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2004 Volume 19*

Edited by

Cary L. Cooper

*Lancaster University Management School
Lancaster University, UK*

and

Ivan T. Robertson

*Robertson Cooper Ltd and
University of Manchester
Institute of Science & Technology, UMIST, UK*



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ABOUT THE EDITORS

Cary L. Cooper *Lancaster University Management School, UK*

Ivan T. Robertson *Robertson Cooper Ltd, Manchester, UK*

Cary L. Cooper is currently Professor of Organizational Psychology and Health in the Lancaster University Management School, Lancaster University, UK. He is the author of over 100 books (on occupational stress, women at work, and industrial and organizational psychology), has written over 400 scholarly articles for academic journals, and is a frequent contributor to national newspapers, TV, and radio. He is currently founding editor of the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* and co-editor of the medical journal *Stress Medicine*. He is a Fellow of the British Psychological Society, The Royal Society of Arts, The Royal Society of Medicine, and the Royal Society of Health. Professor Cooper is the President of the British Academy of Management, is a Companion of the (British) Institute of Management, and one of the first UK based Fellows of the (American) Academy of Management (having also won the 1998 Distinguished Service Award for his contribution to management science from the Academy of Management). Professor Cooper is the editor (jointly with Professor Chris Argyris of Harvard Business School) of the international scholarly *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Management* (12 volume set). He has been an advisor to the World Health Organisation, ILO, and published a major report for the EU's European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Work Conditions on 'Stress Prevention in the Workplace'. He holds honorary doctorate degrees from Aston, Heriot-Watt, Wolverhampton and Middlesex universities. He was awarded the CBE, Commander of the Order of the British Empire, by the Queen in 2001.

Ivan T. Robertson is Professor of Work and Organizational Psychology in the Manchester School of Management, UMIST and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of UMIST. He is a Fellow of the British Academy of Management, the British Psychological Society, and a Chartered Psychologist. Professor Robertson's career includes several years experience working as an applied psychologist on a wide range of projects for a variety of different organizations. With Professor Cooper he founded Robertson Cooper Ltd (www.robertsoncooper.com), a business psychology firm which offers consultancy advice and products to clients. Professor Robertson's research and teaching interests focus on individual differences and organizational factors related to human performance. His other publications include 25 books and over 150 scientific articles and conference papers. He is now Managing Director, Robertson Cooper Ltd, Manchester, UK.

CONTRIBUTORS

- Carolyn M. Axtell *Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield, Mushroom Lane, Sheffield S10 2TN, UK*
- C. Shawn Burke *Department of Psychology, University of Central Florida, 3280 Progress Drive, Orlando, FL 32826, USA*
- Scott B. Button *Personnel Decision Research Institutes, Inc. 1300 North 17th Street, Suite 1010, Arlington, VA 22209, USA*
- Rolf van Dick *Aston University, Aston Business School, Aston Triangle, Birmingham B4 7ET, UK*
- Steven J. Fleck *Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield, Mushroom Lane, Sheffield S10 2TN, UK*
- Brad Gilbreath *Division of Organizational Leadership & Supervision, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, IN 46805-1499, USA*
- Desmond J. Leach *Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield, Mushroom Lane, Sheffield S10 2TN, UK*
- Cornelia Niessen *Institute of Psychology, Technical University of Braunschweig, Spielmannstrasse 19, D-38092 Braunschweig, GERMANY*
- Sandra Ohly *Institute of Psychology, Technical University of Braunschweig, Spielmannstrasse 19, D-38092 Braunschweig, GERMANY*
- Miguel A. Quiñones *Eller College of Business and Public Administration, University of Arizona, P.O. Box 210108, Tucson, AZ 85721-0108, USA*

