Effect of Psychological Empowerment on Employee Job Satisfaction of Nepalese Commercial Banks

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of psychological empowerment on employee job satisfaction of Nepalese commercial banks. Employee job satisfaction is the dependent variable. The selected independent variables are psychological empowerment, meaningful work, organizational commitment, employee performance and self-determination. The primary source of data is used to assess the opinions of the respondents regarding psychological empowerment, meaningful work, organizational commitment, employee performance and self-determination in Nepalese commercial banks. The study is based on primary data with 121 respondents. To achieve the purpose of the study, structured questionnaire is prepared. The correlation coefficients and regression models are estimated to test the significance and importance of different factors affecting employee job satisfaction in Nepalese commercial banks.

The study showed that psychological empowerment has a positive impact on employee job satisfaction. It implies that providing psychological empowerment leads to employee job satisfactions. Likewise, meaningful work has a positive impact on employee job satisfaction. This indicates that assigning employees with meaningful work leads to the employee job satisfactions. Similarly, organizational commitment has a positive impact on employee job satisfaction. It indicates that the organizational commitment towards employees enhance employee job satisfaction. Moreover, employee performance has a positive impact on employee job satisfaction indicating that better performance in job leads to the employee job satisfaction. Likewise, self- determination has a positive impact on employee job satisfaction which indicates that higher the level of self-determination in employees, higher would be the satisfaction from the job.

Keywords: psychological empowerment, meaningful work, organizational commitment, employee performance, self-determination, employee job satisfaction

1. Introduction

Employees are significant corporate assets that the corporation values highly. Employees with high levels of skill, knowledge, and ability are very valuable to the business. A more crucial factor is that knowledgeable

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personnel support the company's objectives, work to attain those objectives, and increase revenue for the business (Mustafa *et al.*, 2020). Building company relationships with employees is an important step to stimulate high performance results, therefore the company's obligation is to trigger employee commitment to the company or organizational commitment (Berberoglu, 2018).

Bin Jomah (2017) stated that psychological empowerment is positive treatment of superior workers with junior workers. Psychological empowerment refer to the mental empowerment of workers in a work environment where the organization gives full trust to the worker. The dimensions of psychological empowerment are; 1) Meaning, value at work in accordance with beliefs and standards related to the needs of the company or organization for tasks, target goals and personal values. Employees who have a high value for their work have a high commitment and will be more focused on their work and more involved in company activities; 2) Competence, a worker's belief in the capability to complete their work successfully. Including the theory of high self-sufficiency can increase the commitment of workers to their work, be more effective, take initiative, and show greater effort in difficult conditions and 3) Self-Determination, the feeling of having the authority to act according to personal decisions without feeling constant supervision (Jordan *et al.*, 2017).

Spreitzer (1995) defined psychological empowerment is the belief that one has necessary knowledge and skills to perform the job well that can make a difference in the organization. Psychological empowerment have been demonstrated to be successful in winning the hearts and minds of employees as well as increasing employee performance (Seibert et al., 2004). Psychological empowerment enables them to adopt performance enhancing behaviour and contribute to the development of the organization's competitive strength and success. Psychological empowerment is a practices aimed at providing employees with access to job related knowledge and skills and granting them discretion to change work processes increase encouragement to performance (Harris et al., 2009). Psychological empowerment is a motivational technique if designed and implemented properly in organizations. When employees perceive high levels of Psychological empowerment, they are motivated towards their jobs and are likely to experience positive accompanying consequences (Spreitzer et al., 1997).

Employee psychological empowerment has widely been recognized

as an essential contributor to organizational success with many authors observing a direct relationship between the level of employee psychological empowerment and employee job performance, employee job satisfaction and employee commitment (Meyerson and Dewettinck, 2012). Empowering employees enables organizations to be more flexible and responsive and can lead to improvements in both individual and organizational performance. Empowered employees view themselves as more effective in their work and they are evaluated as more effective by their co-workers (Quinn and Spreitzer, 1997).

Psychological Empowerment (PE) enables employees to adopt performance enhancing behaviour and contribute to the development of the organization's competitive strength and success. Moreover, employees PE was seen as a motivational technique if designed and implemented properly in organizations. In general, when employees perceive high levels of PE, they are motivated towards their jobs and are likely to experience positive accompanying consequences (Spreitzer *et al.*, 1997). Empowering employees may be one of the strategies that enable organizations to balance employees' job performance and job satisfaction. Thus, employee psychological empowerment will lead to improving productivity, performance and job satisfaction (Greasley *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, employee psychological empowerment programs have been widely adopted in manufacturing companies as a way of to improve employee job satisfaction and job performance (Degago, 2014).

