

The Impact of Psychological Empowerment on Job Performance: A Study on Clerical Employees in Selected Public Sector Organizations in Colombo District, Sri Lanka

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1. Introduction

Administrators often have a huge burden of problems and load of work to do alone. They usually stay back at the workplace to complete their work or take over time during weekends to meet the work deadlines. These incidents happen when the management does not empower their work of their employees in an organized way. The administrators think that the employee cannot help them in completing the tasks, help in solving problems or make any decisions. In an organization, having psychological empowerment can bring a strong impact on the employees. According to the Lawler (1992), psychological empowerment can also be regarded as an individual's approach to proactive work alignment, thereby enhancing the employee's performance and efficiency.

According to the Spreitzer (1999), psychological empowerment focuses on changing managerial attitude by conveying individuals together. Further, he views employee empowerment as a motivational concept demonstrated in four cognitions meaning (value of a work goal or purpose, arbitrated in relation to an individual's own ideas), competence or self-efficacy (a person's belief in his or her ability to perform activities with skill), self-determination of an individual's sense of having choice in commencing and flexible actions) and impact (the degree to which an individual can influence strategic administration or operating outcomes at work). Hence, empowerment, as a psychological state, is an active work orientation where individual wishes and feels able to shape his/her work role and context.

According to Amabile & Grykiewicz (1989), psychological empowerment should create individuals feel they have a certain degree of autonomy, feel less embarrassed by rule-bound facets and self-effective in endorsing their work; and in combination of those features allow people to be innovative. Considering the relationship between psychological empowerment and job performance, psychological empowerment has a direct and positive influence on job performance. This proved that empowered staffs revealed positive performance actions, and so psychological empowerment was an appreciated pathway for organizations to pursue their examine for performance enhancement in job settings (Tuuli & Rowlinson, 2009).

Job performance can be defined as an individual contribution to reach the overall performance of an organization to enhance the final targets (Perera, 2019). Campbell et al. (1993) defined job performance as individual actions that are linked to organizational goals. It specifies how well employees do their jobs, the creativity they take and the resourcefulness they express in solving problems and the manner they use their existing resources and the time and energy they spend on their works (Rothman & Coetzer, 2003). According to the results of the study of Kirkman & Rosen's (1999) it stated feeling empowered was more productive than teams that required a sense of empowerment. Sigler & Pearson (2000) showed a study on On-the-Job Masters programs of 13 universities in Taiwan and discovered that among psychological empowerment dimensions were significantly related to performance.

In the public sector most of the employees are not performing in the expected manner. So, their job performance level is very low. The main reason for this is that they have no psychological empowerment in their job. So, the superiors have to give consideration to increase the psychological empowerment of the clerical employees in the public sector organizations. For that they can follow some strategies like

creating their working environment more effectively, offering attractive remuneration package, better working conditions etc. By following those strategies superiors can empower their employees psychologically through high satisfaction and work motivation. Then obviously their job performance will be high. Therefore, the purposes of this study is to (1) to discover and describe the degree of psychological empowerment and job performance of clerical staff in selected public sector organizations in Sri Lanka; (2) to identify the impact of psychological empowerment on job performance of clerical staff in selected public sector organizations in Sri Lanka.

