

PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG THE MANAGERIAL PERSONNEL OF AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Psychological empowerment was more broadly defined 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. The four dimensions of psychological empowerment have been correlated with various work behaviors and affective outcomes at work. The aim of the present study was to study psychological empowerment and occupational stress among the managerial personnel of automobile industry. Managerial personnel working in automobile industry participated in the study. Questionnaires were administered to assess psychological empowerment and occupational stress among the managers. The collected data were analysed with mean, standard deviation, ANOVA, correlation, and regression tests. Results indicated that there were significant differences in psychological empowerment and occupational stress among the respondents of different age and income groups. There was a significant negative correlation between psychological empowerment and occupational stress. Seventeen per cent of the variation in occupational stress was explained by psychological empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Psychological empowerment is defined as the fundamental personal beliefs that employees have about their role in relation to the employing organization. The beliefs are organized into four dimensions: meaning, self-determination, competence, and impact (Spreitzer, 1995). Self-determination is the amount of freedom and discretion people have in the workplace, meaning is having a personal connection to work, competence is the confidence about one's abilities to perform work responsibilities, and impact is the ability to make a difference in the work organization (Spreitzer, 1995).

According to Spreitzer and Quinn (2001) psychological empowerment at work is developed within an individual; it is not granted by a superior or institution. While the institution may facilitate the development of psychological empowerment, it may not award psychological empowerment. The member of the organization must develop the four dimensions of psychological empowerment independently.

The four dimensions of psychological empowerment theory have been correlated with various work behaviors and affective outcomes at work (Spreitzer, Kizilos, & Nason, 1997). Meaning has been most strongly associated with job satisfaction, an affective outcome (K. Thomas & Tymon, 1994). Self-determination is also associated with job satisfaction. Impact is related most strongly to work effectiveness. Competence is inversely related to job stress and positively related to work effectiveness (Spreitzer & Quinn, 2001).

The four dimensions are said to combine additively to create an overall construct of psychological empowerment. In other words, the lack of any single dimension will deflate, though not completely eliminate, the overall degree of felt empowerment. Thus the four dimensions specify "a nearly complete or sufficient set of cognitions" for understanding psychological empowerment (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990).

Stress arises when individuals perceive that

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they cannot adequately cope with the demands being made on them or with threats to their well being (Lazarus, 1966). Job stress is a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning (Beehr and Newman, 1997). There are three categories of potential stressors: environmental, organizational, and individual. Environmental factors include economic uncertainty, political uncertainty, and technological uncertainty. Organizational factors include task demands, role demands, interpersonal demands, organizational structure, organizational leadership, and organization's life stage. Individual factors include family problems, economic problems and personality.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Lynn Holdsworth and Susan Cartwright (2003) explored the relationship between stress, satisfaction and the four dimensions of psychological empowerment (meaning, impact, self-determination and competence) within a call centre. The occupational stress indicator and Spreitzer's empowerment measure were used to collect data from a North West (UK) call centre. The study found the call centre agents were more stressed, less satisfied and reported poorer mental and physical health than the general working population. In addition the sample perceived themselves as less empowered than other workers in a traditional office environment.

Li IC, Chen YC, and Kuo HT (2007) conducted a study to understand the relationship between work empowerment, including both organizational and psychological empowerment, and work stress among nurses at Long Term Care Facilities in Taiwan. A total of 178 nurses participated in the study. Organizational empowerment measures included a range of components made up of formal power, informal power and perceived access to the work empowerment structures of opportunity, information, support and resources. Psychological empowerment measures included components made up of meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. It was found that there was a moderate level of organizational and a slightly higher level of psychological empowerment among the nurses studied. A moderate level of work stress was found among the subjects. Both work empowerment and psychological empowerment were significantly associated with work stress.

Boudrias, Morin and Brodeur (2012) investigated the role of psychological empowerment as a protective factor for burnout among workers exposed to work-related stressors (e.g. daily hassles, overload, job changes). A cross-sectional questionnaire study was conducted, with a convenience sample of 401 healthcare workers. Hierarchical multiple regressions were performed to test main and moderating effects of empowerment cognitions. Results revealed partial support for the hypotheses. Only the job meaningfulness cognition exerts a beneficent main effect on all burnout symptoms beyond the effect of stressors. Some moderating effects differing according to burnout dimensions were also found. Most interestingly, high levels of empowerment cognitions accentuate the effect of change-related resources in the reduction of emotional exhaustion. Because psychological empowerment has beneficial effects, organizations could rely on different strategies to enhance it.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The present study was aimed at studying the psychological empowerment and occupational stress among the managerial personnel of automobile industry.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A convenience sample consisting of forty six managerial personnel working in automobile industry participated in the study. Questionnaires were administered to assess psychological empowerment and occupational stress among the managers. The Psychological Empowerment Questionnaire (PEQ) (Spreitzer, 1995) was used in this study. The scale contains three items for each of the four sub-dimensions of psychological empowerment. The respondents indicated the extent to which they agreed with each statement on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A higher score means a higher degree of psychological empowerment. Occupational Stress Index developed by Srivastava and Singh (1981) was used to assess the level of stress. The scale contains 15 items on a five-point scale. The collected data was analysed with mean, standard deviation, ANOVA, correlation and regression.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis of the data collected from the respondents. Table 1 provides the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographic factors	Classification	Number of Respondents	Percent
Age (in years)	20-30	12	26.1
	30-40	16	34.8
	40-50	18	39.1
Experience (in years)	Below 10	18	39.1
	10-15	19	41.3
	Above 15	9	19.6
Income (in rupees)	Below 20000	19	41.3
	20000-25000	19	41.3
	Above 25000	8	17.4

Among the 46 respondents, 18 (39.1%) belong to 40-50 years age group; 19 (41.3%) belong to 10-15 years experience group; and 19 (41.3%) belong to below 20000 and another 19 (41.3%) belong to 20000-25000 income group.

