PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AT WORK PLACE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this theoretical review is to examine antecedents and consequences of psychological empowerment at workplace. The review includes construct definition of psychological empowerment, emphasized by G. M. Spreitzer (1995), and its relationship with various personal and work-related outcomes. The authors have done extensive review of research literature to indicate the importance of construct of psychological empowerment for both employees and organization. The authors have also highlighted the shortcomings in the literature and have provided constructive suggestions for future researches.

Key Words: Empowerment, Communication, Task Significance

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The concept of empowerment has been developed and advanced by several researchers. Many academics and practitioners over the past decade have embraced empowerment as a means of increasing decision-making at lower organizational levels while at the same time enriching the worklives of employees (Chebat & Kollias, 2000; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995; 1996; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Continuing interest among practitioners and researchers suggests that the topic contributes to the literature in organizational psychology.

Empowerment is an important construct because it offers the potential to positively influence outcomes that benefit both individuals and organizations (Liden & Tewksbury, 1995; Forrester, 2000; Spreitzer, 1995, 1996). Theory development (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Thomas Velthouse, 1990), and construct, validation of an empowerment measure (Spreitzer, 1995), as well as some initial empirical support for its relationship to work related outcomes

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(Sparrowe, 1994; Liden, Sparrow & Wayne, 2000; Spreitzer, Kizilos & Nason, 1997) indicate the potential importance of empowerment. Empowerment is thought to unleash employees' potential, to enhance their motivation, allow them to be more adaptive and receptive to their environment and minimize work related hurdles that slow responsiveness (Forrester, 2000; Spreitzer, 1995, 1996).

A substantial body of research has demonstrated that empowerment is an important driver of organizational effectiveness; practitioners and researchers have identified it as a construct warranting further inquiry (Kanter, 1989; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

Randolph (2001) in his study has emphasized three core elements of empowerment—sharing information, creating autonomy through boundaries and replacing the hierarchy with self directed teams.

Research has acknowledged contextual factors such as organizational culture (Sparrowe, 1994) and top level support (Arad & Drasgow, 1994), as influencing factors for empowerment. However, especially critical contextual factors, including social interactions, have largely been ignored. Two key social relationships at work place are those with superiors and co-workers. Relationships between leader and subordinate have been examined as the leader-member exchange (Seers, 1989). Only a handful of studies have considered the quality of the relationship between leader and subordinate in fostering empowerment (Keller & Dansereau, 1995; Sparrowe, 1994; Spreitzer, De Janasz & Quinn, 1999; Uhl-Bien & Graen, 1993; Wat & Shaffer, 2005), and we are not aware of any studies that have examined relationships between the quality of social interactions with co-workers and empowerment.

While examining the relationships between contextual factors and components of psychological empowerment, Siegall & Gardner (2000), have found that the contextual factors were differentially associated with the elements of psychological empowerment. Communication with supervisor and general relations with company were significantly related to the empowerment factors of meaning, determination and impact. Team work was related to meaning and impact. Concern for performance was related to meaning and self-determination.

Although organizational researchers have begun to reach consensus on conceptualizing empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990), little research has examined explicitly the individual perspective on empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995).

Although significant relations between various dimensions of psychological empowerment and work outcomes such as job performance, work satisfaction, organizational commitment, managerial innovation and effectiveness is established but published evidence regarding its relationship with employees, physical and mental health is limited and require critical attention by the future researchers.

The present review is based on the extensive and classic works of Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Spreitzer, 1995, 1996; Liden, Wayne & Sparrow, 2000; Boudrias, Gaudreau & Laschinger,
The purpose of the present theoretical review is to build a theoretical model that integrates job characteristics (task significance, task identity, skill variety, feedback from the work itself and autonomy), organizational characteristics (access to information and rewards), social exchange relationships Leader- Member Exchange (LMX) and Team-Member Exchange (TMX) and personal characteristics (locus of control and self esteem) with psychological empowerment in the explanation of health and work related outcomes.

**CONSTRUCT DEFINITION OF EMPOWERMENT**

Empowerment is a popular term in management. Widespread interest in psychological empowerment came at a time when global competition and change required employee initiative and innovation (Drucker, 1988). Empowerment is an important construct because it offers the potential to positively influence outcomes that benefit both individuals and organization (Liden & Tewksbury, 1995). "Empowerment is the process of enabling workers to set their own work goals, make decision and solve problems within their sphere of responsibility". (Moorhead & Griffin, 1999).