- Eduardo Salas *Institute for Simulation Training, University of Central Florida, 3280 Progress Drive, Orlando, FL 32826, USA*
- Sabine Sonnentag *Institute of Psychology, Technical University of Braunschweig, Spielmannstrasse 19, D-38092 Braunschweig, GERMANY*
- Kevin C. Stagl *Department of Psychology, University of Central Florida, 3280 Progress Drive, Orlando, FL 32826, USA*
- Nick Turner *Queens School of Business, Queens University, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 3N6, CANADA*
- Toby D. Wall *Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield, Mushroom Lane, Sheffield S10 2TN, UK*
- Brian Welle *Catalyst, 120 Wall Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10005, USA*
- Stephen J. Wood *Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield, Mushroom Lane, Sheffield S10 2TN, UK*

EDITORIAL FOREWORD

In this issue of *IRIOP*, we have some of the leading international scholars from the USA, UK, Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands. A number of the chapters are revisiting themes that we reviewed in past volumes to update us on current research in that area. For example, Brad Gilbreath explores the healthy workplace but with the focus on ‘the supervisor’s role’—which is particularly novel. Sabine Sonnentag, Cornelia Niessen, and Sandra Ohly examine the theme of training and development but from the new perspective of learning and development at work. Although empowerment and participation have been themes of the past in *IRIOP*, the approach taken by Toby Wall, Stephen Wood, and Des Leach links this directly with performance. Finally, Eduardo Salas, Kevin Stagl, and Shawn Burke review 25 years of team effectiveness research, exploring research themes and emerging needs.

Newer topics that have not been covered before include the chapter by Brian Welle and Scott Button on workplace experiences of lesbian and gay employees, which highlights the current research and future areas for fertile exploration. Rolf van Dick assesses identification in organizational contexts, through the metaphor of ‘my job is my castle’. The ‘work experience’ is the focal point for Miguel Quiñones piece, where he helps to set the agenda in this area for future researchers. And finally, Carolyn Axtell, Steven Fleck, and Nick Turner provide a comprehensive review of a growing research agenda item, virtual teams. The future development of virtual organizations rests on an increasing awareness of the issues and concerns as individuals begin to work more remotely.

Finally, we would like to thank our contributors and readers over the last 19 years for their support for *IRIOP*, which has grown from strength to strength, given the high-quality output from dedicated scholars throughout the world. We are both handing over the Editorship of *IRIOP* to Gerard Hodgkinson and Kevin Ford, knowing that they will carry on the tradition of top-quality reviews in the field of industrial and organizational psychology in the future. Good luck to them and thanks to all who have supported us throughout the years.

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September 2003

Chapter 1

EMPOWERMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Toby D. Wall, Stephen J. Wood, and Desmond J. Leach
Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield, UK

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade the notion of empowerment has become popular in I/O psychology and management circles. Its currency among practitioners can be illustrated by the view of a CEO who stated that ‘No vision, no strategy can be achieved without able and empowered employees’ (cited in Argyris, 1998, p. 98). Concurrently, a survey based on a representative sample of 564 UK manufacturing companies (Waterson, Clegg, Bolden, Pepper, Warr, & Wall, 1999) showed that, although only 23% reported using empowerment extensively, 72% had adopted empowerment initiatives to at least some degree, had done so within the last few years, and had planned to develop them further.

Similar rates of adoption have been reported in Japan, Australia and Switzerland (Clegg, Wall, Pepper, Stride, Woods, Morrison et al., 2002), and in the USA (Lawler, Mohrman, & Ledford, 1998). Evidence of the continued increase in the use of empowerment in the UK comes from a study by Wood, Stride, Wall, and Clegg (2003). They followed up on the companies in Waterson et al.’s (1999) manufacturing sample four years later, and found that the proportion using empowerment extensively had nearly doubled. They also found more use of empowerment in service organizations than in manufacturing ones. Hardy and Lieba-O’Sullivan’s (1998) verdict that ‘the popularity of this latest approach led some writers to hail the 1990s as the “empowerment era”’ (p. 452) extends into the new millennium.

