review of literature, two general perspectives of empowerment have been identified, the structural empowerment and psychological empowerment. (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Wilkinson, 1998; Spreitzer, 1995). Structural empowerment is also referred to as top-down processing or mechanistic approach which believes that empowerment occurs when higher levels of hierarchy share power with lower levels of the hierarchy in an organization. The structural perspective maintains that it is the implementation of new processes and the distribution of power that empowers employees. (Conger and Kanungo, 1988). This is also referred to as the relational dimension of empowerment or the relational construct as it is concerned with changing the relationship between managers and employees (Lashley,2001).

The structural determinants proposed by Kanter(1977) provides a framework for measuring structural empowerment within a workplace. According to Kanter's structural theory of organisational behaviour, perceptions of formal power, informal power and access to opportunity, information, resources and support determine the level of structural empowerment in an organisation. This perspective of empowerment, suggests that organisational structure is a critical factor in explaining the workplace behaviour of the employees (Smith, 2008).

Psychological empowerment.

The psychological empowerment perspective focuses on the employee's perception of empowerment (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990, Spreitzer, 1995). This perspective is also known as organic or bottom-up processing maintain that empowerment is achieved only when psychological states produce a perception of empowerment within the employee. (Quinn and Spreitzer, 1997; Wilkinson, 1998) The work of Conger and Kanungo(1988) which defined that empowerment involves the motivational concept of self-efficacy is normally used as a initial point in the literature of psychological empowerment (Bryman et al, 2004). Lashley(2001:23) states that ' empowerment as a motivational construct relies more on an understanding of empowerment through individual's internal needs for power and control and feelings of self-efficacy. Inorder to achieve psychological empowerment, it is not just enough to introduce changes in the management practices but it is mandatory to ensure that all those practises are fully realised (Bryman et al, 2004).

Thomas and Velthouse(1990) developed the cognitive model of empowerment and argued that empowerment is a multifaceted construct and defined more broadly as intrinsic task motivation manifested in a set of four cognitions reflecting an individual's orientation to the work role: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact (Bryman et al, 2004).The first empowerment cognition is **meaning** which concerns the value of a work goal or purpose judged in relation to an employee's own ideals and standards which refers to the fit between the requirements of the work role and the employee's beliefs, values and behaviours (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990, Spreitzer, 1995). The second empowerment cognition is **competence**, which is an employee's belief in his or her own capability to perform task activities efficiently when he or she tries to do so (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). **Self-determination** the third empowerment cognition involves causal responsibility for a person's actions which

is the perception of the employee in the initiation and continuation of work behaviours and processes (Spreitzer, 1995). **Impact** is the fourth empowerment cognition which reflects the degree to which an employee can influence strategic, administrative or operating outcomes of work (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Impact is referred to as 'the converse of learned helplessness' (Spreitzer, 1995, p1444) as it emphasises on the lack of perceived influence over the workplace forces. These four cognitions together reflect an active orientation to the work role in which the individual has the freedom to shape the work role and context (Spreitzer, 1996).

Hence the four dimensions are nearly a complete or sufficient set of cognitions for understanding the overall construct of psychological empowerment as a lack of any one of the dimensions may deflate the overall degree of felt empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995). The higher the individual scores in each of these elements/cognitions, the more empowered the individual feels (Bryman et al, 2004). Thomas and Velthouse (1990) stated that there are six key variables which influence these four cognitions, they are task assessments, environmental events, global assessments, interpretative styles, behaviours and interventions (Bryman et al, 2004).

The model of psychological empowerment stresses on the importance of the perception of the employees on the working environments more than the objective reality (Spreitzer, 1996). It was suggested that, “an individual's judgement about observable organisational conditions are shaped by their interpretations which go beyond verifiable reality.” (Spreitzer, 1996, p486). The psychological perspective is the most useful perspective in this piece of research as it enables us to systematically review both the theoretical and the empirical evidence on the effects of empowerment in the workplace, because of the development of the psychological empowerment scale by Spreitzer in 1995.

Antecedents of psychological empowerment.

Spreitzer (1995) hypothesized two personality traits, self-esteem and locus of control and two work context variables, information-sharing and rewards as the antecedents of psychological empowerment which are positively related to psychological empowerment.

Self-esteem: This is defined as the general feeling of self-worth which is positively related to empowerment. Individuals with high self-esteem exercise feelings of competence or self-determination and hence view themselves as assets to an organisation having high expertise

and work specific skills thus assuming an active orientation to their work role (Spreitzer, 1995).

Locus of control: The impact dimension is often associated with locus of control, but impact is different as it is influenced by the work context whereas the locus of control is a global personality characteristic that endures across situations (Spreitzer, 1996). 'Locus of control explains the degree to which people believe, rather than the external forces that they determine what happens in their lives' (Spreitzer, 1995, 1446). Individuals having this personality trait feel capable of shaping their work role and environment and hence feel responsible for their working environment instead of being controlled by external forces (Spreitzer, 1995).

Information: According to the hypothesis of Spreitzer (1995), access to information about the goals and mission of the organisation is positively related to empowerment. An empowering organisation is supposed to “make more information more available to more people at more levels through more devices” (Spreitzer, 1995, p 1447). Two specific types of information, information about an organisation's mission and information about performance are essential for empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995). Conger and Kanungo (1988) stated that information sharing about the organisation's mission is an important antecedent of empowerment because it creates a sense of meaning and purpose and enhances an individual's ability to influence decisions centred around the organisation's mission and goals (Spreitzer, 1995). Performance information is vital for the employees to feel valued.

Rewards: An empowering organisation should have an incentive/ reward system that recognises individual and organisational performance. Spreitzer (1995:p1448) suggests that individual incentives enhance empowerment by, "recognising and reinforcing personal competencies and providing individuals with incentives for participating in and affecting decision-making processes at work.”

The psychological empowerment process

Conger and Kanungo (1988) stated that empowerment becomes a necessity when the employees start feeling powerless. Thus he suggested that, “it is important to identify conditions within organisations that foster a sense of powerlessness among employees” (Conger and Kanungo, 1988, p474). In order to remove these conditions, empowerment strategies and tactics which provide personal efficacy information to them could be employed

(Conger and Kanungo, 1988). Conger and Kanungo (1988) represented the process of empowerment in five stages. (Lashley, 2001).

Stage 1: This stage involves the identification and diagnosis of the organisational aspects that lead employees to feel disempowered (Conger and Kanungo, 1988). Those conditions may be tall, hierarchical organisational structures, and autocratic leadership that prevent the employees from participating in decision making or an ineffective reward system that fails to recognise deserving employees or the presence of status differentials characterised by high power distance or the nature of the work itself which is much restricted and repetitive that limits discretion and sense of meaningfulness (Lashley, 2001).

