



THE EFFECT OF EMPOWERMENT ON EMPLOYEES' JOB SATISFACTION: A RESEARCH ON KONYA INDUSTRIAL ZONE

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Mehmet ULUTAŞ

Kırgızistan-Türkiye Manas Üniversitesi – Turizm ve Otelcilik Yüksekokulu
Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi – Havacılık ve Uzay Bilimleri Fakültesi,
mehmet.ulutas@manas.edu.kg, mulutas@konya.edu.tr

Abstract

The concept of Empowerment, which can be expressed by the words “to give power to”, “to energize”, “authorization”, is defined as the extension of the freedom of choice and action of employees. Job satisfaction is the internal satisfaction that employees receive when doing business. Business executives should take all kinds of measures to increase the job satisfaction of their employees. It was aimed to study the relationship between job satisfaction and empowerment can be omitted. In this context, a survey was conducted on the employees of 19 different companies operating in different sectors in Konya Industrial Zone, including the first five hundred and the second five hundred largest industrial establishments in Turkey, and important data on the relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction were reached. According to this research results; It shows that there is a positive relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction

Keywords: Empowerment, Job Satisfaction.

Introduction

Empowerment is a management technique that makes an employee the sole owner of the work. With this method, subordinates are empowered and become final decision makers on how and in what way they will do their work.

Organizations made up of individuals who have exercised only orders, and whose thinking and development abilities are eliminated, can be successful if they are in a militaristic system. However, it is possible for enterprises to survive in the brutal competitive environment of the 21st century by including all employees in business processes.

Here, empowerment creates a democratic environment in enterprises, producing employees who make their own decisions and take responsibility for the outcome of their decisions.

This study contributes to the success of businesses by demonstrating the positive impact of empowerment on job satisfaction of employees.

In this framework, the aim of this study is to examine the concept of empowerment in an comprehensive way, and to demonstrate analytically how employee empowerment affects employees' job satisfaction.

Literature Review

Empowerment

Empowerment means to give power to. Power has a few meanings. Power in the legal sense means authority; and in this case empowerment also means authorization. On the other hand, power can also be expressed as energy. In this case, empowerment means to energize. Energy transfer is the most plausible statement for motivational use of the concept of empowerment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

In the Oxford English Dictionary, the word "to empower" is specified as "to enable". In contrast to the earlier definition of empowerment as delegation of authority and resources; the definition of "enabling" is understood in fact as motivating by increasing personal efficacy (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

Empowerment is more about the use of power. If a conventional definition of empowerment is to be made, it should include those people outside the decision-making process in the decision-making process (Rowlands, 1995).

Dew (1997) stated that the fruits of the "empowerment" tree are the democratic atmosphere in the workplace. According to Dew, when the people in the organization are empowered and their support systems continue to strengthen, democracy will gradually rise to daylight.

According to Narayan (2002), empowerment, in general, points to the expansion of freedom of choice and action in order to shape one's life.

Blanchard et al. (1996) stated that what is built on empowerment is "to believe in and trust employees".

Mondros & Wilson (1994) think that there is a significant difference between actual power and feeling of being powerful. Strengthening according to them refers to a psychological situation that allows one to pursue concrete actions towards the goal of being strong and includes cases of competence, control and entitlement.

Psychological empowerment is defined as a motivational structure that manifests itself with four concepts. These are concepts of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Significance refers to the harmony between one's own beliefs, values and ideals, the purpose of engraving, and the business role that one expects. Proficiency is the belief that an

individual has the skill to perform their jobs in the best possible way. Autonomy is that one can make his own self-selection in the stages of starting, sustaining or terminating work, and acting independently in making decisions. Impact is the degree to which an individual can influence his or her own strategic, administrative, or operational outcomes (Spreitzer, 1995).

Fetterman and Wandersman (2005) have laid down the basic principles of empowerment as follows: Empowerment, community ownership, inclusion, democratic participation, social justice, community knowledge, evidence-based strategies, capacity building, organizational learning and accountability.

Laschinger et al. (2004) in their researches, indicate that environments that enhance the perception of staff empowerment have a lasting positive effect on employees.

Job Satisfaction

Friedman (2000) defines job satisfaction as: "It is the inner fulfillment and the pride emotion of doing a certain job. Job satisfaction is the pleasure that an employee gets when he/she feels he has accomplished a job that is important and appreciated."

Psychologists have found explicit links between job satisfaction and goal setting and decision making (Rowan, 2008).

Applying pressure in all types of work environments can cause job satisfaction to become weaker among employees (Dukes-Robinson & Esmail, 2014).