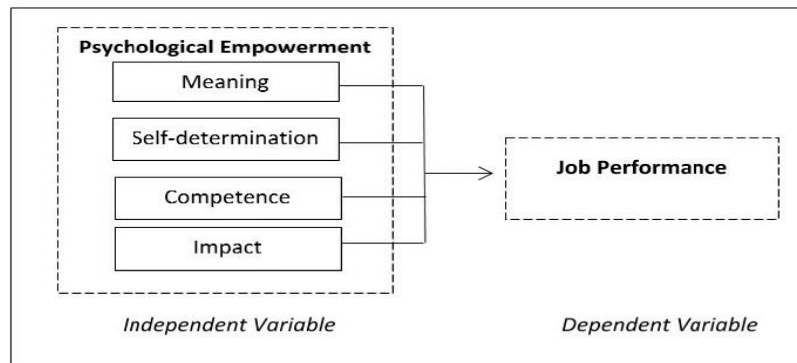
2. Problem of the Study

Public sector organizations are publicly sponsored, government maintained and follows a bureaucratic way of governance and if the public sector employees are not psychologically empowered. Then it will badly affect their performance. According to Arzlan & Zaman (2014), the overall influence of psychological empowerment on job performance is significantly positive and employees who feel organizationally and psychologically empowered strongly forecast better job performance. Further, Durah & Saif (2014) explained the impact of psychological empowerment on the effectiveness of job performance. Considering the above findings, it is noted that a number of similar researchers have been widely carried out in other countries in this area. However, there is a gap in observed knowledge especially in the Sri Lankan context about analyzing the impact of psychological empowerment on job performance. Therefore, to fill this remaining gap, the research problem intends to investigate, do psychological empowerment impact on job performance of clerical staff in selected public sector organizations Sri Lanka?

3. Research Framework

Considering the preceding literature, independent variable is psychological empowerment and dependent variable is job performance (Figure 1). Psychological empowerment consists of four dimensions as meaning, self-determination, competency and the impact.

Figure 1: Research Framework



Indradevi (2011) and Sigler & Pearson (2000) identified a strong link between psychological empowerment and job performance. Spritzer (1995) found that there is a significant and positive impact of the meaning on job performance; therefore, the first hypothesis is articulated as:

H₁: There is an impact of meaning on job performance.

Spritzer (1995) and Sigler & Pearson (2000) identified an impact of competence on job performance. It is found that there is a significant positive impact of the competence on job performance; therefore, the second hypothesis is formulated as:

H₂: There is an impact of competence on job performance.

Spritzer (1995) and Sigler & Pearson (2000) investigated whether there is an impact of self-determination on job performance. It is found that there is a significant positive impact of the self-determination on job performance. Therefore, the third hypothesis is developed as:

H₃: There is an impact of self-determination on job performance.

Spritzer (1995) and Sigler & Pearson (2000) showed that there is an empirical evidence to support the significant positive impact of the impact on job performance; therefore, the fourth hypothesis is articulated as:

H₄: There is an impact of the impact on job performance.

4. Method

Study Design

The main objective of this study was to describe the impact of psychological empowerment of job performance of clerical employees in selected public sector organizations in Sri Lanka and the hypotheses were formulated based on the objectives. As a result, the type of investigation of this study was analytical, conducted in a natural setting and no controlled variables of the study. The survey was carried out among the sample of 150 clerical employees in selected public sector organizations in Sri Lanka. The convenience sample used for selection of public sector organizations and a random sampling method considered for the selecting a respondent. The unit of analysis was at an individual level. To collect the primary data required for the study a set of self-administered questionnaire was distributed among them. The secondary data were collected from the sources such as reports, records, and other publications from various sources. Data collected from primary (questionnaire) source were collected and analyzed using the computer based statistical data analysis package, SPSS version 16.0. The data analysis included univariate and bivariate analyses.

Measures

The questionnaire consists of three parts.

Demographic Factors: relating to gender, age, educational level and experience in public sector organizations. Psychological empowerment scale was measured with Spreitzer (1999) twelve -item scale. The instrument focuses on the four dimensions as competence, self-determination and the Impact on a 5-point Likert-type scale that stretched from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree.” The sample element is “My job seems very important to me.”

Job performance scale was measured with Koopmans (2014) fifteen-item scale. The instrument focuses on the dimensions as task performance, contextual performance and the counterproductive work behavior on a 5-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree.” The sample element is “I managed to plan my work so that it was done on time.”

Validity and Reliability

The reliability of the instrument used to collect data was observed by Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient test (refer Table 1), which suggest that the consistency of each instrument was acceptable.