Two conceptions of empowerment exist in the literature. The first refers to the set of managerial practices entailing the delegation of decision-making responsibilities down the hierarchy. This approach roots empowerment in the organizational context and defines it in terms of "a practice, or set of practices involving the delegation of responsibility down the hierarchy so as to give employees’ increased decision-making authority in respect to the execution of their primary work tasks" (Leach, Wall & Jackson, 2003, p. 28). In the past, organizational researches have focused their work on empowering management practices, including the delegation of decision-making from higher organizational levels to lower ones and increasing access to information and resources for individuals at the lower levels (Blau & Alba, 1982; Bowen & Lawler, 1992; Mainiero, 1986; Neilsen, 1986). Proponents of employee empowerment (Kanter, 1977; Lawler, 1986), have proposed that enriched work environment that provides access to authority, information, resources, support and the opportunity to learn are empowering and can lead to improved performance.

However, while this perspective has garnered much attention by practitioners because it helps them see how the kinds of managerial actions that can facilitate empowerment at work, it is limited, because it provides organizationally-centric perspective on empowerment. It does not emphasize the nature of empowerment as experienced by employees. This is important because in some situations although power, knowledge, information and rewards had been shared with employees yet they still feel disempowered. And in other situations, individuals lacked all the objective features of an empowering work environment yet still felt and acted in empowered ways. Hence, individual perspective of empowerment is also important.
The second use of the term, called psychological empowerment, refers to the experience of empowerment among employees. In this context, the term empowerment refers to its psychological aspects, which consists of a set of conditions necessary for intrinsic motivation. The experience of being empowered has been proposed to be a mediator between empowering managerial practices and outcomes expected from empowered workers such as job performance and innovation (Menon, 2001; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Rather than focusing on managerial practices that share power with employees at all levels, the psychological perspective is focused on how employees experience empowerment at work. This perspective refers to empowerment as the personal beliefs that employees have about their role in relation to the organization. In the context of psychological perspective of empowerment, Conger & Kanungo (1988) have emphasized empowerment as the motivational concept of self-efficacy. These authors have argued that management practices are one set of conditions and that those practices may empower employees but will not necessarily do so.

In a very recent study, Millet & Sandberg (2005), argues that psychological empowerment and individual control are two key factors that minimize the many perils faced by the modern workers.

In a study of staff nurses, Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Bhatia (2005), have found the mediating effects of psychological empowerment on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. While adopting integrative psychological approach to employee empowerment, Menon (2001), has contended that the psychological experience of power underlies feelings of empowerment. The author has identified goal internalization as a major component of the psychological experience of empowerment in addition to the traditional components of empowerment perception of control and self-efficacy or competence.

Bhargava & Kelkar (2000), conducted their study on Indian managers, officers and supporting staff of a successful business organization. They reported positive correlation with job satisfaction and empowerment and negative correlation with centralization and empowerment. By taking into the consideration of these findings, the authors stressed the importance of decentralization for managing people in organization.

**Psychological Definition of Empowerment**

Thomas & Velthouse (1990), have defined empowerment more broadly, as increased intrinsic task motivation manifested in a set of four cognitions reflecting as individual's orientation to his or her workrole: meaning, competence (which is synonymous with Conger and Kanungo’s self-efficacy), self-determination and impact. Until recently, little research has taken an individual perspective on empowerment, focusing on the psychological experience of empowerment.

1. **Meaning**: Meaning is the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual’s own ideals or standards (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Meaning involves a fit between the requirements of a workrole and beliefs, values and behaviours...
Meaningfulness concerns the value of a task holds in relation to the individual's value system.

2. **Competence:** Competence refers to self-efficacy specific to work. A belief in one's capability to perform work activities with skill (Gist, 1987; Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Thus, competence is the self-belief that one possesses, the skills and abilities to perform a job well. Competence is analogous to agency beliefs, personal mastery, or effort-performance expectancy (Bandura, 1989).

3. **Self-determination:** Where competence is a mastery of behaviour, self-determination is an individual's sense of having choice in initiating and regulating actions (Deci, Connell & Ryan, 1989). Self-determination reflects autonomy in the initiation and continuation of work behaviours and processes; examples are making decisions about work methods, pace and effort (Bell & Staw, 1989; Spector, 1986). In other words self-determination is the feeling of having control.

