

An Investigation of Relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating the effects of psychological empowerment dimensions of job satisfaction. The main purpose of the study is to identify the various constructs of psychological empowerment. This paper is to contribute to knowledge about the conditions that precede the employee job satisfaction, and shows that dimensions of psychological empowerment (experienced meaningfulness, competence, impact and self-determination) play an important role in this regard. Using data collected from the senior executives and manager level of Launchpad LLC [Coimbatore] of organizations. The result of the study focuses on the psychological empowerment of employees will contribute to the employees' job satisfaction. This study concludes there is a positive relationship between the variables of psychological empowerment and Job satisfaction. Hence, providing an environment and empowering the employees in a psychological perspective is the need of the time to provide job satisfaction.

Introduction

In the fields of management theory and practice, the idea of psychological empowerment has received great recognition. The concept of psychological empowerment has enlarged wide acceptance in both management theory and practice (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Donovan, 1994; Hall, 2008; Kanter, 1989; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). A substantial body of research has accumulated during the past two decades refining the conceptual domain of psychological empowerment and investigating its antecedents and consequences.

The various important questions that have yet to be answered in an empowerment research are

related to the interactive effects of these dimensions on important job outcomes. For instance, do the dimensions influence job outcomes in an additive fashion? Do they affect the job outcome independently; are there synergistic or suppressive effects of these variables? Do the effects of some of the dimensions depend on the levels of the other dimensions?

Additive effects suggest the influence of one dimension is independent of the other dimensions and each adds linear variance to measure outcomes. Interactive effects occur when the total effect of empowerment is greater or less than the sum of the individual dimensions effects (for a general discussion on interaction,

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see Aiken & West, 1992). Although interactive effects are often examined in organizational research (Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1989; House, Shane, & Herold, 1996; Kravitz, Bludau, & Klineberg, 2008; Valentine, 1999; Wated, Sanchez, & Gomez, 2008), studies on psychological empowerment have addressed only additive effects. It is important to both management research and practice to understand potential dimensional interactions. The additive model suggests that more empowerment is always better if the individual dimensional effects are positive. Managerially, to enhance focal job outcomes, companies could simply increase empowerment on each and all of the individual dimensions.

Accordingly, the area of this research is to examine the interactions among empowerment dimensions. The focus on job satisfaction as an outcome variable because it is an outcome of fundamental importance for organizational performance (Spreitzer, Kizilos, & Nason, 1997). Job performance, motivation, turnover, and organizational commitment have been shown to be related to job satisfaction (Judge, 1993; Martin & Bennett, 1996; Williams & Anderson, 1991). There is a lot of empirical support stating the relationship between employee empowerment and work related outcomes. (Lidwn et al., Sparrowe, R.T 1994; Spreitzer, G.M 1995; Spreitzer et al., 1997). The most related outcomes of employee empowerment are job satisfaction and job performance. In this study the author tried to identify the investigate relationship between psychological empowerment of employee on job satisfaction.

This study bridges up the gap between in literature by analysing the relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction with references to senior, middle and lower level managers. Researchers on manufacturing sector with respect to relationship between psychological empowerment and its consequences are rare. Therefore, this study also addresses this research gap by investigating the relationship between these variables. After detailed literature review, this study finds that there exists no empirical research on the relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. Thus, this research caveat needs attention of researchers so that this gap could be bridged up.

In the following sections, we develop several interactions hypotheses and then report the results of an empirical study. We conclude with a discussion of theoretical and managerial implications.

Review of Literature

In the fields of management theory and practice, the idea of psychological empowerment has received great recognition

Psychological Empowerment

In the past two decades, psychological empowerment has become a very popular topic in management field for academic researchers and business practitioners. The term psychological empowerment has been modified by various researchers such as Conger and

Kanungo, (1988); Thomas and Velthouse, (1990) and Spreitzer, (1995). Conger and Kanungo, (1998) defined psychological empowerment is a process of increasing employee feelings of self-efficacy. However, Thomas and Velthouse, (1990) also defined as state of increased intrinsic motivation. Thomas and Velthouse, (1990) have developed a model identifies four cognitions or task assessments as the basis for employees' empowerment. The four cognitions of empowerment were known as sense of impact, competence, meaningfulness and choice. There are another researcher called Spreitzer, (1995) who has further extended and operationalized the model of psychological empowerment which has developed by Thomas and Velthouse. Spreitzer has made some precious improvement on teh model and renamed the terms of cognitions. Spreitzer renamed the meaningfulness cognitions as meaning cognition and choice cognitions as self-determination cognitions. Hence, Spreitzer defined the psychological empowerment as reflecting a personal sense of control in workplace, as manifested in four beliefs about the person-work environment relationship in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact.