The relationship between job satisfaction and job performance constitutes one of the most respected research topics in organizational psychology. Industrial psychologists call this relation "Holy Grail" (Judge et al., 2001)

Rinehart and Short (1993) found that there was a meaningful relationship between staff empowerment and job satisfaction in the research on teachers.

There are many factors of job dissatisfaction such as absenteeism, complaints, demotivation, high turnover, delay etc. Also there are also numerous factors that determine the level of job satisfaction of employees, financial advantages and benefits, career development and promotion, working environment, managers and colleagues. (Bari, Fanchen, & Baloch, 2016)

Relationship between Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

Eklund (2008) stated that empowerment is of vital importance for teachers' job satisfaction. According to Bentley et al. (2013), it has been found by many researchers around the world that job satisfaction has a significant correlation with job performance and that job satisfaction has a strongest correlation when it comes to jobs requiring complexity and

autonomy. It is also expressed in the study that there is a positive relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction, when considering that autonomy is an element of empowerment.

In the study on state university employees in Northern Malaysia, Hanaysha and Rozita Tahir (2016) have concluded that empowerment has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Engström et al. (2010), in their study on nursing staff, determined that six out of eight factors of job satisfaction showed a positive correlation with total empowerment. Sarwar and Khalid (2011) found that empowerment positively affects job satisfaction in a survey of employees of banks operating in the Lahore city of Pakistan.

Hechanova et al. (2006) researched the relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction and performance in five different service sectors in the Philippines, such as hotel management, food and beverage management, banking, call center and airlines operating , and found positively correlation between empowerment and job satisfaction. Zembylas and Papanastasiou (2005) found that in a research on Cypriot teachers, the level of job satisfaction of teachers is related to empowerment.

The results of the empirical analysis by Fernandez & Moldogaziev (2015), based on the data of the 2010 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), indicate that empowerment practices (i.e., sharing information about goals and performance, providing access to job-related knowledge and skills, and granting discretion to change work processes) has positive and significant effects on job satisfaction.

Ahmad and Oranye (2010) conducted a survey on nurses working in educational hospitals in England and Malaysia. According to the findings of the research, Malaysian nurses feel more empowered and more committed to their institutions than British nurses. However, British nurses' job satisfaction was higher than that of Malaysian nurses. This result shows that empowerment does not give same conclusions in all countries and in empowerment practices cultural differences must be taken into account.

Ning et al. (2009) found a statistically significant positive correlation between empowerment and job satisfaction in their research on Chinese nurses. Abraiz et al. (2012) examined the relationship between job satisfaction and the four dimensions of empowerment (autonomy, responsibility, information, creativity) in research on hotels, hospitals and educational institutions in Pakistan. They found that job satisfaction has a positive relationship with the four dimensions of empowerment. But the relationship between job satisfaction and autonomy is relatively higher than other variables.

Lautizi et al. (2009), in a survey of Italian nurses, examined the relationship between structural empowerment and work stress and job satisfaction using the Kanter's Theory of Empowerment. Findings revealed that there is a positive correlation between structural empowerment and job satisfaction, and a negative correlation with work stress.

Pelit et al. (2011) in the research they conducted on 5-star hotel employees in Turkey, they considered empowerment in two dimensions as behavioral and psychological. The results show that psychological and behavioral empowerment has a significant effect on job satisfaction.

Choi et al. (2016) studied the causal relationships between perceived transformational leadership, empowerment, and job satisfaction in their research in private and public hospitals in Malaysia. Findings suggest that empowerment of employees does not only increase job satisfaction; has also revealed that empowerment mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction.

In their research on teachers working in Israeli elementary schools, Bogler and Nir (2012) reveals that empowerment mediated the relationship between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction. Sarmiento et al. (2004) found that higher levels of staff empowerment resulted in less burnout and higher job satisfaction in their research on nurses in Canada. Yang and Lee (2009) found that in the research they conducted on Chinese nurses, both empowerment and organizational commitment was significantly related to job satisfaction.

The Aim and The Theoretical Model

This study will contribute to a better understanding of the empowerment and the relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction. The aims which are pursued with the research can be ordered like this: That whether there is a relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction of the employees or not and if so, being determined what this relationship's direction and size are.

In this study, while the empowerment is chosen as independent variable and job satisfaction is chosen as dependent variables. Here, the relationships (positive or negative) between dependent and independent variables are searched and measured. A hypothesis is tested related to this subject and this hypothesis' accuracy and whether it is accepted or rejected are searched.

H₁: Empowerment has a positive effect on the employees' job satisfaction.

As the research model, a symbolical model like below has been used. The independent variable X represents “empowerment” and Y (dependent variable) represents “job satisfaction”.