Stage 2: This stage involves the introduction of empowerment strategies and managerial techniques to eliminate the conditions identified and to enhance the feelings of self-efficacy among the employees (Conger and Kanungo, 1988). This might include introducing participatory management techniques such as breaking down rigid hierarchies so that it leads to flatter organisational structures providing more discretion and freedom to participate in decision making. This stage also involves setting goals, providing systems of feedback such as the suggestion box, adopting a democratic leadership style that facilitates bottom-up communication and reward systems that reward competence (Lashley, 2001).

Stage 3: This involves providing self-efficacy information to sub-ordinates from a variety of sources (Conger and Kanungo, 1988) “Providing information about how the individual's personal efficacy is developing is deemed to be an important feature in developing the individual's perceptions and belief in their own efficacy” (Lashley, 2001, 26). Personal efficacy information can be obtained from individual and personal reflections on their own development, verbal feedback and providing a facilitative and encouraging work environment that builds trust and confidence (Lashley, 2001).

Stage 4: In this stage, as a result of receiving such information, sub-ordinates start feeling empowered (Conger and Kanungo, 1988). The empowered employees then strengthen their efforts and use their potential and develop an expectancy of personal efficacy (Lashley, 2001).

Empowering Experience: The expectancy theory by Lawler(1973) states that an individual's motivation to increase his or her efforts in a particular task depends on two types of expectation, the expectation that their effort will result in a desired level of performance

referred to as the self-efficacy expectation and the expectation that their performance will yield desirable outcomes referred to as outcome expectation (Conger and Kanungo, 1988). Conger and Kanungo (1988) suggests that when individuals are empowered, it is the personal efficacy expectation that is strengthened and their outcome expectation remains unaffected which means that the empowered employees develop a can-do attitude or become self-competent believing in their own effectiveness regardless of the hopes for favourable performance outcomes.

Stage 5:The final stage in the empowerment process is characterised by behavioural changes in employees which results in continuous efforts and persistence of behaviour to achieve organisational goals and accomplish task objectives (Conger and Kanungo, 1988 ; Lashley, 2001).

Behavioural Changes : The process of empowerment influences the initiation which is amount of efforts and initiative an employee is ready to take and the persistence which is amount of time an employee persists in the face of obstacles and aversive situations and handles the crisis with confidence (Conger and Kanungo, 1988). “Empowerment processes may allow leaders to lessen the emotional impact of demoralising organisational changes or to mobilise organisational members in the face of difficult competitive challenges” (Conger and Kanungo, 1988, p 476). The process also enables leaders to set high performance goals and enables employees to accept and to be committed to these set goals (Conger and Kanungo, 1988).

Criticisms of the model: Though the model provides a basic understanding of how personal efficacy might be developed at an individual level, there are some limitations which have been recognised. The model is criticized of failing to recognise the complexity of the chain of processes being built (Lashley, 2001). The contextual factors such as the labour market conditions, business strategy and the nature of customer service which may restrain the manager's perceptions of empowerment and its benefits have not been considered in this model (Lashley, 2001). When analysed from a practical viewpoint, it is not possible to generalise that one stage will naturally lead to the other as suggested by the model, as the empowerment practises introduced in one stage may not result in the development of a sense of personal efficacy in the next stage owing to the experiences of employees which may not change their work behaviour as in stage 5(Lashley, 2001). Hence organisational effectiveness

is not assured as there may be other internal or external factors that are more influential in determining an organisation's success (Lashley, 2001).

Outcomes of psychological empowerment

Empowerment provides significant benefits to the individual and the organisation. Spreitzer (1995), identified two main consequences of psychological empowerment to be effectiveness and innovative behaviour. He quotes that empowerment has great potential to contribute to these outcomes as in a managerial context, the work processes cannot be structured only by using formal rules and procedures. Spreitzer(1995:1448) defined “managerial effectiveness as the degree to which a manager fulfils or exceeds work role expectations.” Empowered managers exhibit more effectiveness as they feel self-competent, have the ability to positively and meaningfully influence their job and work environments and executing their responsibilities proactive and independent (Spreitzer, 1995). According to Thomas and Velthouse (1990), empowerment increases concentration, initiative and resiliency and thus increases managerial effectiveness (Spreitzer, 1995).

Each of the four cognitive dimensions is found to be related to behaviours leading to organisational effectiveness, meaning was found to result in high commitment and high concentration of energy, competence leads to efforts, persistence in challenging situations and high goal expectations, self-determination results in learning, interest and resilience in the face of adversity and impact is associated with absence of withdrawal from difficult situations and high performance (Spreitzer, 1995). She also proposed that the employee perceptions of empowerment leads to enhanced value of work, increased job-satisfaction and a subsequent increase in productivity levels (Spreitzer, 1995).

Spreitzer (1995) hypothesised psychological empowerment results in innovative behaviours, which is change oriented and refers to the creation of something new or different which may be new process, idea, product, or service. since empowered individuals have a great degree of autonomy and impact, they show creativity and are less restrained by the rule bound aspects of work (Spreitzer, 1995). To sum up Spreitzer(1995), suggested four important outcomes of empowerment, taking initiative, stimulating innovation, embracing risks and coping with uncertainties.

Conger and Kanungo (1988) as discussed earlier suggested behavioural changes as a result of the empowerment process, stating that, “empowerment as an enabling process

affects both initiation and persistence of subordinates' task behaviour” (Conger and Kanungo, 1988, p 476). Empowerment also results in the strengthening of personal-self-efficacy of individual employees which leads to the development of personal mastery (Conger and Kanungo, 1988).

Ongori(2008) listed the following benefits as possible outcomes of empowerment , building trust, commitment and ownership towards the organisation, job-satisfaction, providing exceptional customer service, and quick and spontaneous decision-making .Prior research in the field suggests that there are other outcomes like empowered employees having higher levels of interpersonal-level trust in their managers (Moye and Henkin, 2004), low levels of absenteeism and lower levels of intention to leave the job.

This piece of research will focus on the relationship between psychological empowerment and three attitudinal outcomes which have been identified by many researchers and practitioners as important outcomes of empowerment, organisational commitment, job-satisfaction and self-evaluated performance. These three variables were chosen as it had much relevance to the context in which the actual research was based and based upon the literature review, much of the literature states that they are positively related with psychological empowerment.

Organisational commitment.

Organisational commitment is a multidimensional construct,and its meaning and importance have been discussed from different viewpoints by researchers and practitioners. Two significant conceptualisations of organisational commitment are, an employee's loyalty towards the organisation's mission and goals and an employee's intention to stay with the organisation (Rose and Muthuveloo, 2005). Mowday et al, described three major components of empowerment , “(1)strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation's goals and values:(2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation: and (3)a strong desire to maintain membership in an organisation”. (Mowday et al, 1982, p226). Allen and Meyer (1990) identified three forms of commitment,

Affective commitment: is based on the employee's positive feelings or emotions towards the organisations, defined as “employee's emotional attachment to, identification with , and involvement in, the organisation”(Meyer, Irving and Allen, 1998, p 32).some of the antecedents for affective commitment include job characteristics like task autonomy, task

identity, skill variety, and supervisory feedback, organisational dependability and participative management and decision making (Rose and Muthuveloo, 2005).