Table 2 Showing the Mean and Standard Deviation of research variables in different age groups

Age	Empowerment	Stress
20-30 Mean	71.33	38.75
N	12	12
Std. Deviation	5.581	3.888
30-40 Mean	64.25	47.25
N	16	16
Std. Deviation	9.910	4.865
40-50 Mean	62.28	47.11
N	18	18
Std. Deviation	7.917	4.837
Total Mean	65.33	44.98
N	46	46
Std. Deviation	8.819	5.867

A high level of psychological empowerment (Mean=71.33) and a low level of stress (Mean=38.75) were seen among the respondents of 20-30 age group.

Table 3 Showing the Mean and Standard Deviation of research variables in different experience groups

Experience	Empowerment	Stress
Below 10 Mean	68.94	41.33
N	18	18
Std. Deviation	6.150	6.624
10-15 Mean	62.32	48.32
N	19	19
Std. Deviation	10.683	3.917
Above 15 Mean	64.44	45.22
N	9	9
Std. Deviation	6.966	3.073
Total Mean	65.33	44.98
N	46	46
Std. Deviation	8.819	5.867

A high level of psychological empowerment (Mean=68.94) was observed among the less than 10 years experience group. A high level of stress (Mean=48.32) was observed among the 10-15 years experience group and a low level of stress (Mean=41.33) among the less than 10 years experience group.

Table 4 Showing the Mean and Standard Deviation of research variables in different income groups

Income	Empowerment	Stress
Below 20000 Mean	67.84	42.21
N	19	19
Std. Deviation	9.424	6.511
20000=25000 Mean	65.63	46.42
N	19	19
Std. Deviation	6.491	3.834
Above 25000 Mean	58.62	48.12
N	8	8
Std. Deviation	9.724	6.058
Total Mean	65.33	44.98
N	46	46
Std. Deviation	8.819	5.867

A high level of psychological empowerment (Mean=67.84) and a low level of stress (Mean=42.21) were observed in Below 20000 income group. A low

level of psychological empowerment (Mean=58.62) and a high level of stress (Mean=48.12) were observed in Above 25000 income group.

Table: 5 Showing the results of ANOVA test of research variables and age.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Empowerment	Between Groups	618.831	2	309.415	4.618	.015
	Within Groups	2881.278	43	67.006		
	Total	3500.109	45			
Stress	Between Groups	629.950	2	314.975	14.737	.000
	Within Groups	919.028	43	21.373		
	Total	1548.978	45			

Results indicated that there were significant differences in psychological empowerment ($F=4.618$, $P<.05$) and occupational stress ($F=14.737$, $p<.01$) among the respondents of different age groups.

Table: 6 Showing the results of ANOVA test of research variables and experience.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Empowerment	Between Groups	414.837	2	207.418	2.891	.066
	Within Groups	3085.272	43	71.751		
	Total	3500.109	45			
Stress	Between Groups	451.317	2	225.659	8.840	.001
	Within Groups	1097.661	43	25.527		
	Total	1548.978	45			

Results indicated that there was a significant difference in occupational stress ($F=8.840$, $p<.01$) among the respondents of different experience groups.

Table: 7 Showing the results of ANOVA test of research variables and income

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Empowerment	Between Groups	481.286	2	240.643	3.428	.042
	Within Groups	3018.822	43	70.205		
	Total	3500.109	45			
Stress	Between Groups	264.314	2	132.157	4.424	.018
	Within Groups	1284.664	43	29.876		
	Total	1548.978	45			

Results indicated that there were significant differences in psychological empowerment ($F=3.428$, $P<.05$) and occupational stress ($F=4.424$, $p<.05$) among the respondents of different income groups.

Table: 8 Showing the correlation among the research variables

		Empowerment	Stress
Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	1	-.412**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	46	46
Stress	Pearson Correlation	-.412**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	46	46

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the above table it was concluded that there was a significant negative correlation between psychological empowerment and occupational stress ($r = -.412$; $p < .01$).

Table : 9. Regression analysis with Stress as Dependent variable**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.412a	.170	.151	5.407

a. Predictors: (Constant), Empowerment

ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	262.579	1	262.579	8.981	.004a
	Residual	1286.399	44	29.236		
	Total	1548.978	45			

b. Dependent Variable: Stress

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	62.871	6.023		10.438	.000
	Empowerment	-.274	.091	-.412	-2.997	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Stress

Regression analysis was conducted with occupational stress as the dependent variable. The F value was 8.981 ($p < .01$) and significant. The R square was .170. Hence, it was concluded that 17 per cent of the variation in occupational stress was explained by

psychological empowerment.

CONCLUSION

In the present study an attempt was made to study psychological empowerment and occupational stress among the managerial personnel of automobile

industry. A convenience sample consisting of forty six managers participated in the study. Questionnaires were used to collect data. The collected data were analysed with mean, standard deviation, ANOVA, correlation, and regression tests. Results indicated that a high level of psychological empowerment and a low level of occupational stress were seen among the respondents of 20-30 age group. A high level of psychological empowerment and a low level of stress were observed in Below 20000 income group. There were significant differences in psychological empowerment and occupational stress among the respondents of different age and income groups. There was a significant negative correlation between psychological empowerment and occupational stress. Seventeen per cent of the variation in occupational stress was explained by psychological empowerment.

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