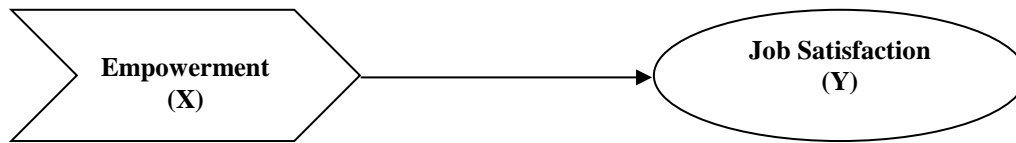


Figure 1. The Relation between Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

Methodology

Sample of the Research, the Method of Data Collection and the Survey

In this study, the managers and the employees of the companies which carry on a business in industry of Konya are chosen as sample; including Konya Seker Inc., Kombassan Paper Inc., Kompen Inc., Komyapı Inc., Ittifak Holding Inc., Ova Sut Inc., Enka Sut Inc., etc which are among first five hundred and the second five hundred largest industrial establishments in Turkey,

A questionnaire form has been used as the data collection tool of the research. The answers given to the questions have been taken with the help of 5 point Likert type scale (1: certainly disagree; ...; 5: certainly agree). The question list has been prepared by starting from the conceptual model of the research. The whole of the questions in the list have been made up the questions used before in literature.

The questions that measure the variable of empowerment have been used by Paré et al (2000) and examples of questions are as follows; “*A great latitude is given to employees for the organization of their work (e.g., work schedules)*”, “*Employees in my work unit have a lot of autonomy in regard to project management*”, “*In my work unit, employees have a great deal of liberty in the conduct of their work*”, “*Employees in my work unit are extensively involved in the recruitment process*”, “*Employees in my work unit are regularly consulted in technological investments decisions*”.

The questions that measure the variable of job satisfaction have been used by different lecturers. Examples of questions are as follows; “*Generally speaking I am satisfied with my job*” (King and Xia, 2001), “*I like doing the things I do at work*” (Liu, 2005), “*In general, I like working here*” (Moynihan & Pandey, 2008), “*Most days I am enthusiastic about my job*” (Williams et al., 2003)

The questionnaire forms have been distributed by hand to 300 people in the level of manager and employee according to simple random sampling and 207 forms of them have

returned. 13 of the forms which returned have not been included in the analysis, because they have been filled by chance and there are many questions which haven't been marked, so the number of the questionnaire forms totally used is 194.

Findings

Factor Analysis

In factor analysis, the dependent and independent variables were considered separately and variables were analyzed in this way. Factor loadings for the prospector strategy are given in Table 1. Total variance explained is 66.876 %. According to the factor analysis, it can be said that scale has structural validity.

Table 1. The Factor Loadings of Dependent Variable

| Variables | Questions | Factor Loadings | Mean | Std. Deviation | Survey References |
|--|--------------|-----------------|------|----------------|--|
| Independent Variable Empowerment (X) | EMP.3 | .829 | 2.81 | 1,172 | (Paré, Tremblay, & Lalonde, 2000) |
| | EMP.4 | .822 | 3.07 | 1,245 | |
| | EMP.6 | .687 | 2.91 | 1,157 | |
| | EMP.2 | .685 | 2.85 | 1,227 | |
| | EMP.5 | .671 | 2.85 | 1,233 | |
| Dependent Variable Job Satisfaction (Y) | JS.5 | .928 | 3.88 | ,995 | (Williams, Welch, Chairperson, & Virginia, 2003) |
| | JS.4 | .888 | 3.85 | 1,025 | (Moynihan & Pandey, 2008) |
| | JS.3 | .882 | 3.89 | 1,055 | (Liu, 2005) |
| | JS.2 | .760 | 3.70 | 1,130 | (King & Xia, 2001) |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

* The questions whose factor load is not distributed to the appropriate components are removed from the scale.

Reliability Analysis

In reliability analysis, alpha coefficients of each variable are checked. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for empowerment (X) is .808 (5 questions) and Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for job satisfaction (Y) is .899 (4 questions).

As a result, reliability values for variables were higher than the value defined and accepted by international literature.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients are shown in Table 2. In correlation table, relationship between dependent variable and independent variable is examined.

Table 2. The Values of Correlation

| Variables | | X | Y |
|-----------|------------------|--------|-------|
| X | Empowerment (X) | 1.000 | |
| Y | Job satisfaction | .364** | 1.000 |

Pearson Corr. and Significance.
 **. Corr., $\rho=0.01$.

When looking at Table 4, it can be seen that; there is a significant relation ($\rho=0.01$ and $\beta=.364$) in a positive way between empowerment and job satisfaction.

Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis in model is tested by regression analyses. At the end of the regression analysis, our hypothesis will be accepted or rejected according to variables' β coefficients and significance (ρ) levels. The elements shown in these tables are dependent variable, independent variable, beta coefficients (β), significance (ρ), R^2 and F values.

As stated in research hypothesis, it is assumed that there is a mutual interaction and relation between "empowerment" and "job satisfaction". The existence of relationships between variables which were propounded in research model was determined by correlation analysis. In addition, linear regression analysis was done to explain the features of relations of variables. Findings of linear regression analysis, done with the aim of examining the effect of empowerment on job satisfaction, are as follows:

As appered in Table 3, in this regression model; $R^2 = .133$; $\rho = .000$ and $F=29.392$ values were obtained. The obtained values, R^2 and F, show that the variable used in the model explains "job satisfaction".

Table 3. The effect of Empowerment on Job Satisfaction

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|--------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 (Constant) | 2,762 | ,206 | | 13,385 | ,000 |
| Emp_ort | ,368 | ,068 | ,364 | 5,421 | ,000 |

Dependent Variable: Job satisfaction; R: 0,364; R^2 : 0,133; Adjusted R^2 : 0,128; D-W: 1,868; Model F: 29,392, $p < 0.0001$

According to regression analysis results in Table 3, participants' attitude change caused by job satisfaction results from empowerment. In this context, R^2 determination

coefficient indicates that 13.3 % of the employees' attitude change caused by job satisfaction results from empowerment. When employees' empowerment increases 1 unit, that causes 0.368 unit rise on their job satisfaction. H_1 hypothesis is supported by this result. In other words, empowerment increases the job satisfaction.

The regression results of empowerment and job satisfaction were shown together schematically in Figure 2 below. Relations belonging to the accepted results are shown with thick dashed-line arrows.

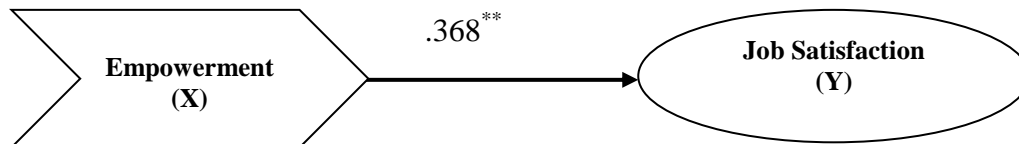


Figure 2. The Relation between Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

Results of Hypothesis

The results concerning hypothesis are shown in Table 4. The result criterias are following; R^2 , Beta (β), Significance (ρ) and Accepted/Rejected status (A/R). As a result, the hypothesis is accepted as it is significant at the rate of 1 %.

Table 4: *The Results of Hypothesis*

| No | Hypothesis | R^2 | β | ρ | A/R |
|-------|--|-------|---------|--------|-----|
| H_1 | <i>Empowerment has a positive effect on the employees' job satisfaction.</i> | .133 | .368** | .000 | A |

Conclusions

In this study, it is aimed to search whether there is a significant relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction in respective organizations.

The results of our research show that there is a significant and positive relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction. Eklund (2008), Bentley et al (2013), Hanaysha and Tahir (2016), Engström et al. (2010), Sarwar and Khalid (2010), Hechanova et al (2006), Zembylas and Papanastasiou (2005), Fernandez and Moldogaziev (2015), Ahmad and Oranye (2010), Ning and Qiu Jie (2009), Abraiz et al (2012), Lautizi and Ravazzolo (2009), Pelit et al (2011), Choi et al (2016), Bogler and Nir (2012), Sarmiento et al (2014), Yang and Lee's (2009) research's findings also support that result.

When we look at the findings of the research, we see that empowerment has a positive influence on job satisfaction. There have been dozens, maybe hundreds, of studies that have shown that employees with high job satisfaction have contributed positively to the success of their business.

Employees who are satisfied with their jobs will do better their jobs and make less mistakes because of they are enthusiastic about their job, and they will create businesses with higher performance.

Employers need to increase employees' empowerment levels to increase job satisfaction of employees. Following the implementation of empowerment methods, employees firstly will feel more important themselves, think more freely, act more independently in their jobs, and participate in business-related decisions.

Limitations

As in each social research, a few limitations have been run across in this study, as well. It should be viewed as that the study has been done on relatively little example by focusing on time slack and cost, so the study group is limited in representing to the aggregate and the conclusions can't be generalised.

Recommendations for Next Research

Empowerment is of great importance for the effective and efficient operation of organizations. For this reason it needs to be investigated the relationship between Empowerment and those variables such as turnover intention, job stress, performance, productivity, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior.

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