Ugboro, I.O and Obeng, K (2000), made a study on TQM adopted organizations, to find out the relationship between top management leadership, employee empowerment, job satisfaction and customer satisfaction. Their study identified a positive correlation between these factors. Laschinger et al., (2004), used a longitudinal design to test a model linking

changes in structural and psychological empowerment to changes in job satisfaction. Changes in perceived structural empowerment had direct effects on changes in psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. The results of the study supported the proposition that changes in perceptions of access to structural empowerment had an impact on changes in both psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. Further there was no relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. Jose (2008) in her study was able to find that the level of psychological contract was varying among the permanent and temporary employees. But this was not in the case of organizational commitment. Both the permanent and temporary employees showed no significant difference in organizational commitment.

Meaning – Spreitzer has defined meaning cognitions as a “sense of purpose or personal connection to their work goal”. Meaning is the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual's own ideals or standards Thomas & Velthouse, (1990). The meaning cognition must involve a fit between the requirements of a work role and beliefs, values, and behaviours (Brief & Nord, 1990; Hackman & Oldham, 1980). The work goal should not have any conflict with own values and beliefs in order to have the feeling of being empower.

Competence –Competence cognitions can be defined as the individual employee believes that they have skills and capability to perform their work effectively Spreitzer, (1995). If an individual

employee's lack a sense of confidence in their skills and capability, this actually will make them lack a sense of empowerment as a result of individual inadequate. According to Thomas & Velthouse, (1990) indicated that "competence assessment can be refers to the degree to which a person can perform task activities skillfully when he or she tries". Competence is analogous to agency beliefs, personal mastery, or effort-performance expectancy Bandura, (1989).

Self-determination – self-determination is a sense of freedom for an individual employee to do their own work Spreitzer, (1995). The superior must provide their employees the chance and freedom to make certain decision about their work instead of just require their employees to follow the rules and regulations within the organization. Self-determination where competence is a mastery of behaviour, self-determinations of having choice in initiation and regulating actions Deci, Connell, & Ryan, (1989). Self-determination reflects autonomy in the initiation and continuation of work behaviours and processes.

Impact – Impact is the degree to which an individual can influence strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at work (Ashforth, 1989). Impact is the converse of learned helplessness (Martinko & Gardner, 1982). 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 & Robertshaw, 1982). Moreover, Spreitzer, Kizilos and Nason (1997) stated that impact is different from self-determination, which self-determination is refer to individuals' sense of control over their own

work, however, impact is refers to individuals' sense of control over organizational outcomes and believe in having the ability to make a contribution and significant positive effect in their organization performance.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has become a primary factor that will influence that individuals jobs and to the job experience. If there is enhancement of employees' job satisfaction within the organization, this will in turn lead to increase in individual employee and overall organization productivity and performance, improve employee creativity and innovative, reduced turnover rate as well as absenteeism Dickson& Lorenz, (2009). Sometime, job satisfaction is responsible to act as importance roles to determine an individual employee either to resign or remain with the organization. If he or she has a low job satisfaction, then he or she tends to resign or leave the organization. Locke (1976) has provided the definition of job satisfaction which has been widely agreed upon. He defined job satisfaction as "an enjoyable or optimistic emotional state resulting from the assessment of one's job or job experiences". Numerous variables are considered vital to an employee's job satisfaction.