Fenton-O’Creedy (1995) notes that ‘prior to its adoption as a management term, the word empowerment was most often used in such fields as politics, social work, feminist theory, and Third World aid ... to mean providing individuals (usually disadvantaged) with the tools and resources to further their own interests’ (p. 155). Within I/O psychology and management, empowerment typically has a more restricted meaning. It is used to denote the

enhancement of employees' autonomy in their work, or increased involvement and influence in decision-making more generally, within the wider agenda and interests of the organization. Thus it loses the emphasis on empowerment furthering employees' own interests, though many assume they value greater empowerment. In other words empowerment involves 'moving decision-making authority down the (traditional) organizational hierarchy' (Menon, 2001, p. 156). Empowerment is a generic construct that can encompass a family of different initiatives, and can apply at all levels within the organization from shop floor to middle and relatively senior management (see also Robbins, Crino, & Fedendall, 2002).

Four main perspectives on empowerment are evident, each of which has its own distinctive literature. One is that of *psychological empowerment* (e.g., Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990), where the emphasis is on individual cognitions of self-determination, competence, and related constructs. This is an experiential or subjective perspective, concerned with how empowered employees feel.

In contrast, the remaining three perspectives on empowerment are more directly rooted in the autonomy or influence afforded by the environment within which people work, and collectively are thus sometimes described as 'situational' or 'structural' forms of empowerment (see Spreitzer, 1995a). The second we shall call *role empowerment* to reflect the fact that it focuses on the delegation of added responsibility to individuals or groups for the execution and management of their own primary tasks. This is what London (1993) defines as 'ensuring the employee has the authority to do his or her job' (p. 57). Examples include job enrichment and self-managing work teams.

The third perspective, *organizational empowerment*, encompasses the involvement or representation of employees in decision-making within the wider enterprise. Examples include consultation and participation, styles of management fostering these, as well as representation on bodies such as management boards and through trade unions. Such practices have been rather neglected in the I/O literature in recent times, but they have been more prominent in the management and industrial relations fields.

The final perspective that we identify we call *embedded empowerment*. This refers to initiatives in which role or organizational empowerment is a core component within a wider framework. The topical example on which we will focus is work on human resource management (HRM). This is concerned with the effects of the HRM system as a whole, within which, role and organizational empowerment typically play a central role alongside other factors, such as investment in selection and training. Such systems are often labelled accordingly (e.g., 'high involvement management') (Wood, 1999).

In this chapter we critically review evidence relating to each of these four perspectives on empowerment as they bear upon performance at work. We

use the term performance to denote the achievement of the primary economic task (e.g., output in manufacturing, volume in sales). We do not include broader considerations such as employee welfare or social and environmental responsibility, as represented within the more general ‘balanced score card’ approach (e.g., Daft, 1998). The focus on economic performance, however, means that the outcome differs according to the perspective on the empowerment in question. Thus for psychological and role empowerment, performance is typically concerned with job or team output; whereas for organizational and embedded empowerment the focus is on the performance of the organization as a whole in terms of such measures as productivity, profit, or return on assets. We conclude by attempting to integrate findings from the four perspectives on empowerment and to identify issues for future research and practice. First, however, to set the scene, we offer a brief history of empowerment research and an outline of the wider socio-political influences affecting interest in the topic.

EMPOWERMENT RESEARCH: A BRIEF HISTORY IN CONTEXT

It is only recently that the term empowerment has become popular, and arguments could be mounted about the distinctiveness of some contemporary approaches (such as psychological empowerment). However, as most commentators observe (e.g., Arnold, Arad, Rhoades, & Drasgow, 2000), interest in situational empowerment, and especially in role empowerment, has a long history. The study of psychology and management in work settings developed in the early part of the 20th century, against the backdrop of scientific management (Taylor, 1911). That approach focused on role disempowerment by promoting narrowly defined, low discretion jobs, and the concentration of decision-making in the upper reaches of the management hierarchy. Although scientific management brought immediate productivity benefits, there was concern about the longer term value, and particularly about the social and psychological costs of the resultant work simplification. During the 1920s criticism of the practice was voiced in political circles on both sides of the Atlantic (Rose, 1978). Consequently, much early investigation, such as that funded by the Industrial Fatigue Research Board in the UK, was devoted to investigating its effects on employee well-being (Wall & Martin, 1987). That research helped create and shape the field of study that was to become I/O psychology in the US and occupational psychology in the UK. It led to recommendations for broadening the range of tasks within jobs and, less noticeably at first, for devolving more authority to job holders. This gave rise to interest in role empowerment in the form of job redesign, as the antithesis of scientific management or work simplification.