4. **Impact:** Impact is the belief that one has significant influence over strategic, administrative or operational outcomes at work (Ashforth, 1989). Thus, it represents the degree to which individuals perceive that their behaviour makes a difference (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Further, impact is different from locus of control; whereas impact is influenced by the work context; internal locus of control is a global personality characteristic that endures across situations (Wolfe & Robetshaw, 1982). Hence, psychological empowerment is defined as a second order motivational construct manifested in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact and these four dimensions are argued to combine additively to create an overall construct of psychological empowerment (Sprietzer, 1995).

Together, these four cognitions reflect an active, rather than a passive, orientation to a work role. According to Spreitzer, (1995) active orientation refers to an orientation in which an individual wishes and feels able to shape his or her work role and context.

In other words, the lack of any single dimension will deflate, though not completely eliminate, the overall degree of felt empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995).

**Antecedents of Psychological Empowerment**

The major antecedents of psychological empowerment which shape how individuals see themselves in relation to the work environment are:

**Job characteristics**

The most widely recognized model of job characteristics was developed by Hackman and Oldham (1976), and it focuses on the specific motivational properties of job. The motivating properties of job characteristics have been well established both theoretically and empirically (Griffin, 1987; Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Hackman & Oldham, 1976), and hence the job characteristics model represents a theory of intrinsic motivation.
Reacting to a focus in industrial psychology on extrinsic factors such as pay and working conditions that motivate people, Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) proposed that intrinsic factors such as recognition and responsibility may possess strong motivational properties. Hackman & Oldham (1976), built on Herzberg, et al., framework by developing a refined set of characteristics that motivate employees intrinsically. The core job characteristics of the Hackman and Oldham (1975), model are as follows

1. **Task Significance**: Task significance involves the importance of the task. It involves both internal and external significance. The degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives or work of other people.

2. **Task Identity**: Task identity refers to the degree whether the job has an identifiable beginning and end. It is the degree to which the job requires completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work; that is the extent to which a job that has a beginning and an end with a tangible and visible outcomes.

3. **Skill Variety**: It is the degree to which the job requires a variety of different skills, abilities talents as well as a range of knowledge.

4. **Autonomy**: The degree to which the job allows the individual substantial freedom, independence and discretion to schedule the work and determine the procedures for carrying it out i.e., the degree of independence employees have in scheduling and organizational work.

5. **Feedback**: It is the degree to which individual performing a job gets direct and clear information about the effectiveness of the performance.

The core job characteristics lead to intrinsic motivation through the mediation of three critical psychological states: experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility and knowledge of results (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). While describing each of the cognitive task assessment that compose empowerment, Thomas and Velthouse (1990), drew parallels with the critical psychological states in the job characteristics model: meaning was identified with experienced meaningfulness, impact with knowledge of results, and self-determination with experienced responsibility. This conceptualization of three of the four empowerment dimensions in relation to the critical psychological states suggests that the nature of tasks, as defined by the job characteristics approach, contributes directly to perceptions of empowerment (Liden & Arad, 1996). Substantial research offers initial empirical evidence that there are a number of positive relationships between the core job characteristics and the four empowerment dimensions (Gagne, Senecal, & Koestner 1997; Kraimer, Seibert, & Liden 1999).

In the present review, the rationale for bringing out a relationship between the nature of the job and empowerment is thus derived in part from the theoretical foundations of job characteristic model. Tasks that are high in the core job characteristics of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback are likely to lead to the higher perceptions of empowerment.
Organizational Characteristics

In a theoretical model of empowerment in the workplace, Thomas and Velthouse (1990), suggested that the characteristics of the organizations can have a powerful influence on cognitions of empowerment. Availability or access to information and rewards or incentive system are believed to be psychological ingredients for empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995, 1996).

**Rewards:** A reward consists of all organizational components, including people, processes, rules and procedures, and decision-making activities involved in allocating compensation and benefits to employees in exchange for their contributions to the organization.

A substantial body of evidence has shown that, reward is an important variable in organizational context that significantly contributes in the feelings of being empowered (Bowen & Lawler, 1992; Lawler, 1986). Although rewards for group or organization performance may be beneficial, often employees are not clear about how their own actions can influence performance at high levels (Lawler, 1986). Consequently, individual incentives enhance empowerment by (1) recognizing and reinforcing personal competencies and (2) providing individuals with incentives for participating in and affecting decision-making process at work (Spreitzer, 1995). Individual performance based rewards are argued to be important for empowerment.

