
PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES OF HEALTHCARE CENTERS IN MAKURDI, BENUE STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed effect of psychological empowerment on performance of employee of healthcare centers in Makurdi, Benue State. A survey design was adopted. The study collected primary data using self-administered questionnaire. The population of the study include 969 employees of 26 healthcare centers in Makurdi, Benue State. A sample of 130 employees was determined and surveyed. The sample elements were randomly selected. Data analyzed was done using correlation and multiple regression analysis. The results of the correlation analysis showed significant relationship between psychological empowerment (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact) and employee performance. The result of regression analysis revealed that psychological empowerment have positive significant effect on performance of employees of healthcare centers in Makurdi, Benue State. The study conclude that psychological empowerment positively affects performance of employees of healthcare centers in Benue State; and recommends that heads of healthcare centers in Benue State should empowerment their employees by providing more opportunities for them to take part in decision making and regularly provide feedback to help improve their performance.

Keywords: Employee performance, empowerment, psychological empowerment, self-determination

INTRODUCTION

Organizations today face enormous challenges stemming from development of global markets, rapid technological innovations, shifting workforce, customer demographics, and increasing demand for quality products. These changes have mandated organizations to create an appropriate work environments for individuals. Adequate work environment is a key factor in labor-intensive organizations (Feiz et al., 2019).

Employees are firms' most important resources (Okochi & Ateke, 2021) and sources of competitive advantage (Al Najdawi, 2020; Hanaysha & Tahir, 2016). Empowering them is thus a necessity in today's workplaces because empowered employees make quick decisions and respond swiftly to change in the business environment (Tetik, 2016). Empowered employees are motivated to perform better because they believe they have the autonomy and capability to perform meaningful work that can impact their organizations.

Employee empowerment programmes are widely adopted in both public and private sectors to improve employee performance (Yin et al., 2018). Psychological empowerment reflects employees' active orientation to work roles and consist cognitions shaped by work environment, rather than fixed personality attributes. Psychological empowerment is an important tool for improving employee performance and achieving organizational goals (Ibrahim, 2020).

Empowered employees feel supported, and this results in effective task performance. Scholars argued that well-treated employees seliver quality service to customers (Pakurár et al., 2019). Thus, firms deploy empowerment as a measure to enhance employee outcomes (Yin et al., 2018). Psychological empowerment has four dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. Given the importance of

psychological empowerment on employee behaviour outcomes, previous studies have demonstrated its role in enhancing performance of employees (Dmour et al., 2019; Permarupan et al., 2020).

In the service industry, it is important for organizations to provide excellent service to customers (Suhaila et al., 2018). In order to improve public healthcare, empowerment of employees should be considered paramount. Healthcare professionals play essential roles in the society. In carrying out their roles healthcare workers are required to have high expertise, knowledge and concentration. In addition, they are faced with demands of professional idealism and various kinds of problems from patients and colleagues (Makatiho, 2013).

In most Healthcare facilities, employees have low work initiatives because of lack of opportunities for them to work independently and lack of support from management of hospitals. However, studies on the effect of psychological empowerment on employee performance in the health sector are relatively scarce. To fill the gap in literature, this study examines effect of psychological empowerment (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact) on employee performance in the health sector with focus on healthcare centers in Makurdi, Benue State. The specific objectives are:

- 1) To determine the effect of meaning on performance of employee of healthcare centers in Makurdi, Benue State.
- 2) To ascertain the effect of competence on performance of employee of healthcare centers in Makurdi, Benue State.
- 3) To evaluate the effect of self-determination on performance of employee of healthcare centers in Makurdi, Benue State.
- 4) To examine the effect of impact on performance of employee of healthcare centers in Makurdi, Benue State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological Empowerment

Employee empowerment encompass activities required to improve employees' decision making capacity through cooperation, training and team work (Vogt & Murrel, 1990, as cited in Harcourt and Ateke, 2018). It involves assigning appropriate responsibility to employees and helping them gain abilities required for effective job performance. Empowered employees are granted wider authority to monitor, take responsibility, and use their knowledge and skills via independent decisions (Al-Ghabra, 2017).

Individuals appreciate organizations that provide opportunities for decision latitude, challenge, and responsibility, as well as for the feelings of meaning-full work, impact, self-determination and mastery that result from these conditions (Dewettinck, 2003). Empowerment is a strategy used by organizations to develop a flexible organization that is capable of adapting to a changing external environment (Ibrahim, 2020).

The rationale behind empowerment is not only to ensure that effective decisions are made by the right employees but to provide a mechanism by which responsibility for those decisions is vested in individuals and teams (Rawat, 2011). Empowerment provides opportunity for employees to contribute to organizations' overall success (Spreitzer & Quinn, 2001).