The subsequent history of I/O psychology and related fields reveals persistent advocacy of empowerment, albeit in a variety of different forms and levels of analysis. As Wilkinson (1998) notes, elements of role empowerment are evident within the human relations movement prominent in the 1920s and 1930s, inspired by Elton Mayo's Hawthorne studies. Those studies involved field experiments on the effects of work conditions (e.g., hours of work and payment incentives) on performance (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). Unexpectedly, the investigators found performance benefits not only when they improved work conditions but also when they subsequently reduced them. This led to the conclusion that the process of experimenting had empowered employees in that 'supervision was free and easy, the operatives were able to set their own work pace [and that it was] an increased involvement in the job [that] was reflected in a steady improvement in production' (Warr & Wall, 1975, p. 30).

The human relations movement in turn encouraged a broadening of the perspective to include empowerment within work groups, leadership style, and wider organizational structures. For example, that movement was soon followed by the development of socio-technical systems theory in the UK (e.g., Trist & Bamforth, 1951) that promoted role empowerment at the team level, through the advocacy of autonomous working groups (now variously called semi-autonomous, self-managing, or empowered groups or work teams (see Arnold et al., 2000, p. 249)). Commensurate with their respective cultures, the work group emphasis that emerged especially in the UK was paralleled by a continuation of the more individualistic approach in the US, where Herzberg (1966) advanced his two-factor, or motivation-hygiene, theory of work design. He coined the term 'job enrichment' to reflect its advocacy of increasing individual employee autonomy and responsibility. The same term was subsequently adopted by Hackman and Oldham (1976), whose Job Characteristics Model led to similar recommendations for job design.

There were parallel developments with respect to organizational empowerment. Pursuing the human relations theme of the role of leadership style, McGregor (1960) contrasted 'Theory X' (Taylorism) with 'Theory Y' (empowering) management approaches, recommending the latter as a means of enhancing performance. Likewise, Likert (1961), focusing on 'new patterns of management', compared System I, defined in terms of close control and lack of delegation, with systems II, III, and IV, representing progressively greater empowerment. The focus of empowerment had broadened from the work role of the employee or work group towards a more inclusive approach, and from enhanced autonomy and authority over the immediate work to include participative forms of leadership and management.

The interest in organizational empowerment gained further momentum in the 1960s, fuelled by national and international political initiatives. In the UK, for example, the tenor of the times was captured by the *Report of the*

Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employee Associations (Royal Commission, 1968), which states 'the right to representation in decisions affecting [work] is, or should be, the prerogative of every worker in a democratic society' (paragraph 212). Similarly, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) report to that Royal Commission recommended: 'provision should be made at each level in the management structure for . . . representatives of the work people employed in these industries to participate in the formulation of policy and in the day to day operation of these industries' (TUC, 1966, p. 262). Within Western Europe more generally, the Draft Fifth Directive of the European Economic Community (EEC, now the European Union, EU) recommended a representative system at board level within companies. As Towers (1973) observed, 'Over the last few years powerful socio-cultural, political and industrial pressures have coalesced to articulate themselves into a widespread demand for greater participation and democratization' (p. 7). In Western Europe that was reflected in research on industrial democracy and participation (e.g., Emery & Thorsrud, 1969; Poole, 1986). In the US interest did not expand from role to organizational empowerment to the same extent, with attention to the latter largely restricted to more general notions of participative decision-making (e.g., Locke & Schweiger, 1979) and employee 'voice' (e.g., Freeman & Medoff, 1984).