Although, there are many different definitions of job satisfaction from various researchers, but the meaning of job satisfaction is remain the same. Job satisfaction can be defined as an indication of the employees' emotional and their physical feelings Hoppock, (1935). According to Herzberg (1966), an important determinant of job satisfaction is personal meaning. Kanter (1983) suggests that perceived meaningfulness results in greater commitment and concentration of energy. Job satisfaction results from fulfillment

of desired work values Locke, (1976). Lack of meaning in the workplace has been linked to apathy and job dissatisfaction Thomas & Velthouse, (1990). Ashforth (1989, 1990) suggested that perceived lack of opportunity to have an impact of the organization might be related to job satisfaction, and Thomas and Tymon (1994) reported a positive relationship between impact and job satisfaction, but Spreitzer et al.'s (1997) study is not supported the hypothesized effect of perceived impact on satisfaction.

Relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an earliest anticipated or predictors' outcomes of empowerment Spreitzer, Kizilos & Nason, (2007). The psychological empowerment models developed by Thomas & Velthouse, (1990) and Conger and Kanungo, (1988) did not include and examine the outcome variables. However, Thomas and Tymon (1994) has further extended the empowerment models and found that the employees' level of job satisfaction was the most significant relationship. The empirical research has found that psychological empowerment is significantly positive associated with job satisfaction. However, the result of the relationships between the four cognitions of psychological empowerment and job satisfaction has found to be varied from study to study (Dickson & Lorenz, 2009; Carless, 2004; Liden, Wayne & Sparrowe, 2000).

The empirical research has found that psychological empowerment is significantly positive related to job satisfaction. However, the result of the relationship between four cognitions of psychological empowerment and job satisfaction has found to be varied from study to study (Dickson & Lorenz, 2009; Carless, 2004;

Liden, Wayne & Sparrowe, 2000; Spreitzer, Kizilos and Nason, 1997). The only result generated by all of the study have the same outcome which is the meaning cognition has significant related to job satisfaction for part-time and temporary workers. The other three cognitions have shown an inconsistent result among the studies. The self-determination cognition has been found that no significant positive relationship with job satisfaction and this result found to be consistent with other study (Carless, 2004; Liden, Wayne & Sparrowe, 2000). However, Dickson & Lorenz, (2009) generated that there is negative relationship. Furthermore, the competence and impact cognitions have also been found to be inconsistent result. According to Liden, Wayne and Sparrowe (2000) indicated that the competence cognitions is found to have negative relationship with job satisfaction, while Spreitzer, Kizilos and Nason (1997) and Carless (2004) found that there is a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction. The impact cognitions, it has found to have significant positive relationship with job satisfaction for Liden, Wayne and Sparrowe (2000) and no any relationship between them for Spreitzer, Kizilos and Nason (1997).

Demographic Variables related to psychological Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

The belief that, in general, men hold more power in organizations than women is widely accepted. Lockwood et al. (2012) also indicated that gender do not have any relationship with psychological empowerment. Conversely, some studies showed that women tend to feel less empowered than men. Wang and Zhang (2012) in their study among teachers found a statistically significant difference in the level of psychological

empowerment based on gender. Spreitzer (1996) in their study could not find any relationship between gender and psychological empowerment. The studies of Path et al. (2009) and Joo and Shim (2010) also found out that there were no significant differences in the scores of both genders-males and females when compared, with the employee psychological empowerment. Demographic variables like age, gender, race, tenure etc also affect the job satisfaction.

Work Experience interpersonal sources of power in organizations comprise reward power; coercive power; legitimate power; expert power; and referent power (Hellriegel, Slocum and Woodman, 1995). Literature indicates a positive correlation

between tenure and job satisfaction, which means that employees with longer job experience are more satisfied compared to those with fewer years of experience Okpara, (2004).

The literature has yet to establish a consistent link between competence and satisfaction. Carless (2004) reported that competence was negatively related to job satisfaction, whereas Spreitzer et al. (1997) reported that competence is positively related to job satisfaction among subordinates but not among supervisors. Other research has reported no relationship between these variables (Holdsworth & Cartwright, 2003; Siegall & Gardner, 2000; Thomas & Tymon, 1994). Dimitriades and Kufidu (2002) in this study influence of demographics (gender, age and experience) on psychological empowerment.