Psychological empowerment is a collective strategy for the organization in the sense of a redistribution or devolution of decision-making power to those who do not currently have it (Cunningham *et al.*, 1996). Psychological empowerment brings benefits to employees as well as it enables employees to do good work and to take responsibility for their own performance (Fragoso, 2000). Psychological empowerment is the motivational construct of an intrinsic task, including four cognitions that reveal a personal orientation competence, meaning, self-determination, and impact and demonstrates cognitive orientations about their job role (Spreitzer, 1995). Conger and Kanungo (1988) found that psychological empowerment as a practice of improving feelings of self-efficacy among organizational players through the identification and removal of conditions that foster powerlessness by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing access to efficacy information.

Thomas and Velthouse (1990) defined psychological empowerment as

a set of four cognitions reflecting an employee's orientation to his/her role in terms of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Psychological empowerment is also defined as a motivational construct that focuses on the cognitions of the individual being empowered and has been shows to play an important role in employees' attitudes and performance (Menon, 2001). Bordin et al. (2007) showed that psychological empowerment is the primary predictor of employee job satisfaction and as a result, an increase in employee job satisfaction was one of the key anticipated outcomes behind the perceived feeling of psychological empowerment among employees in the workplace, while low levels of psychological empowerment in the workplace were strongly related to the reduction in employee job satisfaction. Dickson and Lorenz (2009) found that psychological empowerment components were significant and positively associated with employee job satisfaction. However, results of the relationship between the four components of psychological empowerment and employee job satisfaction vary from one study to another. Carless (2004) examined each of the four components of psychological empowerment and found significant associations between competence, meaning and impact (but not autonomy) components and employee job satisfaction. Moreover, Laage (2003) found that employee job satisfaction as a total correlates practically significant to both of the empowerment questionnaires as well as to impact, self-determination, goal internalization and perceived control. Laschinger et al. (2001) agreed that the feelings of psychological empowerment strongly influenced nurses work satisfaction. Kirkman and Rosen (1999) revealed that psychological empowerment is positively related to employee job satisfaction.

Psychological empowerment has widely been recognized as an essential contributor to organizational success with many authors observing a direct relationship between the level of employee psychological empowerment and employee job performance, employee job satisfaction and employee commitment (Meyerson and Dewettinck, 2012). Salazar *et al.* (2006) found that all psychological empowerment constructs significantly correlated with managers' employee job satisfaction. However, the study further stated that only meaningfulness and trust significantly predicted satisfaction levels. Moreover, Illardi *et al.* (1993) found that employees who strongly felt that their work allowed them to experience autonomy, competence and relatedness reported higher levels of employee job satisfaction. Likewise, Deci *et al.* (1989) indicated that a managerial orientation that promoted self-determination had a positive effect on general employee job satisfaction among employees. Dickson and Lorenz (2009) concluded that both meaning

and impact component had a positive relation with employee job satisfaction of temporary and part-time nonstandard workers. Saif and Saleh (2013) found that meaning, self-determination and impact had a significant effect on employee job satisfaction, but competence had no effect on employee job satisfaction.

According to Fulford and Enz (1995), effect of psychological components of empowerment, it was revealed that components of meaningful and influence were the two strongest effects on employee job satisfaction in the hospitality industry. However, Fock et al. (2011) indicated that influences of psychological empowerment components on employee job satisfaction were not uniform. Holdsworth and Cartwright (2003) found that three elements of psychological empowerment, i.e. meaningfulness, self-determination, and impact were in positive and significant relation to employee job satisfaction of the personnel among employees of call centre. Therefore, it appeared appropriate to examine how an employee's perception of the degree of psychological empowerment components provided by their workplace may be a key determinant of their sense of employee job satisfaction. Spreitzer (1995) found that fulfilling employee desired work values, they will be satisfied. Moreover, if employees feel competent they are more likely to be confident and satisfied with their job. Mathew (2022) found that the direct relation between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction is positive, strong and statistically significant.