Continuance commitment: is the commitment which involves the recognition of the costs that an employee incurs while leaving the organisation (Meyer, Irving and Allen, 1998). The antecedents include age tenure, career satisfaction and intent to leave (Rose and Muthuveloo, 2005).

Normative commitment: which is the form of commitment that “reflects employees' feelings of obligation to remain with the organisation” (Meyer, Irving and Allen, 1998, p 32) which is based on the employees commitment to the values and goals of the organisation. The potential antecedents include fellow worker's commitment, organisational dependability and participatory management (Rose and Muthuveloo, 2005).

Chris Agryris (1998), explores two kinds of commitment, external commitment and internal commitment. External commitment, also referred to as contractual compliance is the type of commitment employees possess, when they have a very limited amount of task autonomy and are accustomed to work under the command-and control model (Chris Agryris, 1998). Internal commitment is the type of commitment where individuals exercise greater task-autonomy and are committed to a particular project, person or program for their own individual reasons or motivations (Chris Agryris, 1998). Internal commitment is the type of commitment that is closely allied with empowerment (Chris Agryris, 1998). In order to bring about internal commitment, managers should enable and empower employees to participate in defining work objectives, and suggest ways in which the objectives could be achieved.

Spreitzer (1995), reported that out of the four dimensions of psychological empowerment, meaning, competence and impact results in organisational commitment and thus concluded that psychological empowerment is positively related to organisational commitment. In this research, one of the hypothesis would be that organisational commitment is positively related to psychological empowerment and out of the four dimensions, meaning exerts a greater influence on commitment.

Job satisfaction.

According to Spector(1997), job satisfaction is the most frequently studied variable in organisational behaviour research. Job satisfaction is an attitudinal variable which is defined

as the extent to which an individual likes or dislikes his/her job (Spector, 1997). Though it was initially approached by researchers from the perspective of needs fulfilment which refers to the physical needs like pay and remuneration, later the focus has shifted to cognitive processes rather than underlying needs (Spector, 1997). Spector (1997:2) stated that, “ Job satisfaction can be considered as a global feeling about the job or as a related constellation of attitudes about the various aspects or facets of the job.”which means that an employee could have different perceptions about different facets of the job.

Mowday et al(1982), explained the difference between organisational commitment and job satisfaction by stating that organisational commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to the entire employing organisation's values and goals whereas job satisfaction refers to the perception of the employee with regard to the specific task environment where the employee performs his or her duties.

Hackman and Oldham(1976), studied job satisfaction as a psychological work construct and described it using the Job Characteristics Model which consists of five main facets which directly influence job satisfaction, task identity which refers to how closely an employee could relate to the particular task performed, task significance which signifies the importance of the employee's role in the task performed, skill variety which is concerned with the various number of responsibilities the employee possesses, autonomy which is the amount of control the employee exerts over his job and feedback which represents the perceived level of the employee's confidence in how well the job is performed. When these five characteristics are accomplished , the employee experiences meaningfulness in his work which is associated with the meaning cognition of psychological empowerment.

Spreitzer(1995) reported that job satisfaction is one of the important outcomes of psychological empowerment as all the four dimensions, meaning, competence, self-determination lead to job satisfaction. Hence in this piece of research, the second hypothesis would be that psychological empowerment is positively related to job satisfaction.

Self-evaluated performance.

Self-appraisal of job performance refers to how an individual rates himself in his present job performance (Meyer, 1980). Thornton (1980:268) stated that, “Individuals have a significantly different view of their own job performance from that held by other people.” Since the appraisal entirely depends on the perception of that particular employee, self-

assessment accuracy becomes the prime concern(Franks et al, 1997). There are three types of self-assessment accuracy identified, the first being over-estimation which occurs when candidates think they are performing better than they actually are,the second is under -estimation when the individuals feel they perform poorly than they actually are and the third being perfect accuracy where the candidates are able to perceive their exact abilities and know how they actually perform the job (Franks et al, 1997).

According to Thornton (1980), self-appraisals of work performance contains evidence about the following traits, leniency, variability, halo, bias and construct validity. Self-appraisals are being used as a part of the performance appraisal interview, and though there are certain drawbacks like inaccuracy,interpersonal conflicts, distrust and increase in defensiveness, it has potential advantages like, greater self awareness, greater learning and greater dialogue between colleagues (Franks et al, 1997).

Spreitzer(1995), reported that considering the four cognitive elements of psychological empowerment meaning results in high concentration of energy leading to high levels of performance, competence results in more effort thereby resulting in high performance. Hence in this piece of research, the third hypothesis would be that Psychological empowerment is positively related to performance. Self-appraised performance was chosen as a variable because empowerment is focussed as a motivational construct in this report and hence the attitudes and perception of the employee is given more importance.

Discrepancies and continuities of concern.

Though we have focussed on the beneficial outcomes of employee empowerment in the earlier sections, it is also possible for the managerial techniques to have certain negative impact. Lashley (2001:258) states that, “In many ways employee empowerment has suffered from over-enthusiastic promotion by advocates and over-zealous application by practitioners”. One of the most common criticisms on the existing literature of employee empowerment is that it lacks precision and lists out the same benefits and typologies to different forms of empowerment generalising it in all situations (Lashley, 2001). Writers fail to recognise that empowerment is not an universally same managerial technique but takes different forms which may be participative, consultative or directive and hence based on that initiatives need to be defined (Lashley, 2001).

Another concern which leads to inconsistency is the fact that many theorists refer to empowerment as a management-led initiative, failing to realise the importance of the collective representation and ownership of employees in reality (Lashley, 2001). The employee empowerment techniques that are introduced to bring about employee involvement and participation in decision making, have been limited to task level arrangements and do not extend beyond their immediate task and workplace (Lashley, 2001).

Many advocates of empowerment claim that the empowered should operate in the specific boundaries set by the management, which creates tensions because the employees and managers may perceive the appropriate boundary in different ways. Another possibility is that as the expectations of appropriate management styles rise, the employees will start demanding more participation and would want their boundaries extended to non-task dimensions (Lashley, 2001)

Conger and Kanungo (1988) concluded that empowerment may lead to misjudgements and over-confidence, since the blind confidence on the positive outcomes may lead organisations to persist in efforts that are actually tactical or strategic errors. Hence it is very important for future researchers to take into account the possibilities of such effects and investigate such efforts and plan the process according to that (Conger and Kanungo, 1988).

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the the research design used for the study and the methods which have been used to collect, generate and analyse the data collected. It will present information about the target population, sample, research instruments used and the validity and the reliability of the instruments will be discussed along the possible limitations of the chosen methods. The chapter also covers an introduction to the methods used in data analysis.