**Access to information:** Access to organizational information allows individuals to see the "big picture" and develop alternative frames of reference for understanding their roles in the organization's operations (Bowen & Lawler, 1992). In order for individuals to feel empowered, they must understand the goals of their work units and how their own work can contribute to those goals. Social cognition theory suggests that access to information facilitates self efficacy (Gist & Mitchell, 1992), access to information also facilitates "sense-making" which is especially important during times of high uncertainty (Weick, 1979). Information about organizational vision is important because it helps to create a sense making and purpose (Conger & Kanungo, 1988) and enhances an individual's ability to make and influence decisions that are appropriately aligned with an organization's goals and mission (Lawler, 1992).

Voluminous research literature has supported the relationship between access to information and empowerment (Kanter, 1986; Lawler, 1992; Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Such information include data about work flow, productivity, the external environment competition, and firm's strategy (Lawler, 1992). Kanter (1986), has suggested that in order to be empowering, organizations "must make more information more available to more people at more levels through more devices." (p.5).

Social Exchange Relationship

Substantial body of evidence has acknowledged the role of various social contextual factors (such as organizational culture and top managerial support (Sparrowe, 1994; Arad & Drasgow, 1994), in influencing empowerment. However, critical contextual factors such as
social interactions at work place \textit{(i.e.}, relationship with supervisors and co-workers) have largely been neglected in these studies. Specifically, studies regarding the relationship between quality of social interaction with co-workers and empowerment is extremely limited and requires further attention \cite{Liden2000}. Hence in the present review, we are mainly concerned with two key social relationships (LMX and TMX) at work which are important in fostering empowerment. Relationships between leader and subordinate have been examined in the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) literature and relationship among coworkers have been studied as Team-Member Exchanges \cite{Seers1989}.

\textit{Leader Members Exchange (LMX) and Empowerment:} Despite the individual and organizational relevance of empowerment, there is limited research that focuses on possible links between leadership and empowerment \cite{Keller1995}. Keller & Dansereau further asserted that social exchange theory seems as a basis for understanding the relationship that develops between superiors and subordinates.

The Leader Member Exchange (LMX) model of leadership stressed the fact that leaders develop unique working relationship with each of their subordinates. LMX theory provides substantive evidence that leaders differentiate among subordinates, that these disparities are far from random and that in-group and out-group status is related to employee performance and satisfaction \cite{Gerstner1997}.

The leader gives benefits to subordinate and subordinates reciprocate with increased responsiveness towards the leader \cite{Hollander1978}. According to Blau \cite{Blau1964}, social exchange relationships are based on trust. That is, when an individual gives to benefits another, they do so, trusting that the other party will reciprocate.

The exchange which transpires between superiors and subordinates has been extensively studied under the rubric of Leader Member Exchange (LMX). Empirical research notes that the quality of Leader Member Exchange has implications for turnover \cite{Graen1982, Vecchio1984, Vecchio1986}, performance \cite{Liden1982, Seers1984, Seers1989} and productivity \cite{Graen1982, Graen1984}. Yet, to date very limited research examines implication of Leader Member Exchange for empowerment. In an empirical study on sample of 128 managers, employees from 13 organizations, Gomez & Rosen \cite{Gomez2001} submitted the importance of managers- employee relationship on perceived empowerment.

Deci, Connell & Ryan \cite{Deci1989}, have contended that the leader plays a vital role in providing subordinates with empowering experiences. These authors have argued that "the interpersonal work climate created by managers for their subordinates" contributes directly to subordinates feelings of self-worth and sense of self-determination \cite[p. 580]{Deci1989}. The LMX literature indicates that the supervisor-subordinate relationship has a major impact on employee's work experience \cite{Liden1997}. Perhaps the most important elements that differentiate leader-member relationship are the degree of emotional support, decision
making responsibility and task challenge granted to the member (Deci et al., 1989). High level of decision making influence and responsibility provide meaning feelings of self-efficacy, a sense of impact and perceptions of empowerment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Spreitzer, 1995).