Proposed Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

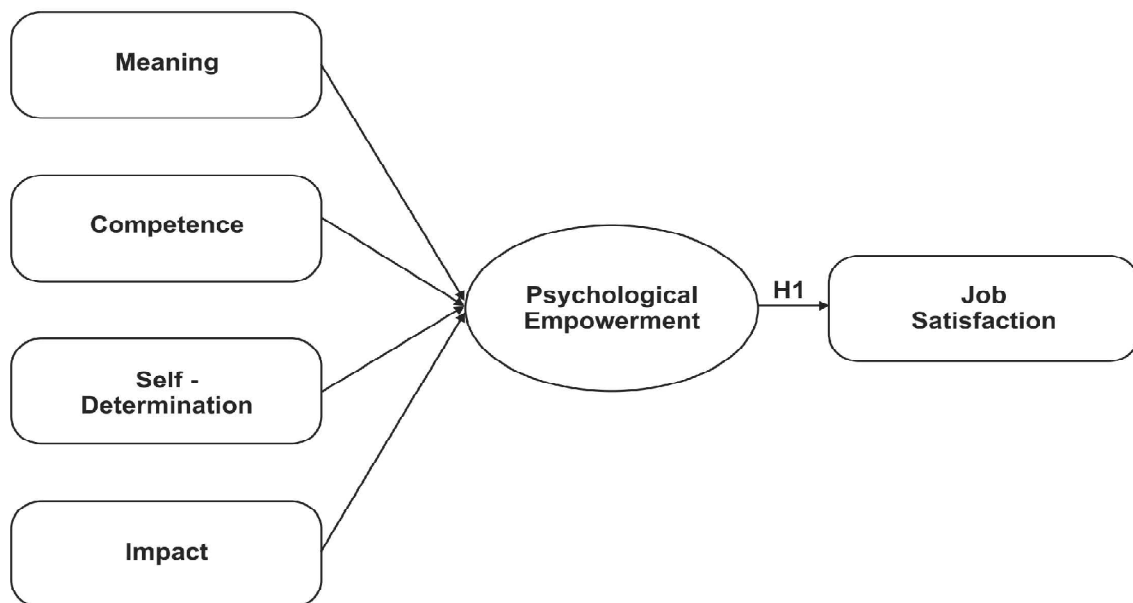


Fig.1: Proposed Model (Spreitzer, 1995)

This paper proposes to identify the relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction of junior, senior executives and manager level of Launchpad LLC [Coimbatore] of organizations. Based on the discussions presented in the literature review, psychological empowerment affects job satisfaction. The four cognitions of psychological empowerment: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact affect job satisfaction. Based on the above discussion, the research framework is constructed and presented above in Fig1.

Research hypothesis

Building on previous research findings, we suggest that three demographic variables (gender, age and work experience) may be expected to be related psychological empowerment.

H₁: Psychological empowerment is positively significant relationship with job satisfaction.

H₂: The Employees, psychological empowerment and job satisfaction differ significantly based on their on their demographic profile information.

Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

Survey questionnaires were distributed to the junior executives, senior executives and manager level employees in the Launchpad LLC (Coimbatore). A total of 90 surveys from employees were directed to the researchers address. The sample consists of 60 white collar employees of Launchpad LLC [Coimbatore]. This includes employees of junior executives, senior

executives and manager level. The demographic details of each of the sample were collected which does not include their names in order to protect the identity of the subjects of the study. Since all the samples were in management level, the questionnaires were distributed to each of them individually. Since the population is well defined and the source list was available for the study, the samples were selected using simple random sampling method.

Measures

Psychological Empowerment: Empowerment was assessed using the instrument developed by Spreitzer (1995). Spritzer's measure, comprising four three-item subscales, taps the empowerment dimensions of meaning, impact, self-determination and competence, job satisfaction. In the present study responses were recorded on five point scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

Demographics: The three demographics items examined gender, age and total experience. Two of these variables, age and experience, were measured using a ratio scale with the remainder being measured by use of a nominal scale.