Quantitative research:

The main aim of this research was to measure the individual components of psychological empowerment and to analyse the extent of correlation between psychological empowerment and the three organisational outcomes. In this research the researcher has adopted a quantitative research methodology since quantitative research tends to be associated with analysis and the results of the quantitative research are expressed in numbers which is particularly well suited to measure comparisons and correlations whereas in contrast qualitative methods are more suited to descriptions (Denscombe, 2007). Quantitative research differs from qualitative research in a number of ways, the main aim of the quantitative research is to measure phenomena so that they can be transformed into numbers which are then analysed by using statistical procedures (Denscombe, 2007). The quantitative methods are powerful and reliable, can be conducted for larger samples ,are associated with a specific purpose and is carried out with a predetermined research design (Denscombe, 2007). But the use of quantitative research methods in social research also has some limitations like, the researcher using quantitative methods may be obsessed with the techniques of the analysis at the expense of broader issues underlying the research, large volumes of data can overload the researcher, lacks depth and detail and in some respects may not be as objective or neutral as it may seem on the surface (Denscombe, 2007).

Research design

The main purpose of this research was to was to measure the individual components of psychological empowerment and also identify the extent to which Psychological Empowerment (independent variable) is related to three dependent variables: Organisational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, and Performance (self-reported) based on the literature review

performed prior to the research, that stated that psychological empowerment had a positive influence on these three organisational outcomes. Hence the analytic survey design which specifically explores the associations between variables was chosen as the relevant research strategy (Oppenheim, 1996).

The research strategy used was the survey research, it is a popular and widely used strategy which allows the collection of a large amount of data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way (Saunders et al, 2003). The survey data which is mostly obtained from questionnaires , can be standardised allowing for easy comparison and using the survey strategy allows the researcher to have more control over the research process (Saunders et al, 2003). However there are some limitations in using a survey as a research strategy such as survey research produces data that lacks depth and details about the topic being investigated, the accuracy and honesty of responses is not assured as the researcher is detached from the research and that the response rate could be low (Denscombe, 2007).

According to Oppenheim (1996), the analytic survey design “is less oriented towards representativeness and more towards finding associations and explanations, less towards description and enumeration and more towards prediction, less likely to ask 'how many ' or 'how often ' than 'why' and 'what goes with what’” (Oppenheim, 1996, p 21). An analytic survey design consists of two types of variables, the independent variable/ experimental variable which are the causes or predictors, the effects of which are being studied referring to psychological empowerment in our study and dependent variables which are the results or the effect variables produced by the impact of the experimental variable referring to the three critical work outcomes (Oppenheim, 1996).

Data collection techniques

The main method of data collection was through self-administered questionnaires in which the questionnaires were presented to the respondents by the interviewer . The purpose of the research was explained and the respondents are left alone to complete the questionnaires which will be picked up later (Oppenheim, 1996). 'This method was chosen since, it ensures a higher response rate, accurate sampling, and a minimum of interviewer bias, while permitting interviewer assessments , providing necessary explanations and giving the benefit of a degree of personal contact' (Oppenheim, 1996, p 103). The researcher felt that adopting this method instead of postal or internet questionnaires would ensure a higher

response rate, more accuracy and at the same time, some degree of personal contact with the respondents.

Sample:

In data collection, the snowball sampling technique was used which is a form of convenience sample, in which “the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these to establish contact with others” (Bryman, 2008, p 184.). The researcher's place of work was chosen based on the convenience, access to information and geographical proximity (Yin, 1994). Data was collected from 123 subjects, all belonging to the clerical cadre which includes the tellers, cashiers and clerks working in the Indian Banking sector. For data collection, travel to India was considered mandatory. Questionnaires were distributed among 15 bank branches, 8 of them were public sector banks and 7 were private sector banks which are located in the city of Chennai in the southern part of India. This specific group of employees were chosen because attaining self-efficacy and to feel psychologically empowered is a challenge at their level when compared with those bank employees in a supervisory or managerial cadre due to the nature of their job which requires them to be very cautious and careful and also because they belong to lower levels in the organisation's hierarchy in the Indian context.

Background:

Each branch office of a bank has a branch manager followed by assistant managers assigned for specific departments and these group of employees are in a managerial position and are responsible for the overall administration and efficient daily operation of a full service branch office. The next level of employees will be the chief accountants and account assistants who are middle level executives who belong to the supervisory cadre ensuring all filing is done in a timely and accurate manner. This level is followed by the clerical cadre sub-ordinates which comprises of the clerks and tellers or cashiers.

The clerks, cashiers or tellers play a very significant role in the smooth running of every bank and the responsibilities of each of them should be discussed in detail to understand the nature of their jobs. The bank clerks are behind every transaction from cashing a check, to taking out a loan and are expected to be experts in record-keeping. There are different types of bank clerks in each branch of the bank, the New account clerks are responsible for opening and closing accounts and attending customers, Interest clerks who

are responsible for recording, interests due to customers holding saving accounts as well as the interest owed to the banks on loans and other investments, Exchange clerks who are responsible for international accounts and translating foreign currency into Indian rupees, Loan clerks who sort and record information about loans, Statement clerks who are responsible for preparing the monthly balance sheets for account holders, Securities clerks who record, file and maintain stocks, bonds and other investment certificates, they also have the responsibility of keeping track of dividends and associated dividends. In addition to these there are also other clerks who have different responsibilities and are required in some private banks.

A bank teller or a cashier are the front line service providers in a bank as they are the ones who mostly associate with the customers and conduct most of the bank's routine transactions. Their responsibilities include cashing checks, accepting deposits and loan payments and processing withdrawals. A teller requires good judgement skills and a great deal of attention to detail since before cashing a cheque, they have to make sure that they verify the date, bank name, identification of the person to receive payment and legality of the document and test the accuracy of the documents before processing the transactions. In most of the Indian banks, a head teller is nominated for a particular teller line and his additional duties will be preparing work schedules, assessing the vault, ensuring the correct balance in the vault and overseeing shipments of cash to and from the federal reserve.

Having analysed the significance of the role played by the clerks and tellers in ensuring organisational effectiveness, this group of people were found most suitable to study psychological empowerment and its impact. The bank clerks, and tellers need an empowered environment in order to be motivated to perform better and be committed to the organisation. As their role demands interpersonal skills, a sense of alertness and caution, good judgement skills and ability to make quick decisions and respond spontaneously to changes, they should possess enhanced levels of self-efficacy and should find their jobs meaningful and their contribution valuable, should show high levels of competence , and should have certain degree of self-determination and control at least over their own task environment. In short they should experience all the four cognitions of psychological empowerment stated by Thomas and Velthouse(1990), which will lead to organisational effectiveness and desired organisational outcomes.