In an empirical study examining the relationship between leadership practices and empowerment, Keller & Dansereau (1995) have found that the receipt of negotiating latitude and support for self-worth from supervisors empowers subordinates by increasing their perception of control. Subordinates reciprocate by performing in accordance with supervisory preferences. Additionally, superiors who utilize empowering leadership practices are predicted to be viewed as fair by subordinate. Consistent with this argument is research showing a positive association between LMX and such variables such as decision influence (Liden & Graen 1980; Scandiora, Grean & Nonak, 1986; Schriesheim, Neider, Scandwra & Tepper, 1992), task variety (Dunegan, Duchon & Uhl Bein, 1992) and support for employees' self-worth (Keller & Dansereau, 1995). Higher level of decision-making influence and responsibility provide meaning, feelings of self-efficacy, a sense of impact, and perceptions of self-determination that are described as being pay ingredients of empowerment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Sprietzer 1995). Therefore, LMX quality determines the extent to which leaders grant member the latitude and support that are the necessary antecedents of perceptions of empowerment (Liden et al., 2000).

**Team Member Exchange (TMX) and Empowerment:** A small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, common performance goals and an approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.

The construct of Team Member Exchange quality (TMX) is proposed as a way to assess the reciprocity between a member and the peer group. It should measure the member's perception of his or her willingness to assist other members, to share ideas and feedback and in turn, how readily information, help and recognition are received from other members. Thus, the quality of the Team Member Exchange relationship indicates the effectiveness of the member's working relationship to the peer group (Seers, 1989).

The emphasis placed on teams and teamwork in contemporary organizations (Hollenbeck et al., 1995), and the fact that empowerment is often implemented at the group level suggest that the study of empowerment is not complete without the inclusion of exchanges among work group members. Specially relations with co-workers, termed TMX by Seers (1989), may have a profound effect on experience and perception of empowerment. Low TMXs are limited to exchanges required for the completion of work tasks, whereas high TMXs involve exchange of resources and support that extend beyond what is necessary for task completion. By offering work related expertise and feedback, co-workers provide the conditions necessary for enhanced perceptions of meaning and impact. Similarly, appropriate feedback and social support increase peer perceptions of competence. Moreover, to the extent that co-worker exchanges include sharing of power and authority in the completion of the team's tasks, they support perceptions of self-determination.
Personal Characteristics

The personal characteristics that play an important role in fostering empowerment are self-esteem and locus of control (Spreitzer, 1995, 1996).

**Self-esteem:** It refers to the extent to which a person believes he or she is a worthwhile and deserving individual (Luthans, 2000). According to Brockner (1988), people differ in the degree to which they like or dislike themselves. This trait is called self-esteem. The most generalized finding on self-esteem is that low self-esteem are more susceptible to external influence in comparison to high self-esteem. Low self-esteem are dependent on the receipt of positive evaluations from others. As a result, they are more likely to seek approval from others and more prone to conform to the beliefs and behaviours of those they respect than are high self-esteem. In the managerial positions, low self-esteem will tend to be concerned with pleasing others and therefore, are less likely to take unpopular stands than are high self-esteem.

After reviewing the research literature, Krietner and Kinicki (2001), concluded that high self-esteem can be a good thing, but only if like many other human characteristics such as creativity, intelligence, and persistence it is nurtured and channeled in constructive and ethical ways, otherwise it can become antisocial and destructive (Brockner, 1988). Self-esteem as a general feeling of self-worth is posited to be related to empowerment. Individuals who hold themselves in high esteem are likely to extend their feeling of self-worth to a work-specific sense of competence (Bandura, 1977). Through self-esteem, individuals see themselves as valued resources having talents worth contributing, and they are thus, more likely to assume an active orientation with regard to their work and work units (Gist & Mitchell, 1992).

**Locus of Control:** Thomas & Velthouse (1990), suggested that locus of control, the personality trait most relevant to the impact dimension, will also be related to empowerment. Locus of control is the extent to which people believe that their behaviour has a real effect on what happens to them (J. B. Rotter, 1996). Locus of control explains the degree to which people believe that they, rather than external forces, determine what happens in their lives (Rotter, 1966). According to Moorhead & Griffin (1999) “A person's locus of control is the extent to which he believes that his circumstances are a function of their own actions or of external factors beyond their control” (p.75).

People who believe that they can influence forces and events that shape their lives are said to have an internal locus of control. While people who rate high on external control believe that their lives are determined by outside events and forces such as luck or chance (Schultz & Schultz).

Individuals with an internal locus of control regarding life in general are more likely to feel capable of shaping their work and work environments and hence to feel empowered. They are likely to see themselves as causal agents affecting their work environments rather than as
being externally controlled by organizational forces. In contrast "externals" are likely to see their behaviour as strongly influenced by a dominant system (Spreitzer, 1995).