Psychological empowerment entails a set of psychological states that are necessary for individuals to feel a sense of control in relation to their work role. Rather than focus on managerial practices that share power with employees at all levels, the psychological perspective focuses on employees experience about their work (Ibrahim, 2020). Psychological empowerment has been defined explicitly as individuals' experience of intrinsic motivation based on cognitions about their relation to their work role (Spreitzer, 1995).

According to Spreitzer (2007) psychological empowerment focuses on the personal beliefs that employees perform their role successfully in relation to the organization. Psychological empowerment is classified under four dimensions; meaning, competence, self-determination and impact (Spreitzer, 1995). The four cognitions combine additively to create an overall construct of empowerment (Spreitzer 1995).

Meaning involves the value of work. It is the fit between the needs of one's work role and one's beliefs, values and behaviors. Meaning enable employees improve a psychological relationship with the organisation (Permarupan et al., 2020). Al-Makhadmah et al. (2020) explained that meaning is the sense of importance employees attach to their tasks as integral component of service provided to customers. For instance, "the work I do is very important to me."

Competence or self-efficacy describes employee's capacity to perform the job. It refers to employee's belief that they are capable of performing their work activities. For example, "I have mastered the skills necessary for my job". Self-determination means an individual's sense of having control over their work. It reflects a sense of autonomy such as "I can decide on my own how to go about my work." Impact entails the degree to which one can influence strategic, administrative or operating outcomes at work. For instance "I have significant influence over what happens in my organization" (Girdwichai & Sriviboon, 2020).

Employee Performance

Employee performance is about employees achieving the results, goals or standards as per the expectations set by the organization (Al-Makhadmah et al., 2020). Employees are rated on how well they do their jobs compared to expected performance standards. It is the accomplishment of a given task measured against pre-set standards of accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed, the initiatives they take, their creativity in solving problems and the resourcefulness in the way they utilize their resources, time and energy (Bon, 2012).

Pradhan and Jena (2017) define employee performance as individual's work achievement after exerting required effort on the job which associated through getting a meaningful work, engaged profile and compassionate employers around. Cardy and Leonard (2004, as cited in Okchi and Ateke, 2020) provides that employee performance comprise outcomes, results and accomplishments produced by employees; and relates to collective efforts and behaviours relevant to organizational goals, which are controlled by employees. Employee performance is measured in this study using service quality and task performance evaluated by immediate supervisor (Tuffaha, 2020)

Psychological Empowerment and Employee Performance

Employee empowerment is used as a competitive tool to allow employees to immediately make the right decision without permanent reference to higher departments and it can help employees utilize their creativity, reduce expenses, and create efficient and cost-effective mechanisms (Al-douri, 2018). Previous studies demonstrate the importance of psychological empowerment on employee and organizational performance (Shakirah & Shah Rollah, 2020).

Psychological empowerment contributes positively to employees' and organizational performance (Landry & Whillans, 2019). Permarupan et al. (2020) affirmed that meaning enables employees to improve a psychological relationship with the organisation. Other studies have demonstrated a strong relationship between meaning and employee performance (Degago, 2014; Ibrahim, 2020).

Competence help employees to utilise their skills, knowledge and ability in performing the task and develop belief that the job are their responsibility (Permarupan et al., 2020). Additionally, studies show that impact significantly relates and predicts employee performance (Tetik, 2016; Degago, 2014), and make employees feel involved and part of the business (Ibrahim, 2020).

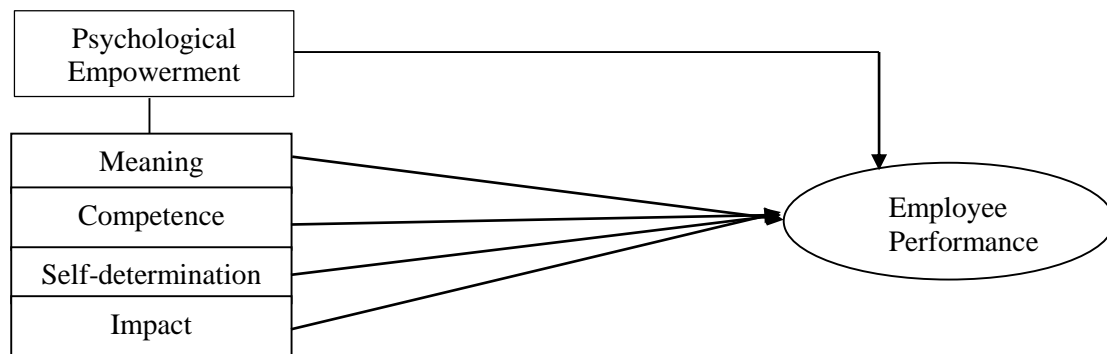


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

METHODOLOGY

In this study a survey design was adopted. This method helps in collecting different opinions of the participants on the study variables (psychological empowerment and employee performance). A simple random sampling technique was used to collect data from a sample size of 130 respondents determined from a population of 969 employees of twenty-six healthcare centers in Makurdi, Benue State. Data was collected using questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed on a 5-point Likert scale.