Pilot work:

In the case of using questionnaires as the main method of data collection, it is always important to begin the research by conducting a pilot study. ‘A pilot research is a trial run-through to test the research design with a subsample of respondents who have characteristics similar to those identifiable in the main sample surveyed.’(Gill and Johnson, 2002, p120). In this research, the formulated questionnaires were first distributed to a judgement sample of 3 clerks and 2 tellers belonging to 4 branches, and they were asked to fill up the questionnaires. This was done to predict how respondents will interpret and react to questions and also to identify any potential problems in the questionnaires (Gill and Johnson, 2002, p120). The participants came up with certain flaws like the length of the questionnaire was very long and that they were not able to understand certain questions as the level of English was very high and complicated. In addition few branch managers were also consulted about the design of questionnaires. Once these flaws were identified, the questionnaires were modified and simplified to suit the need of the respondents, the job-satisfaction questionnaire and self-appraised performance questionnaires which had 13 items were changed to questionnaires with 3 items to make it easy for the participants. Keeping in mind the education level, and the understanding of the English language of the clerks and tellers, simple and easy questionnaires were selected to assess each dependant variable. Since the psychological empowerment scale by Spreitzer(1995) was found to be the most suitable research instrument to measure psychological empowerment, each item was provided in both English and the vernacular Tamil language.

Data collection

A total of 206 self-administered questionnaires were distributed among 15 bank branches, 112 were distributed to the public sector bank branches and 94 were distributed to the private sector bank branches. Of the 206 questionnaires that were distributed totally, 123 were completed and returned fully and found to be valid, hence the response rate was found to be 60% which is considered as a good response rate for analysis and reporting according to Babbie. (1997). The response rate in the private sector was found to be 64% which was greater than the response rate in the public sector which constituted 56%.

A pre-questionnaire was attached to each questionnaire which requested the respondents to fill five columns, age, sex, total number of years of work experience in the

same position, number of years in the organisation and education level. According to the data, the age of the employees varied from 20-58 years with the mean of 32, regarding gender 54.8% of the respondents were male and 46.2% were females, the work experience in the sector started from 6 months to 35 years, the mean being 9.86 years, the organisational tenure ranged from 6 months-32 years, the mean being 5.67years. Education level of the respondents ranged from 76% of them who have completed their higher secondary board examination (equivalent to A levels or college) and have passed the clerical cadre examination conducted by the government of Tamilnadu, India or by private sector banks and 33% of them with a undergraduate degree like B.A., or B.Sc., and also have passed the clerical cadre examination. Persons with higher level degrees like masters and diplomas get promoted to the supervisory cadre and no longer remain in the level of clerks and tellers.

For data analysis and interpretation, the clerks and tellers were considered as a single sample as a whole as they belonged to the same level or cadre in the management structure. Information on the variables like age, gender, organisational tenure, work experience, and educational level were collected in order to identify any specific trends, or relationships in the hypothesis testing as these factors have been found to have an influence on organisational commitment, job satisfaction and performance according to certain researchers.

Research instruments:

For the chosen analytical survey design to be effective, each of the four variables [one independent variable and three dependent variables] should be measured as carefully as possible giving equal importance to both the independent and dependent variables.(Oppenheim, 1996). A great deal of importance was given to the sequencing of the questions in the questionnaire so that they follow a natural and logical order, and also to the overall presentation of the questionnaire.(Gill and Johnson, 2002) In this research, the questionnaire measuring each variable were presented in a separate page with clear instructions on how to fill it up, above each page. The scale used in all the research instruments used in this research is the Likert scale, which is an attitude scale developed by Rensis Likert is a multiple item measure of a set of attitudes relating to a particular area (Bryman, 2008). In the likert scale, each respondent is asked to indicate his or her level of agreement with the statement. The aim of the scale is to measure the intensity of individual's

feelings about the are in the question.(Bryman, 2008). The following are the research instruments used in this study.(refer Appendix3-Questionnaires)

Psychological Empowerment in the Work Place:

The research of Spreitzer (1995) led to the development and validation of a multidimensional measure of psychological empowerment in a work context. The measure provides evidence for the construct validity of a nomological network of empowerment in the workplace.(Spreitzer, 1995). As Thomas and Velthouse(1990) defined psychological empowerment as a motivational construct manifested in a set of four cognitions reflecting an individual's orientation to his or her work role, the model suggests that each of the four dimensions, Meaning, Competence, Self-determination and Impact contribute to an overall construct of psychological empowerment, and the model also presents results showing evidence of internal consistency and test-retest reliability of the dimensions of psychological empowerment in the work context (Spreitzer, 1995).

The instrument consists of 12 items which are all self-assessments divided into 4 sets of 3 statements each, each reflecting an empowerment cognition. The alpha coefficient of the empowerment items were found to be 0.84(Spreitzer, 1996).The respondents were required to agree or disagree with the given statements on a 7 point Likert scale with the traditional scoring from 1 for strongly disagree to 7 for strongly agree (Spreitzer, 1996). An example of items include 'The work I do is meaningful for me ' reflecting meaning dimension, ' I am confident about my ability to do my job.' reflecting the individual's competence, ' I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job.' reflecting self-determination and 'My impact on what happens in my department is large' reflecting the cognitive dimension of impact (Spreitzer, 1996). Hence this indicates that all four dimensions are equally significant in defining the overall empowerment construct. This instrument was used to assess the extent to which an individual employee, which in this case refers to the clerks and tellers have felt empowered in their respective work place.(refer Appendix3-Questionnaires)

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire:

This instrument developed by Balaji (1986) was used in this research to measure an individual's Organisational Commitment. This questionnaire was chosen keeping in mind the three main components of Organisational Commitment identified in the literature review, acceptance and belief in the organisation's mission and goals, strong emotional attachment

and membership with the organisation and strong desire to stay within the organisation (Rose and Muthuveloo, 2005). The instrument was chosen also because the questions had a lot of relevance to the Indian work context . The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found in the reported study as 0.72. (Balaji, 1986). The instrument consisted of five items and the respondents were asked to mark their responses on a 7 point Likert scale with the responses scored from 1 for strongly disagree to 7 for strongly agree.(refer Appendix3-Questionnaires)

Overall Job Satisfaction Questionnaire:

The definition of Spector(1997) was taken as the basis while formulating the questionnaire for overall job satisfaction. He defined job satisfaction as the extent to which an individual likes or dislikes his/her job. The literature review has suggested that job satisfaction should be approached as an attitudinal variable focussing much on the perceptions of the employee and not just fulfilment of physical need. The questionnaire was aimed at measuring the overall satisfaction that the employees feel and hence the elements that produce job satisfaction were not taken into consideration.

The overall job satisfaction questionnaire developed by Seashore, Lawler, Mirvis and Camman (1982) was chosen as the most suitable which satisfied the above stated conditions . It is a 3 item scale, of which the first item was, "I am very satisfied with my current job" and one item being reverse scored. The respondents were required to record their overall job satisfaction on a 7 point Likert scale with scoring being from 1 for strongly disagree to 7 for strongly agree. The negatively worded items were reverse scored.