In the context of Nepal, Gautam and Bhandari Ghimire (2017) found that psychological empowerment has a positive and significant impact on the competitive advantages. Rajendra and Neupane (2020) showed that the several factors affecting employee empowerment in the commercial banking sectors are structural empowerment, psychological empowerment, employees and perception of higher management and management of change. Shrestha and Mishra (2012) found that there is a direct relationship between job stress and psychological strain, different moderating variables, and outcome variables but none of the variables moderated job stress - psychological strain relationship. Likewise, Shrestha and Mishra (2012) also found that psychological empowerment can have a significant practical implications for improving organizational performance by providing appropriate stress management interventions to reduce employees and job stress and psychological strain, and enhance their job satisfaction and reduce the intent to turnover.

The above discussion reveals that the empirical evidences vary greatly across the studies concerning impact of psychological empowerment on employee job satisfaction. Though there are above mentioned empirical evidences in the context of other countries and in Nepal, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of Nepal. Therefore, in order to support one view or the other, this study has been conducted.

The main purpose of the study is to examine the effect of psychological empowerment on employee job satisfaction in Nepalese commercial banks. Specifically, it examines the relationship of psychological empowerment, meaningful work, organizational commitment, employee performance and self-determination on employee job satisfaction in Nepalese commercial banks.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows. Section two describes the sample, data and methodology. Section three presents the empirical results and the final section draws the conclusion.

2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on the primary data. The data were gathered from 121 respondents through questionnaire. The respondents' views were collected on psychological empowerment, meaningful work, organizational commitment, employee performance and self-determination in Nepalese commercial banks. The study is based on descriptive and causal comparative research designs.

The model

The model estimated in this study assumes that employee job satisfaction depends on psychological empowerment, meaningful work, organizational commitment, employee performance and self-determination. Therefore, the estimated model takes the following form:

$$EJS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PE + \beta_2 MW + \beta_3 OC + \beta_4 EP + \beta_5 SD + e$$

Where,

PE = Psychological empowerment

MW = Meaningful work

OC = Organizational commitment

EP = Employee performance

SD = Self-determination

EJS = Employee job satisfaction

Psychological empowerment was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "I have the support and authority to make the decisions necessary for accomplishing my work", "My leader establish conditions that support and stimulate good results" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.765$).

Meaningful work was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "The work I do is meaningful to me", "The work that I do is very important to me" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.751$).

Organizational commitment was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "I am emotionally attached with my job", "I have a sense of pride in working for my bank" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.797$).

Employee performance was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "You meet all the requirement of the job", "I actively pursue or initiate projects for the benefit of the organization" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.739$).

Self-determination was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job", "I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.742$).

Job satisfaction was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "My basic salary is sufficiently paid according to my daily working hours and

work load", "I am satisfied with my chances for salary increases" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.705$).

The following section describes the independent variables used in this study along with the hypothesis formulation.

Psychological empowerment

Psychological empowerment according to Yilmaz and Yılmaz (2016), is a sharpening of self-sufficiency or the independence and ability of a worker. The study continued that self-sufficiency includes the freedom of workers to make decisions regarding workers' jobs and be responsible for the consequences of the results of these decisions. Hechanova et al. (2006) found that psychological empowerment is positively correlated both employee job satisfaction and job performance. Likewise, Rae (2013) found a positive and significant association between the autonomy component of psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. Psychological empowerment work as a main predictor of the employees' satisfaction with job, the high level of feelings about empowerment reasons to increase job satisfaction level whereas on the other hand low level of feelings reason to decrease in job satisfaction level (Indradevi, 2011). Zeng (2009) found that psychological empowerment has a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction. Dickson and Lorenz (2009) found that psychological empowerment components were significant and positively associated with employee job satisfaction. Moreover, Mutairi et al. (2021) found a positive impact of three dimensions of psychological empowerment (meaning, self-determination, and impact) on employee job satisfaction. Salazar et al. (2006) revealed that psychological empowerment is significantly correlated with managers' employee job satisfaction. Based on it, this study develops following hypothesis:

H₁: There is a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and employee job satisfaction.