Table 1: Result of Cronbach's Alpha

	Instrument	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Psychological Empowerment	0.908
2	Job Performance	0.912

The content validity of the instrument was ensured by the conceptualization and operationalization of the variable based on literature, and indirectly by the high consistency reliability of the instruments as signified by Cronbach's Alpha (Kaushalya & Perera,2018). The construct validity of the variable of the study was ensured by the fact that the regression analysis support the hypotheses formulate linking the impact of independent and dependent variables (Wijesooriya & Perera,2016).

5. Results

Hundred completed questionnaires were received for the data analysis purposes. Considering the univariate analysis, frequency distribution analysis was carried out on the respondents by their demographic characteristics. When considering the working experience from years, the data found that majority of respondents were in the below 1-5 category with 42 and minority of the respondents were in the less than 1 category with 9 respondents. Under the 5-10 categories there were 36 and 13 respondents for the more than 10 categories. Under the age, there were 35 employees for the age between 20-30 category and the employees who are above 50 years was the lowest age category, which is only 04 employees. Also, 43 and 18 of the sample was represented by the age groups of 31-40 and 41-50 respectively. When considering the monthly income from Sri Lankan rupees, the highest response rate was between 30000-40000 with 85 respondents, 40,000-50,000 with 9 and above 50000 with 6 respondents. Considering the gender analysis, 40 male and 60 female respondents were in the sample. Among all respondents 67 were single and 33 were married.

The results of the univariate analysis are depicted in Table 2 and the level of psychological empowerment and job performance of clerical employees in selected public sector organizations is normally distributed.

Table 2: Univariate Analysis

		Psychological empowerment	Job Performance
N	Valid	100	100
	Missing	0	0
Mean		3.9500	3.1020
Std. Error of Mean		.02653	.02011
Median		3.9444	3.1333
Mode		3.83	3.13 ^a
Std. Deviation		.26526	.20111
Skewness		-.282	-.307
Std. Error of Skewness		.241	.241
Kurtosis		1.564	-.286
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.478	.478

According to Table 2 the mean of psychological empowerment and job performance of clerical employees under the study was 3.95 and 3.102. Psychological empowerment is almost 4 and job performance is 3 indicating that majority of clerical employees in the public sector organizations under the study psychological empowerment with high and job performance with moderate (not high or low). The standard deviation which comprises an index of the range of a distribution or the variability in the above two (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013) are .02653 and .002011 which is less than 1 indicating that the dispersion is not much.

Table 3: Frequencies of Psychological Empowerment and Job Performance

Coded value	Psychological Empowerment		Job Performance	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
2	08	5.3	06	4
3	37	25	68	46
4	71	47.6	38	25.5
5	33	22.1	37	25
Total	149	100.0	100.0	100

According to Table 03, coded in the collected data with the value 2 indicates response low psychological empowerment and job performance, and the value 3 indicates response moderate psychological empowerment and job performance, and the value 4 indicates response high psychological empowerment and job performance, and the value 5 indicates response very high psychological empowerment and job performance. Accordingly, the clerical employees of public sector organizations under study had high psychological empowerment and moderate job performance level.

Regression analysis was done to recognize the impact of psychological empowerment on job performance. (Refer Table 04). The R square is 0.161, which is approximately 16% of the variability of job performance is explained by the model. Further, the results show that 16% of the variance or impact in job performance is significantly illuminated by four dimensions of psychological empowerment model.

Table 4: Results of Regression Analysis

R. Square	Adjusted R square	β value	Sig value	N
.161	.152	.401	.000	100

According to the results shown in table 4, the β value for the psychological empowerment is .401 which is significant at 1 % (significant=.000). It specifies that there is a positive impact on job performance and the psychological empowerment. It can be further explained as, if psychological empowerment increases by one-unit, job performance will be decreased by .401. Hence it can be proved that there is a positive impact of psychological empowerment of job performance of clerical employees. The rest 84% can be explained with the impact of factors other than psychological empowerment.