This instrument has been well tested and used repeatedly over the years.(refer Appendix3-Questionnaires)

Self-appraised performance Questionnaire:

The self appraised performance questionnaire was formulated based on Meyer's(1980) definition of how an individual rates himself in his present job. Keeping in mind the issue of self-assessment accuracy , the respondents were asked to rate their job performance in comparison with their colleagues or co-workers in their respective branches. The instrument was formed with three items, quantity of work, quality of work and the overall work performance which was found relevant to the work context of the clerks and tellers in the Indian banking sector .

The respondents were supposed to rate themselves in these three items in comparison with their colleagues on a 7 point scale with scoring being 1 denoting much less which means their performance is much less when compared to their colleagues to 7 being much more, the score 4 denotes that the individual feels he performs on-par with his colleagues.(refer Appendix3-Questionnaires)

Validity and reliability:

A great degree of importance should be given for ensuring the validity and reliability of the research instruments used for collecting quantitative data. validity is defined as the extent to which a researcher can be sure that the instrument used measures the attribute , it is supposed to measure. (Smith et al, 2002).All the research instruments used in this research, have been well tested and used repeatedly for years by different researchers and show evidence for internal consistency and validity. “Reliability is primarily a matter of stability: if an instrument is administered to the same individual on two different occasions the question is, will it yield the same result?”(Smith et al, 2002, p135).The research instruments have been tested for test-retest reliability and the reliability coefficients were found to be in the order of 0.7 -0.8 which is acceptable in an exploratory research.(Smith et al, 2002).

Research Ethics:

Consent was obtained from the all the 15 branch managers in whose branches the survey was conducted by June 2009 stating to them the purpose and aim of the research and assuring them that all data would be treated as confidential and the name of the individual nor the organisation would be published.

Along with each questionnaire, a covering letter was attached, stating the purpose of the study and that the focus is on exploring the perceptions of employees not on an individual basis but of a particular group of people who belong to the same cadre and share similar responsibilities. The letter also stated that the purpose of the research was also to find ways in which, the work experience and existing working conditions of that particular group of employees could be improved so that they attain self-efficacy and satisfaction in their jobs.

The letter also added that participation was voluntary and the respondents may withdraw their participation at any time of the research.

Confidentiality and anonymity was assured in the letter that all data will be treated as confidential, and only the researcher will have access to them and no information about the identifiable persons or the organizations would be published. In each question schedule, in order to make the promise more explicit, it was stated that, “ The contents of this form are absolutely confidential information identifying the respondent will not be disclosed under any circumstances” (Oppenheim, 1996, p105).

Data analysis techniques

A significant aspect to bear in mind before using quantitative methods to analyse relationships is that they precisely analyse or cover relationships and not causality (Bryman, 2008). This means that the inference of this study could be that psychological empowerment is either positively or negatively related to the three organisational outcomes and it could not be inferred that psychological empowerment causes organisational commitment ,or job satisfaction or improved performance. Inorder to analyse the extent to which psychological empowerment was achieved in the workplace , the descriptive statistics of each component of psychological empowerment was used to predict the level of empowerment.

Since the hypotheses in this research are based on a single independent/ predictor variable, **simple linear regression analysis** is used for analysing the resulting associations. Regression analysis is a technique used for describing the relationship between one or more variables [independent] and one or more other variables.[dependent], simple regression involves just one independent variable and multiple regression involves more than one independent variable (Stolzenberg, 2004). Since the data analysis is concerned with the analysis of two variables at a time, that is the single independent variable and one dependent variable at a time, it can also be termed as **bivariate analysis**(Bryman, 2008). In the regression analysis, the first task of the analyst is to describe the variables in the data set. regression methods focus on the means and standard deviations of variables in order to establish the deviations from the variable means and to measure those deviations in standard deviations of each variable(Stolzenberg, 2004). The regression model summarises the relationship between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y) in a equation of this form, $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1(X)$. where β_0 is called the intercept indicating the value of Y when $X=0$ and β_1 is called the slope or the regression coefficient expressed as changes in the value of Y per unit change in X (Stolzenberg, 2004). The coefficient of determination R,

is the descriptive measure of the strength of the regression relationship, or a measure of how well the regression line fits the data which is also referred to as goodness of fit (Saunders et al, 2003). The square of the R value equals the variance or explains the proportion of variation of the dependent variable explained by the independent variable (Stolzenberg, 2004). The data analysis was done using the SPSS for windows software which is the most widely used package of computer software used for the analysis of quantitative data for social scientists (Bryman, 2008). The SPSS for windows which stands for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, was used in this research , as it was found to be the most suitable and widely used software for doing this kind of relationship analysis (Bryman, 2008).

Limitations of the research:

- 1.The research does not allow us to make causal references, or determine the causality between the independent variable and the dependent variable (Oppenheim, 1996).
- 2.The quantitative research is not neutral or objective as it may seem on the surface. 'The measurement process possesses an artificial and spurious sense of precision and accuracy' (Bryman, 2008, p159).
- 3.Self-completion questionnaires do not provide scope for additional and underlying information. They are associated with the risks of accuracy, incompleteness and does not suit all kinds of respondents.
- 4.The findings of the research could not be generalised as the research is focussed on the a particular category of bank employees from a single city in India.
- 5.The results of the data are obtained in numerals and hence they lack depth and details of the specific area researched (Denscombe, 2007) .

CHAPTER 1V

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter provides an exclusive presentation of the results obtained from the data collected and analysed using simple regression analysis. The descriptive statistics comprising of mean and standard deviations for each of the variables, the correlation and regression tables are presented and discussed. This chapter also covers the testing of the three hypotheses from the review of literature which serve as the basis for this research.

Descriptive Statistics

Regression and related methods which are concerned with the analysis of variance, focus attention on the means and standard deviations of variable (Stolzenberg, 2004). It is also stated that a regression analysis should start by arithmetically calculating the variable means in order to describe the central tendency of each variable and their standard deviations to describe the extent to which data diverge from the mean (Stolzenberg, 2004).

Though the hypotheses considers psychological empowerment as an overall construct taken as a single independent variable, the mean and standard deviations of each of the four components of empowerment defined by Thomas and Velthouse (1990) were obtained separately in order to measure the extent to which these components contributed to the overall construct of psychological empowerment.. The mean and S.D of the four components of empowerment were found to be. (see appendix 4-for descriptive statistics.)