Meaningful work

Hackman and Oldham (1976) defined meaningful work as the "degree to which the employee experiences the job as one which is generally meaningful, valuable, and worthwhile. May *et al.* (2004) found that the personal resources of meaningfulness, psychological safety, and resource availability had a significant influence on employee engagement. Simon *et al.* (2021) found that meaningful work was found to be the strongest predictor of employee

engagement, and manager should focus on how meaningful work can be cultivated in the workplace. Steger (2013) suggested that meaningful work is likely a stronger predictor of work engagement than affective disposition. People who felt their work was meaningful were more engaged, regardless of affective disposition. Based on it, this study develops following hypothesis:

H₂: There is a positive relationship between meaningful work and employee job satisfaction.

Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment is the emotional attachment, identification and involvement of individuals with the organization and the desire to remain a member of the organization (Miedaner *et al.*, 2018). Commitment in the workplace has evolved to encompass a broad range of types, such as engagement, attachment, commitment and involvement (Roodt, 2004). Mental empowerment of employees can increase organizational commitment and reduce absenteeism and burnout (Thelen and Yue, 2021). Similarly, Bin Jomah (2017) concluded that employees who are more committed to the company do not want to leave the company and have employee attachment and a tendency to sacrifice for the company. Employees with a high level of commitment tend to make greater effort to perform and invest their resources in the organization (Knight and Saal, 1987). Based on it, this study develops following hypothesis:

H₃: There is a positive relationship between organizational commitment and employee job satisfaction.

Employee performance

According to Wibowo *et al.* (2021), employee performance comes from performance, some provide a sense of performance as a result of work or work achievement. Performance is about doing the work and the results achieved from the work. Employee performance is one of the benchmarks in determining the success of the organization. Sinha (2001) defined employee performance as depending on the willingness and the openness of the employee to do the job. According to Chien (2015), a successful organization requires employees who are willing to do more than the employees performance is imperative for performance to yield organizational effectiveness in an increasingly competitive environment usual job scope and contribute performance that exceed goal's expectations. Ram (2013) found that employees of transport sector motivated by proper training, reward system, revenue earned, personal

polices, improved promotion avenues all these things link to job satisfaction that increased the employee performance in the transport sector. Platisa *et al.* (2015) showed a positive and significant relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance variables. Based on it, this study develops following hypothesis:

 H_4 : There is a positive relationship between employee performance and employee job satisfaction.

Self-determination

Deci & Ryan (1985) defined self-determination as the experience of engaging in behaviours for autonomous reasons that are fully endorsed by the self, as opposed to reasons that feel pressured or coerced. Self-determination is inherent in activities that are intrinsically motivated i.e., undertaken for their own sake. Gagné & Koestner (2002) found self-determined employees feel more committed to their organizations and report fewer turnover intentions and physical symptoms. Spreitzer *et al.* (1997) found the self-determination dimension of empowerment to be related to work satisfaction, suggesting that self-determination is a psychological need. Deci *et al.* (1989) found that managerial practices and behaviour that promote self-determination may increase job satisfaction in different ways. Self-determination may increase employees' trust and feelings of psychological safety, thereby encouraging employees to satisfy their own needs at work. Based on it, this study develops following hypothesis:

H₅: There is a positive relationship between self-determination and employee job satisfaction.

3. Results and discussion

Correlation analysis

On analysis of data, correlation analysis has been undertaken first and for this purpose, Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients along with means and standard deviations have been computed, and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients matrix

This table presents Kendall's Tau coefficients between dependent and independent variables. The correlation coefficients are based on 121 observations. The dependent variable is EJS (Employee job satisfaction). The independent variables are PE (Psychological empowerment),

Variable	Mean	S.D	PE	MW	OC	EP	SD	JS
PE	4.186	0.489	1		·			
MW	4.085	0.578	0.360**	1				
OC	4.121	0.565	0.404**	0.520**	1			
EP	4.191	0.563	0.295**	0.381**	0.445**	1		
SD	4.170	0.525	0.304**	0.504**	0.577**	0.415**	1	
EJS	4.183	0.583	0.220**	0.366**	0.432**	0.274**	0.423**	1

MW (Meaningful work), OC (Organizational commitment), EP (Employee performance) and SD (Self-determination).

Note: The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent levels respectively.

Table 1 shows the Kendall's correlation coefficients of dependent and independent variables for employee job satisfaction. The study reveals that psychological empowerment is positively correlated to the employee job satisfaction indicating that providing psychological empowerment leads to employee job satisfactions. Likewise, meaningful work is positively correlated to the employee job satisfaction. This implies that assigning employees with meaningful work leads to the employee job satisfactions. Similarly, organizational commitment is positively correlated to the employee job satisfaction. It indicates that the organizational commitment towards employees enhance employee job satisfaction. Moreover, employee performance is positively correlation to the employee job satisfaction indicating that better performance in job leads to the employee job satisfaction. Likewise, self-determination is positively correlated to the employee job satisfaction which indicates that higher the level of self-determination in employees, higher would be the satisfaction from the job.