Arguably, the period from around 1980 to the early 1990s saw a lull in the interest in empowerment. With the election of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister in the UK, there was legislation to restrict organizational empowerment through trade unions, and 'managers' right to manage' became a slogan. In Europe, the Draft Fifth Directive was never enacted. There was a retreat from empowerment philosophies. As Wilkinson (1998) notes, 'The rhetoric of enterprise moved to the right in Western Europe and the USA' (p. 42).

Nonetheless, advocacy of empowerment did not disappear, especially within the popular management literature, and developments since have served to renew interest. As Wilkinson (1998) argues, Peters and Waterman's (1982) best-selling book, *In Search of Excellence*, 'was influential in laying the foundation for the modern empowerment movement' (p. 42), and promoted interest in empowerment as a core element of total quality management (Wilkinson, Marchington, Ackers, & Goodman, 1992). Empowerment is implicit in various concepts that were gaining ground in the 1980s, such as post-Fordism, flexible specialization, de-bureaucratization, delayering and decentralization, as reflected in prescriptive management approaches promoted by such writers as Drucker (1988) and Kanter (1989). Influential books making the case for an empowerment approach (e.g., Lawler, 1992; Pfeffer, 1994), together with new developments on psychological and embedded empowerment (the latter suggesting that HRM systems that include empowering practices are associated with superior organizational performance relative to more traditional personnel systems), have helped keep the issue on the policy and research agenda.

In addition to the above, two further factors are important in explaining why the topic of empowerment periodically resurfaces with renewed vigor. The first of these is the development of new technologies, and computer-based ones in particular, that raise questions about how empowered users should be. Although such technology was initially seen by some (e.g., Braverman, 1974) as posing a threat to empowerment at the job level, others saw a need to empower users in order to realize its full potential and achieve flexible production (e.g., Piore & Sabel, 1983; Susman & Chase, 1986). The second factor is that, by the 1990s, downturns in the economic climate made downsizing and delayering increasingly common. As organizations shed staff it became necessary to empower those they retained (Wilkinson, 1998).

Thus the current interest in empowerment can be seen to be the product of both enduring democratic beliefs and values interacting with shifts in socio-political thinking and economic conditions.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT

The most recent and distinct addition to the literature is that concerned with psychological empowerment. Current interest in this idea is usually traced back to the theoretical contribution of Conger and Kanungo (1988). They noted that, whereas there was an extensive literature in both the management and I/O fields on role empowerment and its effects on behaviour at work (which we review in the next sections), the processes or mechanisms that linked these remained largely neglected. Their approach was to focus on the psychological experience of empowerment, how this might derive from what we have defined as role empowerment (and other factors), and its behavioural outcomes. They proposed that the main effect of empowerment was to promote self-efficacy, that is, feelings of confidence in one's ability to perform tasks to a high standard, and that this in turn would affect 'both initiation and persistence of subordinates' task behaviour' (p. 476).

Following Conger and Kanungo's lead, Thomas and Velthouse (1990), in their article on the 'cognitive elements of empowerment', extended the employee experience approach. They proposed that the experience of empowerment involved four 'task assessments'. The first, 'impact', they defined as the extent to which individuals see their behaviours as producing the desired effects in their work role. The second, 'competence', refers to individuals feeling able to carry out their work tasks effectively (Conger and Kanungo's notion of self-efficacy). The third, 'meaningfulness', concerns 'the value of the task goal or purpose' (p. 672), that is the extent to which individuals feel that their work is personally significant. The final task assessment, 'choice', refers to 'causal responsibility for a person's actions' (p. 673), or perceived freedom to determine how to carry out work tasks. The basic premise is that

the components combine additively to represent feelings or perceptions of empowerment, and hence to promote behaviours that enhance work performance.