**Consequences/Outcomes of Empowerment**

**Work related consequences:** Work satisfaction involves cognitive, affective and evaluative reaction or attitudes. Locke (1976), states it is “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience”. There are a number of factors that influence work satisfaction. In work satisfaction work itself plays a major role of satisfaction. Liden *et al.*, (2000), have proposed that the empowerment dimensions are positively related to work satisfaction. In their view on empowerment Herzberg *et al.* (1959) stressed that an employee can derive satisfaction from work only when engaged in meaningful job requiring change and opportunity for recognition.

Employees who perceive their job to be significant, meaningful and worthwhile feel higher levels of work satisfaction than those who perceive their jobs as having little value or meaning (Spreitzer, *et al.*, 1997).

Liden *et al.*, (2000), have also emphasized that empowerment dimensions of impact, competence, and self-determination significantly contributes to the feeling of work satisfaction. Employees derive a sense of satisfaction with the work itself when they feel that they have been directly involved in outcomes that affect the organization. Similarly, the more the individuals are involved in decision-making, the more satisfied they should be with the work itself. A sense of control or self-determination over one's work is satisfying because any accomplishment can be attributed more to one's self than to other individuals, such as a superior.

**Organizational Performance:** Thomas & Velthouse (1990), have suggested that empowered individuals perform better than those who are relatively less empowered. When individuals feel that their jobs are meaningful, and that by completing their job responsibilities they have an impact on others within and outside of the organization, they are motivated to perform well (Liden *et al.*, 2000).

Further Liden *et al.*, (2000) have also emphasized that employees who possess self-determination at work are able to respond to the demands of each unique situation. When self-determination is not present, employees feel helpless because they are not allowed to take work related actions that they deem appropriate (Greenberger, Strasserr, Cummings & Dunham, 1986). Perhaps the most required element of all empowerment dimensions is competence (Liden, *et al.*, 2000).

According to Liden *et al.*, (2000) the personal sense of self-worth and confidence in one's job competence should translate into higher levels of performance in comparison to less empowered individuals. Spreitzer, *et al.*, (1997) in this study included all four empowerment dimension, competence and impact and these were shown to be positively related to performance ratings.
Organizational Commitment: Organizational commitment, sometimes called job commitment, reflects an individual's identification with and attachment to the organization. A highly committed person will probably see himself as a true member of the firm, overlook minor sources of dissatisfaction and see himself remaining a member of the organization (Moorhead & Griffin, 1999). Hence organizational commitment refers to an individual's attachment, loyalty, and identification with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1984). Empowerment may contribute to a sense of commitment to the organization through a process of reciprocation. Individuals tend to be appreciative of organizations that provide opportunities for decision latitude, challenge and responsibility, as well as for the feelings of meaning, impact, self-determination, and mastery that result from these conditions. They are likely to reciprocate by being more committed to the organization (Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-La-Mastro, 1990; Krammer 1999) that is, their identification, attachment, and loyalty to the organization will increase.

Concluding Comments: Challenges in implementing employees empowerment at work.

Today, a substantial percentage of organizations have adopted some kind of empowerment initiative for successful performance of their employees. To be successful in today's competitive business environment, companies need to knowledge, ideas, energy, skills and creative innovation of every employee from front level workers to top level managers in the executive suite.

The best and successful companies achieve this by empowering their employees to take initiative for the overall benefit of the company.

In organizations, empowerment practices are implemented with the purpose of building employee commitment, reducing job dissatisfaction absenteeism, turnover, poor quality work and employee grievance and sabotage. But most often these implementation efforts fail to achieve their result for several reasons.

First, some managers give up empowerment before it has been successfully implemented. Second, sometimes employees do not understand about what is meant by the term empowerment. Thus, a key issue for managers is to be clear and explicit about what they mean by empowerment. Third, sometime managers lack the courage and confidence to empower their employees. They worry that employees will commit mistakes. They feel that they alone are the source of the best ideas. Starting with small initial step at sharing power, setting clear limits for empowerment and building trust in inter-personal relationships would be effective mechanism for reducing these concerns. And fourth, sometimes empowerment efforts are unsuccessful because employees resist efforts at empowerment. Thus, managers should take substantial time for their employees to learn to be more proactive. For empowering their employees, managers can set up small initial steps to build comfort and confidence. Managerial training and development programme can also boost their confidence to act in more empowered ways.
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