According to Table 05, psychological empowerment dimensions positively impact on job performance. All hypotheses are significant since the p value is less than .05. Under the hypothesis 1, There is a significant positive impact between meaning and job performance (R square =0.047, $p < 0.05$); H_1 was thus supported. When considering hypothesis 2, there is significant positive impact of competence on job performance (R square =0.080, $p < 0.05$). So H_2 is accepted. H_3 also will be accepted due to the significant positive impact of self-determination on job performance (R square =0.076, $p < 0.05$). Also, under hypothesis 4, a significant positive impact can be identified between the impact and job performance (R square =0.068, $p < 0.05$); H_4 was thus supported. According to this we can be definite that the entire hypothesis has been accepted due to their significant positive impact on job performance.

Table 5: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

No	Hypotheses	Value	Remarks
H ₁	There is an impact of meaning on job performance	R square =0.047, p <0.05	Accepted
H ₂	There is an impact of competence on job performance	R square =0.080, p <0.05	Accepted
H ₃	There is an impact of self-determination on job performance	R square =0.076, p <0.05	Accepted
H ₄	There is an impact of the impact on job performance	R square =0.068, p <0.05	Accepted

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Psychological empowerment and job performance of clerical employees in selected public sector organizations in Sri Lanka is high and moderate respectively. This study empirically examined the impact of psychological empowerment on job performance of clerical employees in selected public sector organizations in Sri Lanka. In relation to the results of regression analysis, psychological empowerment has a positive impact on job Performance with the strength of b value is 0.304. It exhibited that two study variables were positively correlated as, psychological empowerment increases, job performance will be increased. Further, dimensions of psychological empowerment were also found to have a positive impact on employee job performance. The b value of meaning, self-determination, competence, and the impact are 0.055, 0.089, 0.206 and 0.192 respectively which designate the positive impact.

As the term psychological empowerment was formed, researchers have been paying close consideration to the relationship with job performance. Because the vital purpose to study psychological empowerment is to increase job performance. Currently, the results of how psychological empowerment affects job performance were not reliable, for an example, Liden et al. (2000) applied four-dimensional structure of psychological empowerment scale developed by Spreitzer (1999) to study how the four dimensions affect job performance.

Further, Chiang & Hsieh (2012) distinguished that psychological empowerment and its dimensions correlate significantly with job performance. Further, the results of the cornerstone studies exhibited that meaning, competence, self-determination and impact was each positively effects job performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Geralis & Terziovski's (2003) study exposed that empowerment practices when simultaneously implemented, were associated with better employee well-being, productivity, performance, and service. Liden et al. (2000) found a relationship between psychological empowerment and positive performance results.

7. Recommendations

Psychological empowerment is another substantial way of increasing job performance of clerical employees in the public sector. Therefore, convincing characters in the organizations should have sophisticated the practices concentrating the psychological empowerment. In modern perspective of world psychological empowerment becoming a key approach for individuals as well as organization having proper psychological empowerment may affect to the performance of the employees. Therefore, the outcomes of this study will be vigorous on the theoretical as well as practical setting. Theoretically, this study context evidences to be a descriptive framework of psychological empowerment and job performance. Practically, these research findings can be used in the public sector to enhance the job performance of their clerical employees. This study provides public sector decision makers and HR practitioners to consider the psychological empowerment factors to enhance job performance. Further, this study updates the existing literature reviewing the Sri Lankan context on psychological empowerment job performance.

This study involves selected public sector organizations. The results may be limited to the specific sector only and the size of the sample restricted to 150 respondents. Further research, studies are

suggested to increase sample size of the study and the many sectors to be involved. Also the generalizability of results is limited since the data set is explicit to employees of public sector organizations. Future researches using large and more diverse sample would be convenient. Further, this study was conducted based on quantitative approach and it would be better if mixed method is used. Though the researchers studied number of variables affecting psychological empowerment and job performance there are numerous other variables that are not deliberated in this study. Therefore, future research is required including many variables in a single model and recommended to carry out to find the impact of psychological empowerment on job performance of the clerical employees and other employees who are working in the both public sector as well as the private sector.

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