Expanding on their analysis of perceived empowerment, Thomas and Velthouse theorized about the organizational antecedents, proposing that alternative practices would affect the components differentially. For example, they suggested that delegation would act solely to enhance choice, job enrichment (which also includes a greater variety of tasks) would promote choice, meaningfulness, and impact, whereas appropriate pay systems would mainly contribute to perceptions of competence and choice.

Psychological Empowerment and its Measurement

Against this theoretical background, researchers began to develop measures of experienced empowerment, so that the various predictions about its antecedents and effects could be empirically tested. Spreitzer (1995a) took up this challenge and introduced the term psychological empowerment to denote the experiential component that Conger and Kanungo and Thomas and Velthouse had identified. Spreitzer developed a measure of the four components that Thomas and Velthouse had advocated, namely, meaning, competence, self-determination (choice), and impact. Items for the dimensions were adapted from existing scales of work characteristics, of which the following are examples: 'The work I do is very important to me' (meaning); 'I have mastered the skills necessary for my job' (competence); 'I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work' (self-determination); and 'I have significant influence over what happens in my department' (impact).

More recently, Kirkman and Rosen (1999) have developed a team-level measure of psychological empowerment. Their measure also corresponds to the Thomas and Velthouse model: the potency sub-scale is synonymous with competence, and measures 'the collective belief of a team that it can be effective' (p. 59); the meaningfulness sub-scale concerns 'a team's experiencing its tasks as important, valuable, and worthwhile' (p. 59); the autonomy dimension, synonymous with choice, refers the extent to which 'team members experience substantial freedom, independence, and discretion in their work' (p. 59); and the impact sub-scale concerns 'work that is significant and important for an organization' (p. 59). Factor analysis findings were consistent with there being four sub-scales, but these were highly intercorrelated.

Psychological Empowerment and Performance

Research to date has been concerned largely with the measurement of psychological empowerment. We do not review that in detail, as it falls outside the focus of this chapter on empowerment and performance.

However, part of the measurement task has been to examine construct validity, that is, whether measures of psychological empowerment relate as theoretically expected to antecedents and outcomes. Theory suggests that psychological empowerment, though in part a consequence of empowering work practices (i.e., enhanced employee decision-making responsibility), is also affected by other factors; and that it is psychological empowerment that results in behavioural outcomes (e.g., motivation and performance). Thus it is assumed that empowering practices alone may not be sufficient to affect behaviour, that employees also need to feel empowered before they engage in performance enhancing work activities (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). In other words there are four elements in their overall prediction: that role empowerment (and other factors) will promote psychological empowerment; that psychological empowerment will enhance performance; that psychological empowerment will mediate the link between role empowerment and performance; and the possibility that role empowerment will interact with psychological empowerment to affect performance.

Spreitzer (1995a) considered the relationship of psychological empowerment with antecedent and outcome variables within her original cross-sectional measurement study. Using a sample of 393 managers, she found that all four sub-scales were positively related to the antecedents of access to information (a situational factor), and three of the four (except meaning) were associated with self-esteem (a personality factor). The relationship of the scales to outcomes was less consistent, with only competence and impact being statistically significantly related in zero-order analyses with performance (e.g., performance standards, overall success) and innovative behaviour, both as rated by subordinates. Subsequently, structural equation modelling showed a good fit for the effects of the antecedent variables collectively on psychological empowerment as a whole, but a less good fit for the effect of psychological empowerment on effectiveness and innovation (albeit that the paths were statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ for both outcomes).

That initial study did not examine the possible mediational role of empowerment, an issue taken up by Spreitzer (1995b) in a second paper using the same sample. Taking five potential antecedents, and the same two outcome measures (as rated by the respondent's subordinates and superiors), she found some evidence of mediation for the relationship of 'work unit culture' (i.e., an HRM orientation similar to that considered later in the section on embedded empowerment) with innovative behaviour, but none for the relationship of culture with effectiveness. There was no evidence of mediation of the relationship of role ambiguity, socio-political support, access to information, or access to resources, with either performance measure. Thus, for this sample, evidence of mediation is at best weak. However, as we note in our more general assessment of this area of research, the antecedents are at best indirect measures of role empowerment.