	Mean	Standard deviation.
Meaning	18.24	1.25
Competence	16.85	1.73
Self-determination	11.93	3.77
Impact	13.12	3.34

Looking at the overall statistics of the independent variable, psychological empowerment, the respondents have reported moderately high levels of empowerment with an overall mean of 15.03. The highest value that could be reached is 21 and the lowest being 3. The meaning dimension has reported the highest mean of 18.24 and also the lowest S.D of 1.25 in comparison with the other three cognitions. This would be because the clerks and tellers who were taken as the subjects in this study, were individuals who had comparatively low education levels when compared with the other levels of employees in the bank in the Indian work context and they find their jobs meaningful as they are able to establish a fit between what is expected of their work role and what they expected their work to be according to their own ideals and standards. The mean of the second empowerment cognition which is the competence was also found to be comparatively higher, and the reason for this might be that the nature of the job of clerks and tellers as explained in the previous chapter requires strong judgement skills, a great deal of attention to detail and also good arithmetic skills, and they need to be experts in careful record keeping and cash-handling to ensure the smooth running of the bank and hence they possess a strong belief and confidence on their capabilities to do their jobs accurately and promptly.

The statistics have revealed that the responses on the self-determination and impact cognitions report lower means and high variance, the reasons for these are analysed as follows. Self-determination cognition has reported the lowest mean of 11.93 and the highest S.D of 3.77. This reveals that the clerks and tellers do not have considerable autonomy or freedom to make decisions about their work methods, and working environments. This could be possible because the clerks and tellers belong to the lower levels in the organisation's hierarchy. The high standard deviation reveals that since data was collected from individuals working in 15 branch offices, the amount of autonomy given to the clerks and tellers in each branch to decide their work methods depend much upon the branch manager's discretion. The mean of the impact cognition reveal that the respondents have a considerably less participation and influence over the strategic decision making of the organisation and the data shows a lot of variation as this cognition, like self-determination also depends on the discretion of the respective branch manager.

Thus the results have clearly indicated that the sample population surveyed report higher levels of meaningfulness and competence while comparatively lower levels of self-determination and impact

The mean and S.D of the three organisational outcomes are found to be as follows.

	Mean	S.D.
Organisational commitment	28.76	2.12
Job satisfaction	13.83	1.21
Performance(Self-evaluated).	15.3	2.85

The above data reveals that the means of the the first two variables indicate considerably higher levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction and the mean of the self-evaluated performance indicates a slightly above the average level of performance. Since the data collection mode was through self-administered questionnaires or in some cases it has been interviewer administered questionnaires, where the researcher was able to the meet the respondents, one trend that was noticed from the responses was that most of the individuals have given a score of either 7 or 6 which represents the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' items in the likert scale for questions on their perceived levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction on items like 'I feel that lam an integral part of the organisation. 'or 'I am satisfied with my job completely.' This may be because employment in the banking sector in India is considered one of the most reliable and long lasting jobs available and also the bank employees enjoy privileges of lesser working hours, paid holidays, pension benefits,a decent working environment and so on .These benefits may be a part of any employment contract in the UK work context but in a developing country like India, these factors definitely play a role in deciding the job satisfaction and commitment of the individual employees and another trend identified in the responses for self-appraised performance questions was that most of the employees rated their overall work performance on par with that of their colleagues /co-workers and hence the mean value neared the average.

Testing of hypotheses

Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 were tested using simple bivariate regression analysis. Hypothesis 1 which states that psychological empowerment is positively related to organisational commitment was found to be true in this study. The model indicated that psychological empowerment was significantly related to organisational commitment as the p

value was equal to 0.17.($p=0.017<0.05$).The regression equation obtained from the outputs of the model where ($\beta=24.428$) is **P.E=24.428 +0.077(O.C)** where P.E stands for psychological empowerment (independent variable) and O.C stands for organisational commitment(dependent variable).(refer Appendix 5-regression)

The equation reveals that the respondents who had high levels of psychological empowerment had higher organisational commitment. The equation technically shows that for every unit increase in the psychological empowerment,you expect 0.077 units increase in organisational commitment. Based on the value of R square, the model suggests that **4.6%** of the variation in the organisational commitment is explained by the variation in the psychological empowerment. Though the model proves that psychological empowerment is positively related to organisational commitment, the amount of impact it has on this organisational outcome is considerably low, or it can be said that it has demonstrated only a weak positive relationship. This may be due to the fact that organisational commitment of individual employees in an Indian work context depends on many other factors like the pay which has to be consistent with the aspirations of the employees to generate commitment, training and development of the clerks and tellers focussed on immediate job needs, performance related incentives and rewards,job security , pension benefits and so on.

Hypothesis 2 which stated that psychological empowerment is positively related to job satisfaction is supported .The model indicated that psychological empowerment had a significant relationship with the overall job satisfaction as the level of significance $p =0.010<0.05$.The regressed equation of the job satisfaction on the psychological empowerment where ($\beta= 14.401$) is **P.E = 14.401+0.064 (J.S.)** where P.E stands for psychological empowerment (independent variable) and J.S stands for Job Satisfaction .(dependent variable).(refer Appendix 5-regression)

The regressed equation states that for every unit increase in psychological empowerment, you can expect 0.064 units increase in the job satisfaction of an individual. Based on the R square value, it was found that **5.3%** of the variation in the job satisfaction is explained by the variation in the psychological empowerment. This again reveals that the effect of psychological empowerment on this critical work outcome though found to be positive, has a substantially low or a weak positive relationship. The reasons for this might be

due to the fact that the clerks and tellers consider or perceive job satisfaction more as a construct of need fulfilment than as a psychological construct satisfying the inner needs.

Hypothesis 3 which stated that psychological empowerment is positively related with self-appraised performance was found to be false. The model indicated a significant negative relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable. The regressed equation predicted the relationship this way, ($\beta = 24.148$) **P.E = 24.148 - 0.14 (S.P.)** where P.E stands for psychological empowerment (independent variable) and S.P stands for Self-appraised Performance .(dependent variable).(refer Appendix 5-regression)This revealed that for every unit increase in psychological empowerment, the level of self-rated performance of an individual decreases by 0.14 units. This is a surprising finding because much of the literature suggests that empowerment leads to enhanced value of work and increase in productivity levels. (Spreitzer, 1995).The reasons for this negative relationship was analysed and after informal discussions with a few clerks and bank managers, the reasons were anticipated to be that the clerks and tellers as discussed earlier belong to lower levels in the organisational hierarchy, though they have exhibited high levels of competence and confidence about their abilities to do their jobs, most of them were found to have a very low self-esteem. Since they were asked to rate their overall performance in comparison with their colleagues and co-workers in their respective branches, keeping in mind their lower education levels, and lesser participation in influencing the strategic and administrative outcomes of the organisation, would have caused them to perceive their performance levels to be much less, and hence would have given themselves lesser scores in the scale .The Indian work scenario is still in most sectors characterised by the presence of large status differentials which leads the employees in the lower levels in the organisation' s hierarchy to underestimate their performance levels when compared with that of their superiors.