Analysis and Discussion

To investigate the relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction construct in the Indian context and further, correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationship between empowerment and hypothesized antecedents. A statistical elaboration of the sample took place, and the summary on the distribution of the sample are tabulated.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	No of Respondents	Percentage
Age	Young	32	53.33
	Middle	19	31.66
	Upper	9	15
Gender	Male	28	46.67
	Female	32	53.33
Work experience	Less than 10 years	39	65
	10 and more	21	35

From the above table, it can be inferred that 53.33% of the respondents belong to younger age groups (18-30 years), 31.66% of the respondents belong to middle age group (31-50 years) and 15% of the respondents belong to an upper age group (above 50 years). The gender of the respondents shows that 46.67% of the respondents are male, whereas 53.33% of the respondents are female. The 65% of the respondents have less than 10 years of experience and 35% of the respondents have 10 or more years of experience.

Table 2: Age and dimensions of Psychological Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

Source		F	Significance
Meaning	Young	.573	.567
	Middle		
	Upper		
Impact	Young	.512	.602
	Middle		
	Upper		
Self Determination	Young	1.104	.339
	Middle		
	Upper		
Competence	Young	.311	.734
	Middle		
	Upper		
Job Satisfaction	Young	.427	.655
	Middle		
	Upper		

The results of One Way Anova show that, there is no significant difference amongst the different categories of age of the respondents with the dimensions of psychological empowerment. From the above one way Anova table it can be inferred that there is no significant difference with different categories of age and job satisfaction.

Table 3: Gender and Dimensions of Psychological Empowerment, Job Satisfaction

Source		Mean	Std.deviation	F	Significance
Meaning	Male	10.03	1.77	.854	.359
	Female	10.31	1.65		
Impact	Male	10.50	2.39	0.36	.851
	Female	10.25	2.46		
Self Determination	Male	9.67	1.74	4.97	.030
	Female	9.43	1.21		
Competence	Male	8.60	2.52	.000	.999
	Female	9.18	2.50		
Job Satisfaction	Male	20.20	1.91	.330	.568
	Female	20.00	2.06		

From the results of independent samples t-test it can be inferred that there is no significant difference (at 0.05 levels) between gender and dimensions of psychological empowerment except that there is a significant difference (at 0.05 levels) between the gender of the respondents and self-determination. It is also perceived that male respondents have high account of self-determination (mean 9.67).

This implies that human resource managers should conduct training programs and counselling sessions for their women employees so as to motivate them and increase their self-determination. Women in India play the dual role of a working woman and a family caretaker, this pressure makes them to deviate from their goals in life and lowers their self-determination.

Table 4: Experience and dimensions of Psychological Empowerment, Job Satisfaction

Source		Mean	Std.deviation	F	Significance
Meaning	Less than equal to 10 years	10.25	1.81	.493	.485
	More than 10 years	10.04	1.49		
Impact	Less than equal to 10 years	10.35	2.25	1.668	.202
	More than 10years	10.38	2.74		
Competence	Less than equal to 10 years	9.41	1.44	.066	.797
	More than 10years	9.80	1.53		
Self Determination	Less than equal to 10years	8.94	2.79	5.319	.025
	More than 10 years	8.85	1.95		
Job Satisfaction	Less than or equal to 10 years	19.97	1.96	.118	.732
	More than 10 years	20.38	2.03		

From the results of independent samples t-test it can be inferred that there is a no significant difference (at 0.05 levels) between work experience and the dimensions of psychological empowerment except significant difference (at 0.05 levels) between the work experience of the respondents and self-determination. It is also perceived that less experienced respondents have high account of self-determination (mean - 8.94).

The lack of self-determination among more experienced employees (above 10 years) could be attributed to the fact that after being in the same type of job for a longer period, the employee may feel that the job is monotonous and boring.

Unpredictably, gender was not related to empowerment in the present sample - contrary to findings reported by Mainiero (1986) and Zani and Pietrantonio (2001). However, although these studies are not directly comparable, it should be noted that their findings were somewhat contradictory. Thus while Mainiero found that males employed different employment strategies than females, with women tending to use an “acquiescence strategy” (i.e. accepting the power imbalance and acting in a helpless, dependent way) to a greater extent than men Mainiero, (1986), Zani and Pietrantonio revealed that women scored higher than men in empowerment with respect to meaning and competence Zani & Pietrantonio, (2001). Hence, the relationship between gender and empowerment remains unclear and warrants further investigation. Finally, although in the expected direction, no statistically significant relationships were identified demographic variables of psychological empowerment and job satisfaction.