The reliability of the research instrument was tested using the Cronbach's Alpha. The results indicated that the constructs were above the recommended threshold. Meaning ($\alpha=0.892$), competence ($\alpha=0.886$), self-determination ($\alpha=0.889$), impact ($\alpha=0.867$) and employee performance ($\alpha=0.911$). As a statistical tool, regression and correlation tests were applied on examine the relationship between proxies of psychological empowerment (meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact) employee performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 130 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the randomly selected employees and 124 were properly completed and returned. Responses provided by respondents are analyzed in the following sub-sections.

Table 1: Correlation between dimensions of psychological empowerment and employee performance

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Meaning (1)	1				
Competence (2)	.617**	1			
Self-determination (3)	.784**	.546**	1		
Impact (4)	.724**	.601**	.647**	1	
Employee Performance (5)	.713**	.731**	.884**	.602**	1

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

Source: Researcher's Computation from SPSS Output, 2022.

The relationship between dimensions of the independent variable (meaning, competence, self-determination, impact) and the dependent variable (employee performance) was established using correlation analysis. The result in Table 1 showed that there is a positive relationship between the variables. The result indicated that there is a positive and strong correlation between meaning and employee performance ($r=.713$; $p<.01$) and a positive relationship between competence and employee performance ($r=.731$; $p<.01$). The result further showed a positive and high correlation between self-determination and

employee performance ($r=.884$; $p<.01$) and a positive correlation between impact and employee performance ($r=.602$; $p<.01$).

Table 2: Test of Hypotheses

Variable	Standardized Coefficients		
	Beta	T	Sig.
Meaning →	EP .201	3.702	.031
Competence →	EP .412	9.704	.000
Self-determination →	EP .793	15.097	.000
Impact →	EP .285	4.747	.023
R	.937		
R Square	.879		
Adjusted R Square	.875		
Durbin-Watson	1.640		
ANOVA F Statistic	215.352		
Sig.	.000		

Predictors: (Constant), Impact, Competence, Self-determination, Meaning

Dependent Variable: Employee Performance (EP)

Source: Researcher's Computation from SPSS Output, 2022.

The result of the regression model presented in Table 2 shows that all the variables explained 87.9% variation in employee performance. This indicates that the independent variables significantly predicted the dependent variable ($R^2 = 0.879$). The coefficient of determination was also significant as evidenced by F ratio of 215.352 with p value $0.000 < 0.05$. This shows that there is a significant relationship between psychological empowerment dimensions (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact) and employee performance. The result of the tested hypotheses indicated that all the four hypotheses showed a positive and significant effect. The independent variables (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact) all have significant effect on the dependent variable (employee performance). The results for the hypotheses were as follows: ($\beta = 0.201$, $t = 3.702$, $p\text{-value} = 0.031$; $\beta = 0.412$, $t = 9.704$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$; $\beta = 0.793$, $t = 15.097$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$; $\beta = 0.285$, $t = 4.747$, $p\text{-value} = 0.023$). Therefore, the study rejected the null hypotheses.

Findings of the study established that there is a significant relationship between psychological empowerment and employee performance. The study further revealed that dimensions of psychological empowerment (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact) have positive significant effect on employee performance. These results align with previous studies that established significant relationship between psychological empowerment and employee performance (Shakirah & Shah Rollah, 2020; Al-douri, 2018). Landry and Whillans (2019) showed that psychological empowerment has positive significant effect on performance of employees and organizations. This is in agreement with Degago (2014), Permarupan et al. (2020); and Ibrahim (2020) whose studies affirmed positive significant effect of psychological empowerment on employee performance. Tetik (2016) found a positive effect of impact and competence as dimensions of psychological empowerment on employee performance. Contrarily, Al-douri (2018) reported that competence does not affect employee performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the relationship between psychological empowerment and performance of employees of healthcare centers in Makurdi. The results showed that dimensions of psychological empowerment (meaning, competence self-determination and impact) positively and significantly relate to employee performance. The results also showed positive significant effect of dimensions of psychological empowerment on employee performance. Hence, the study conclude that the application of psychological

empowerment to employees can increase the performance of healthcare employees in Makurdi, Benue State.

The study therefore recommends that heads of healthcare centers in Benue State should empower employees by providing more opportunities for them to take part in decision making and work independently so that they can take more initiative and be more responsible in their work. Management of healthcare centers should also nurture the competencies of employees like self-management, critical thinking, interpersonal skills, mutual learning and flexible decision-making to help improve their skills. Management should communicate and allow for feedback in every aspect of their activities and operations.

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