

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Psychological Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

The present study shows that there exists a relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. This means that higher the level of Psychological Empowerment higher will be the level of Job satisfaction. These results are in consensus with the findings of previous research relating to psychological empowerment and job satisfaction with different groups of employees (Spreitzer, 1995a; Spreitzer, Kizilos and Nason, 1997).

Public sector organizations have taken up the challenge of providing better-quality services to their employees by promoting different practices including employee empowerment. Empowerment perceptions can augment the value of work for individuals, increase job satisfaction and contribute to work productivity and effectiveness (Spreitzer, 1995a). Conger and Kanungo (1988) defined psychological empowerment as a process of increasing employee feelings of self-efficacy among employees whereas Thomas and Velthouse (1990) explained psychological empowerment as increased intrinsic motivation. There are many researchers who linked job satisfaction with psychological empowerment (Fuller et al., 1999; Carless, 2004; Dehkordi et al.2011; Seibert et al. 2004). The job characteristic model of Hackman and Oldham, 1980 had proposed that psychological states like meaningfulness, feelings of responsibility, knowledge of results etc. influence job satisfaction. Fulford and Enz (1995) stated that perceiving oneself as empowered is positively linked to the emotional states of workers and their overall attachment to the work environment and thus according to their findings perceived empowerment did have an influence on the level of job satisfaction of employees in the hospitality industry.

Spreitzer et al. (1997) also pointed out that one of the earliest anticipated outcomes of psychological empowerment was job satisfaction. In another study on the nurses, Laschinger, Finegan and Shamian (2001) concluded that the feelings of psychological empowerment strongly influenced nurses work satisfaction. The results of these studies were congruent with the result of the present study. Hechanova et al. (2006) studied five different service sectors to determine the relationship of empowerment with job satisfaction and found that psychological empowerment positively correlated with job satisfaction. Their study to understand the relationships between organizational empowerment and job satisfaction among nursing assistants in Taiwan indicated that, where there was a moderate level of organizational empowerment, a higher level of job satisfaction was found. Organizational empowerment was significantly associated with total job satisfaction (Kuo, Yin and Li (2007).

The relationship between Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), psychological empowerment, job satisfaction and turnover intention was studied within the context of a service restaurant environment and the findings revealed that the quality of the LMX relationship and the level of psychological empowerment have direct linear relationships with job satisfaction (Collins, 2007).

Bordin, Bartram and Casimir G. (2007) conducted a study to examine some of the antecedents and consequences of psychological empowerment among Singaporean IT employees and found out that along with other antecedents like access to information, employee participation, supervisory social support, job security, organizational commitment, job satisfaction also correlated positively to psychological empowerment. Thus from the above discussion, it can be summarized that there is a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction.

Dimensions of Psychological Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

The results revealed that there were positive and significant influences between the four dimensions of employee psychological empowerment and overall job satisfaction. This means that the employees of information technology whose job has a high level of meaningfulness, who have enough skills to perform the job, who have confidence and those who were influential in the workplace would be most likely to experience a higher level of job satisfaction. The results are in consonance with earlier research studies. Spreitzer et al. (1997) found that one dimension of empowerment alone was not associated with an organizational outcomes such as effectiveness, satisfaction, and low job strain. They concluded that if an organization has to achieve its outcome such as effectiveness, satisfaction, and low job-related strain the employee must experience all four of the empowerment dimensions. The present study also replicates the above result.

Other empirical research also shows that though the dimensions of psychological empowerment significantly affect job satisfaction, the result of the relationship between the four individual dimensions of psychological empowerment and job satisfaction varies (Dickson and Lorenz, 2009; Carless 2004; Thomas and Tymon, 1994; Liden, Wayne and Sparrowe, 2000; Spreitzer, Kizilos and Nason, 1997).

Many of the studies revealed that meaning is the strongest predictor of psychological empowerment. Spreitzer (1996) found that the dimension of meaning was the strongest contributor to overall job satisfaction. Spreitzer, et al. (1997) examined the relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction in two different samples: One consisted of middle-level managers and the other consisted of lower-level employees. In both samples, Spreitzer and her colleagues found that meaning was the strongest predictor of general job

satisfaction, while the impact was unrelated to job satisfaction. There was ambiguity in the results of self-determination and competence.

Carless (2004) also examined the facets of empowerment and indicated that meaning and competence were the significant predictors of job satisfaction whereas the findings on impact were ambiguous, it was found to be a significant predictor of present job satisfaction, but not general job satisfaction. She opined that if the employees' found that the works they perform were consistent with their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors, this would result in higher job satisfaction and they would be happy to perform their work (Carless, 2004). In another study by Liden, Wayne and Sparrowe (2000) meaning is an important predictor of job satisfaction. This means that when employees' who perceive that their job assigned by their superior to be significant, they will feel a higher level of job satisfaction as compared to those who perceive their jobs as having little value. But they indicated that competence cognition has a significant negative relationship with job satisfaction.

Dickson and Lorenz (2009) also agreed to the relationship between meaning and job satisfaction. They agreed that both meaning and impact cognition had a positive relation with job satisfaction. In the present study also meaning and impact dimensions were the strongest contributors to job satisfaction. But according to Dickson and Lorenz (2009) competence cognition did not have any relationship and self-determination cognition had a negative relationship with job satisfaction, which is in contradiction with the present study.

Several studies show that self-determination also has a great effect on job satisfaction. Thomas and Tymon (1994) with a sample of employees from a hospital, electronics firm and computer services reported that meaning, self-determination and impact were the three factors

which forecast the job satisfaction of an employee. Competence was unrelated to general job satisfaction. Fock et al. (2011) in their study in two countries indicated that the influences of psychological empowerment dimensions on job satisfaction were not uniform. Self-determination had the strongest effect on job satisfaction but no significant results were found with respect to meaning and competence. Dehkordi et al. (2011) also in their study found psychological empowerment in general and its dimensions- meaning, impact and self-determination seem to have a positive and significant relation to job satisfaction. But the dimension of competence was not positively linked to job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

According to Fulford and Enz (1995) the dimensions of meaning and influence had the strongest influences on job satisfaction. Holdsworth and Cartwright (2003) through their research found that three elements of psychological empowerment, i.e. meaningfulness, self-determination, and impact are in positive and meaningful relationships to the work satisfaction of the personnel among employees of the call center. Patah et al. (2009)'s a study on receptionists in five-star hotels and found that psychological empowerment (meaningfulness, competence and influence) have significant influences over overall job satisfaction of the receptionists.

Thus from the above discussion, it is clear that various dimensions of empowerment is related to job satisfaction. The finding of this study that the dimensions of psychological empowerment (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact) of the employees and their job satisfaction are related is in lieu of previous studies. Thus employees like their jobs more when they find their work meaningful, when they feel capable of performing their work well, when they have the freedom to make decisions about their work, and when they feel that they can have an impact on organizational outcomes.