Regression analysis

Having analysed the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients matrix, the regression analysis has been carried out and the results are presented in Table 2. More specifically, it presents the regression results of psychological empowerment, meaningful work, organizational commitment, employee performance and self-determination on the employee job satisfaction in Nepalese commercial banks.

Table 2

Estimated regression results of psychological empowerment, meaningful work, organizational commitment, employee performance and self-determination on the employee job satisfaction in Nepalese commercial banks

The results are based on 121 observations using linear regression model. The model is EJS = β_0 + β_1 PE + β_2 MW + β_3 OC+ β_4 EP+ β_5 SD + e, where the dependent variable is EJS (Employee job satisfaction). The independent variables are PE (Psychological empowerment), MW (Meaningful work), OC (Organizational commitment), EP (Employee performance) and SD (Self-determination).

Models	Intercepts	Regression coefficients of						SEE	F-value
		PE	MW	OC	EP	SD	R_bar2	SEE	r-value
1	1.644 (4.608)**	0.609 (7.177)**					0.294	0.489	51.509
2	2.618 (6.005)**	,	0.374 (3.616)**				0.091	0.556	13.073
3	1.950 (5.842)**			0.542 (6.754)**			0.269	0.498	45.620
4	3.149 (8.107)**				0.247 (2.686)**		0.049	0.568	7.216
5	2.273 (6.754)**					0.468 (5.734)**	0.209	0.598	32.882
6	1.9114 (4.393)**		0.142 (1.293)			0.410 (4.431)**	0.213	0.517	17.368
7	1.5581 (3.767)**		0.026 (0.231)**	0.408 (3.952)**		0.252 (2.626)**	0.299	0.488	18.208
8	1.736 (3.994)**		0.001 (0.010)	0.444 (4.170)**	0.128 (1.317)	0.281 (2.875)**	0.303	0.486	14.175
9	1.496 (3.446)**	0.334 (2.613)**	(0.256)	0.300 (2.552)**	(0.141) (1.486)	0.188 (1.826)	0.336	0.475	13.270

Notes:

- i. Figures in parenthesis are t-values.
- ii. The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent levels respectively.
- iii. Employee job satisfaction is the dependent variable.

The regression result shows that the beta coefficients psychological empowerment are positive with employee job satisfaction. It indicates that psychological empowerment has a positive impact on the employee job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the findings of Zeng (2009). Likewise, the beta coefficients for meaningful work are positive with employee job satisfaction. It indicates that meaningful work has a positive impact on the employee job satisfaction. This finding is similar to the findings of Simon et al. (2021). In addition, the beta coefficients for organizational commitment are positive with employee job satisfaction. It indicates that organizational commitment has a positive impact on the employee job satisfaction. This result is consistent with the findings of Thelen and Yue (2021). Further, the beta coefficients for employee performance are positive with employee job satisfaction. It indicates that employee performance has a positive impact on the employee job satisfaction. This finding is similar to the findings of Platisa et al. (2015). In addition, the beta coefficients for self-determination are positive with employee job satisfaction. It indicates that self-determination has positive impact on the employee job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the findings of Gagné & Koestner (2002).

4. Summary and conclusion

In any organization the employee is the most important person. Employee job satisfaction is the ultimate objective of every organization. Hence, managers and the owners must be aware of psychological empowerment in order to maintain employee job satisfaction. In the process of developing the employee job, it is essential to consider the psychological empowerment.

This study attempts to examine the effect of psychological empowerment on employee job satisfaction in Nepalese commercial banks. The study is based on primary data with 121 observations.

The major conclusion of this study is that psychological empowerment helps in enhancing employee job satisfaction in the context of Nepalese commercial banks. The study shows that psychological empowerment, meaningful work, organizational commitment, employee performance and self-determination have a positive impact on employee job satisfaction in Nepalese commercial banks. The study also concludes that psychological empowerment followed by organizational commitments and self-determination are the most dominant factors that explains the changes in employee job satisfaction in Nepalese commercial banks.

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