Table 5: Psychological Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

Pearson Correlation	Meaning	Impact	Competence	Self determination	Job Satisfaction
Meaning	1				
Impact	.243	1			
Competence	.363**	.503**	1		
Self determination	.075	.488**	.487**	1	
Job Satisfaction	.425**	.267*	.325*	.322*	1
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).					
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed).					

From the above table it can be inferred that there is a positive correlation between the different variables. Among all the variables there is a high correlation between psychological empowerment, namely impact and psychological empowerment (0.81), competence and psychological empowerment (0.76), self-determination and psychological empowerment (0.76), meaning and psychological empowerment (0.51), competence and impact (0.50), Self-determination and impact (0.48), Competence and self-determination (.48). The results concluded that dimensions of psychological empowerment were significantly related and correlated with each other and were moving in the same direction as one variable or construct.

This shows that if an employee finds meaning with the job that he/she does, there is an increase in psychological empowerment. Human resource managers today should focus on not only

providing role definition, but how the task is going to add to personal value and organizational value.

Implications of the study:

The present study showed that findings of the study indicate that the more employees feel empowered the happier they are with their jobs and they are more productive in nature. The practical implication of the study is of importance to management practitioners dealing with empowerment with the workplace. Thus it shows that psychological empowerment is clearly a valuable path to follow to become employed of the choice and to retain your human resource pool.

In sum, of the findings suggest that empowerment program should focus on reaching optimal levels on the individual dimensions that result in the positive outcomes. Although all four dimensions of empowerment are important, as Spreizer et

al. (1997) and many others have suggested, it is essential for job outcomes. The meaning dimensions appear to have a positive effect on satisfaction. As such, a program that emphasizes a high level of meaning should generally do well in terms of generating employee job satisfaction. However, at an average level of job meaning, a combination of too high levels of choice, competence, and impact may actually work against employee well-being (e.g., job satisfaction).

In the current business environment, it's crucial that managers empower their people. It is recommended that organizations implement interventions to increase the psychological empowerment of employees.

Limitations and Future research Directions

This analysis on relationship is a significant addition to the existing empowerment literature, where only linear relationship and additive effects are documented. Like all research, however, this study lie several methodological limitations. First, although results seem to be in line with some of the existing findings, it would be difficult to generalize beyond this sample without further testing both within India and other countries. Although it makes theoretical sense to argue that psychological empowerment affects job satisfaction, the reverse could be very well be true. Job satisfaction could make the individual feel that his or her job is meaningful and motivate him or her to learn and develop higher levels of skills and thus feel more empowered.

Despite the acknowledged limitations, this study represents an attempt towards illuminating the link between psychological empowerment, employee demographics and job satisfaction in the Indian context and also indicates some

questions for future research. Future research should aim to focuses on the relationship on empowerment and job satisfaction. Future research should examine other work place outcome variables such as performance, learning, teamwork and creativity, in relation to these dimensions. In addition, the study needs further replication, extension, and critical evaluation in other transitioning areas, to provide useful insights. Testing the model with other business functions within firms, such as accounting, finance, and so on, will enhance our understanding of the relationships between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. This is another direction for future research.

Conclusion

The paper is a review of existing literature on the relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. The present study was carried out with an objective of explaining the relationship between the psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. The researcher also scrutinized the available literature with respect to psychological empowerment and job satisfaction to the framework of the study. The study investigating the relationships between the psychological empowerment: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact and job satisfaction. The result of the study confirmed the positive relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction.

Globalization has opened up the opportunity to pick up talents from anywhere, it is easier to attain these talents, but retaining them is a huge task, especially when there are competitors who are constantly luring these talents towards themselves. Hence providing an environment and empowering the employees in a psychological

perspective is the need of the time to provide job satisfaction. So human resource professionals should come up with strategies to psychologically empower the employees and make them more productive.

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