Thus the results have clearly indicated that the sample population surveyed report higher levels of meaningfulness and competence while comparatively lower levels of self-determination and impact

The testing of hypotheses has indicated that :

Psychological Empowerment is positively related to Organisational Commitment.

Psychological Empowerment is positively related to Job-Satisfaction.

Psychological Empowerment is not positively related to Performance(Self-reported).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of the research have clearly revealed that achieving psychological empowerment or enabling the employees to feel empowered is very complex and dynamic process, and could not be accomplished by introducing a prescribed set of practices in the workplace irrespective of any context. This has also been stated in the literature review that empowerment is not an enduring personality trait that could be generalised across situations but it was more a set of cognitions shaped by a work environment (Spreitzer, 1995) . The research also brought out that, the four cognitions of empowerment, meaning, competence, self-determination and impact differentially relate to the three work outcomes, organisational commitment, job satisfaction and self-appraised performance.

It was evident from the data analysis, that the specific group of employees targeted in the research , the clerks and tellers experienced a very lesser degree of self-determination which demonstrates the extent to which an employee has autonomy and control in the initiation and regulation of work behaviours and processes (Spreitzer, 1995). This was because these individuals belonged to the lower levels in the organisation's hierarchy and it was quite an expected outcome, as in the Indian work context , education level of an employee plays a very important role in determining the employee's status or self-esteem in an organisation and from the literature review, it could be stated that self-esteem of an individual is found to be an important antecedent of psychological empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995). The perceived level of Impact, the fourth empowerment cognition which is the degree to which an individual influences the strategic, administrative or operating outcomes of work was also found to be less in this group of employees. This again would be because of the presence of high power distance and status differentials which would lead individuals to have lower levels of self esteem and very low locus of control .Locus of control again is an important antecedent of psychological empowerment which is a personality trait explaining the extent to which people believe that they determine what happens in their lives than the external forces (Spreitzer, 1995).

The results also reveal that though much of the normative literature on empowerment as discussed in the literature review has revealed that implementing psychological empowerment brings with it automatically the favourable outcomes such as organisational

commitment, job satisfaction , improved performance, improved service quality, increased productivity levels and so on, the real life research has proved clearly that it is an unrealistic notion. The framework of empowerment which states that if all employees make independent decisions of their work methods and contribute and make suggestions to improve organisational effectiveness, which the managers ultimately implement and this in turn increases the commitment, satisfaction and efficiency of the individual is a completely evangelical claim and not a realistic phenomena which can be achieved in actual practise. It should be realised that empowerment is not universally same, but takes different forms which are participative, consultative and directive and accordingly a range of initiatives need to be formulated (Lashley, 2001).

Recommendations

Having explored the inconsistencies and pitfalls, in the existing methods of motivating and training the clerks and tellers working in the Indian banking sector to feel psychologically empowered, a few recommendations could be provided based on the research findings to enhance the psychological experience of empowerment of the clerks and tellers which in turn would possibly produce favourable work outcomes, like organisational commitment, job satisfaction and increased levels of performance.

The research indicated that there were no proper communication channels disseminating information to the clerks and tellers who belonged to lower levels in the organisational structure. Access to information is an important antecedent of psychological empowerment which is already discussed in the literature review. The individual employees at all levels in an organisation should be made aware of two kinds of information according to Spreitzer (1995), information about the bank's mission and information on performance. If this access of information is provided to the clerks and tellers , it will enhance the ability of an individual to make decisions that are aligned the organisation's goals and mission and the information on performance may help the employee feel fundamental and valued part of an organisation (Spreitzer, 1995). Hence the management should provide access to these two kinds of information for the employees at all levels through proper communication channels.

As the performance of the clerks and tellers is found to be rated low in the self-appraisal questionnaires, a reward system that recognises individual contribution or

performance could be introduced. Individual-performance based awards and its importance in facilitating empowerment are discussed in the literature review.

In order to effectively accomplish psychological empowerment, the factors that lead to psychological state of powerlessness of individual employees should be identified and eliminated (Conger and Kanungo, 1988). This is the first step in the psychological empowerment process proposed by Conger and Kanungo (1988) which enables the individuals to attain self-efficacy identified in the literature review.. In this case, the factors that cause powerlessness of the clerks and tellers are clearly identified as the high power distance between the higher level employees and sub-ordinates and the presence of status differentials which leads to poor self-esteem of the clerks and tellers. Measures must be taken by the management to eliminate or at least reduce these conditions, to achieve empowerment.

Research has revealed the presence of low self-esteem of the clerks and tellers, now in order to extend their feelings of self-worth to a work-specific sense of competence, the clerks and tellers must constantly be acknowledged and appreciated for their performance and also they should be made to feel that they play a very significant role in ensuring the smooth running and the effectiveness of the bank's day to day activities.

Implications for future research :

There is a very broad scope for future research in the field of psychological empowerment and research involving the study of relationships between empowerment and its possible organisational outcomes since the topic is gaining increased attention and popularity in this modern era where organisations are characterised by dynamic and complex changes.

Future research in this field of psychological empowerment could also examine a broader set of consequences or possible outcomes of psychological empowerment .The impact of psychological empowerment on the other possible outcomes listed in the literature review ,like persistence , labour turnover and absenteeism could be studied in various organisational contexts in different levels of the organisational hierarchy in future. This research has used self-appraised performance as one of the critical work outcomes associated with psychological empowerment, actual performance ratings, or appraisal done by supervisors or higher level managers could be used as a variables in future studies of

psychological empowerment. Future research may involve studying psychological empowerment as a moderator variable for achieving organisational effectiveness. Moderators of the links between psychological empowerment and these outcomes could be explored (Spreitzer, 1995). There is a lot of scope for longitudinal research which is used to assess issues of causality as well as the strength and duration of the relationship between empowerment and various outcomes identified in the literature review (Spreitzer, 1995).

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Appendices.

APPENDIX 1.

Text items measuring empowerment (Adapted from Spreitzer, 1995, p1465)

Meaning

The work I do is very important to me.

My job activities are personally meaningful to me

The work I do is meaningful to me.

Competence

I am confident about my ability to do my job.

I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities.

I have mastered the skills necessary for my job.

Self-determination

I have significant autonomy in determining how i do my job.

I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work.

I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.

Impact.

My impact on what happens in my department is large

I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department.

I have significant influence over what happens in my department.

APPENDIX 2.

Consent letter:

Dear participant,

I am conducting a study on psychological empowerment and its impact on three organisational outcomes such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction and self-appraised performance.

I would appreciate your participation in this study.

Your participation in the survey is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any point.

The data collected will only be accessible to the researcher. The results of the survey will be published in a report, however under no circumstances the name of the respondent or the organisation would be revealed.

For any further enquiries please feel free to contact me using this email address

If you wish to receive a soft copy of this report , email me your name and email ID.

Thanking you

Yours sincerely,

Researcher.

