



## PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AS A DRIVER OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

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**ABSTRACT** The current research is a correlational study. It studies the relationship of Psychological Empowerment with Employee Engagement levels of Employees in IT industry in Bangalore Region which is considered as the Indian Silicon Valley. Employee engagement is "A positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values". Psychological Empowerment is defined as a set of motivational cognitions shaped by a work environment and reflecting an individual's active orientation to his or her work role (Spreitzer, 1995). The sample consisted of 318 software employees and the data obtained was analyzed using the correlational statistics to obtain the relationship between the factors. Results indicate that Psychological Empowerment is positively correlated with employee engagement. This study has implications for future research in organizational psychology and business research.

**KEYWORDS :** Organizational Psychology, IT industry, Driver, Psychological Empowerment, Employee Engagement.

The concept of employee engagement has become one of the biggest competitive differentiators in businesses today. "Engagement is about passion and commitment-the willingness to invest oneself and expand one's discretionary effort to help the employer succeed, which is beyond simple satisfaction with the employment arrangement or basic loyalty to the employer" (BlessingWhite, 2008; Erickson, 2005; Macey and Schneider, 2008). Institute for Employment Studies. (Robinson et al 2004) define it as, 'A positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values. An engaged employee is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. The organization must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee.'

Psychological empowerment is one of the important non-monetary drivers of employee engagement. (Spreitzer, 1995) defines it as, "A set of motivational cognitions shaped by a work environment and reflecting an individual's active orientation to his or her work role." It has four sub factors namely competence, meaning, self-determination and impact.

### Review of literature

The studies suggest that there are various drivers of engagement, which could be monetary, non-monetary and psychological. The studies have shown that psychological empowerment has great impact on employees in organizations. They are linked with leadership, high performance, job satisfaction, occupational strain, job fit and also employees having meaningful work. Empowerment links the individual and his or her well-being to the wider social and political environment in which he or she functions.

Unlike the factors of job satisfaction, organizational commitment and work relationships which are considered core drivers of employee engagement, Psychological empowerment is one of such unexplored factor.

### Methodology and Research Design

The current study is a correlational research which is undertaken to study the relationship between the factor of psychological empowerment of employees and their employee engagement levels.

### Research Question

Based on the review of literature the current study raises the research question, "Is there any relationship between Psychological empowerment and employee engagement level of employees?"

### Objective

Thus the objective of the study is to explore the relationship between Psychological empowerment and employee engagement level of employees.

### Hypothesis

There is no relationship between Psychological empowerment and employee engagement level of employees.

### Variables

IV: Psychological Empowerment  
DV: Employee Engagement

### Sampling and selection procedure

The current study involved total of 318 IT employees. The departments in which they work may vary. It was ensured that comparable number of male and female employees were a part of the sample. Employees who were willing to take part in the study were only included and none of the employees were forced to be a part of the study.

The participants for the study were identified by snowball sampling method from different IT companies. All the participants were from Bangalore region and employees from outside Bangalore were not included.

The data was collected by two methods which are online survey method and paper pencil test. Some questionnaires were sent to the participants as Google form link by mail and their responses also recorded by mail. A prior instruction is given to the participants and if any queries, were answered by the researcher on call. Others were given hard copy of the questionnaire. A consent letter was attached to the questionnaire and those who agreed to take part in the study went ahead to complete the questionnaire.

Accordingly, scoring of the responses was done as per the instructions provided in the manual.

### Tools Used.

Psychological Empowerment Scale: The Psychological Empowerment Scale constructed by Spreitzer (1995b) was used to measure psychological empowerment.

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES; Schaufeli et al., 2002) was used to measure employee engagement.

### Operational Definitions.

Psychological Empowerment: Psychological empowerment is defined as a set of motivational cognitions shaped by a work environment and reflecting an individual's active orientation to his or her work role (Spreitzer, 1995).

Employee Engagement: Robinson et al (2004) definition as put forward by the IES (Institute for Employment Studies): 'A positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values. An engaged employee is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. The organization must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee.'

### Statistical Analysis

The current study would use the following statistical analysis:

1. Descriptive Statistics: Mean, Standard Deviations and graphs were used. Percentage was also used whenever required.

2. Inferential Statistics: Correlation would be used to derive the relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Employee Engagement.

**RESULTS**

The objective of the study is to find if there is any relationship between Psychological empowerment and employee engagement level of employees. The current data of 318 employees, when tested for normality reveals itself to be left skewed. Hence non parametric tests were used to test the correlation. Spearman's Rho correlation was used to test the hypothesis which states that "There is no relationship between Psychological empowerment and employee engagement level of employees." The result is as stated below in the table.

**Table 1. Spearman's Rho correlation values between Psychological empowerment and employee engagement of total employees.**

Factors		Employee Engagement Total
Psychological Empowerment Total	Correlation Coefficient	.474**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001
	N	318

\*\* indicates that the factors are significant at 0.01 level

The result table shows that the spearman's correlation coefficient score between Psychological empowerment and employee engagement level of employees is 0.474. This means that there is a statistically significant relationship between Psychological empowerment and employee engagement level of employees at 0.01 level. The hypothesis which states that "There is no relationship between Psychological empowerment and employee engagement level of employees" is rejected.

**DISCUSSION**

The current sub section discusses the relationship between Psychological empowerment and employee engagement level of employees. A Spearman's Rho correlation was run to study the relationship between the two factors.

The hypothesis which states that "There is no relationship between Psychological empowerment and employee engagement level of employees" was rejected as the results show that there is statistically significant relationship between the factors at 0.01 level. This indicates that in the current study, psychological empowerment has a positive effect on engagement level of the employees. The employees feel positive about their work and their workplace when they are psychologically empowered. When the organization involves the employee in important decision making processes of the organization, the employees feel more responsible and confident to carry out his/her work. When they feel their contribution in the organization is significant and has a good impact, as a whole they tend to feel more engaged to their work. They, in turn, involve themselves more deeply in their work and are aware of the current business practices. It helps the employees bring creativity to the workplace. This could be attributed to the fact that when psychological empowerment is high, the employees feel confident of carrying out their duties and they may feel much in control of their work. The work may become personally meaningful to them and thus they may tend to feel more involved and committed to their work. Thus when they are at work they are more zealous and resilient than the disengaged employees. The above findings are also supported by a study done by Spreitzer (1995).

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The objective of the current research is to study the relationship between Psychological empowerment and employee engagement level of employees.

The hypothesis states that "There is no relationship between Psychological empowerment and employee engagement level of employees". A Spearman's Rho correlation was run to study the relationship between the two factors. A statistically significant relationship was found between the factors of Psychological empowerment and employee engagement level of employees. Hence the Hypothesis was rejected.

**Scope of the Study**

Employee engagement has positive outcomes in the organization. There is a general belief that there is a connection between employee

engagement as an individual level construct and business results (Harter et al. 2002).

The study may create greater awareness of self and the dynamics in the organization as it highlights Psychological empowerment as driver of employee engagement along with other drivers of Engagement.

It may thus help the organization manage their workforce better by understanding where they are lacking. It may have many social and organizational future implications.

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