Spreitzer (1996), together with colleagues (Spreitzer, Kizilos, & Nason, 1997), continuing to use the original sample of managers, went on to reconsider the same potential antecedents of psychological empowerment as in her 1995(b) paper (i.e., role ambiguity, socio-political support, access to resources, work unit culture). However, this time the aim was to determine more rigorously whether the four variables differentially predict outcomes. The study considered each sub-scale while controlling for the other three. This showed that, while collectively the sub-scales predicted outcomes relating to work effectiveness, work satisfaction, and job strain, no one dimension did so uniquely. Spreitzer et al. (1997) thus concluded that 'employees need to experience each of the empowerment dimensions in order to achieve all of the hoped for outcomes of empowerment' (p. 679).

Spreitzer's series of studies has served to clarify and operationalize the construct of psychological empowerment, and to establish that it is associated with several of the assumed antecedents and outcomes. For our present purposes, however, an important limitation is that this work is based on a single sample of managers, leaving its generalizability unknown. Subsequent studies by others help to address this limitation.

Gagné, Senecal, and Koestner (1997) report findings based on a sample of 157 technical and telemarketing employees. Factor analysis confirmed the expected four dimensions of psychological empowerment. Using measures from the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) (Hackman & Oldham, 1975), they investigated, through path analysis, how perceived job characteristics (task significance, feedback from the job, feedback from agents, and autonomy support) related to psychological empowerment, and if psychological empowerment mediated the relationship of those characteristics with intrinsic motivation. Findings showed differential effects. For instance, task significance predicted only meaning, feedback from the job predicted impact and autonomy (self-determination), and autonomy support also predicted impact and autonomy. The findings further showed that, for two of the dimensions, meaning and autonomy, those experiencing greater psychological empowerment also reported stronger intrinsic motivation. However, the third dimension, impact, was unrelated to intrinsic motivation; whereas the fourth, competence, was negatively associated. There was also evidence that certain dimensions of psychological empowerment mediated the link between the job characteristics and the outcome (e.g., the relationship between autonomy support and intrinsic motivation was through the psychological empowerment dimension of autonomy). This study is based solely on cross-sectional and self-report data and as such is methodologically limited. Nonetheless, it extends investigations to another type of sample and, contrary to Spreitzer et al.'s (1997) conclusion, suggests there may be dangers in treating the different dimensions of psychological empowerment as a single construct.

More recently, Siegall and Gardner (2000) have examined the relationship of communication with a supervisor, attitude towards the company, teamwork and concern for performance, with the dimensions of empowerment. Applying regression analysis to data from a sample of 203 lower level manufacturing employees, they found communication with a supervisor to be associated with experienced meaning, self-determination and impact, and that attitude to the company contributed solely to meaning. Teamwork was unrelated to any dimension of psychological empowerment when the other variables were controlled. Turning to the question of effectiveness, this study also showed that those experiencing more meaning and self-determination recorded greater concern for performance. Though, as for the previous work, this study is methodologically limited, because of its cross-sectional design and reliance solely on self-report data, it again suggests the components of psychological empowerment are differentially associated not only with assumed antecedents but also with a performance-related outcome.

Liden, Wayne, and Sparrowe (2000) report a study on a sample of 337 lower-level service company employees. They focused in particular on the extent to which the four dimensions of psychological empowerment mediate the relationship between job characteristics (an aggregate of task identity, task significance, and feedback from work) and outcomes (work satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance). Using regression analyses, they found that meaning completely accounted for the relationship between job characteristics and commitment; and that meaning and competence partially accounted for the relationship between job characteristics and satisfaction.

The findings for performance (rated by supervisors) were rather different. Although zero-order correlations suggested that all four dimensions of psychological empowerment were positively associated with the outcome, regression analysis showed only one component, competence, was related to performance when the effects of the other three were controlled. Moreover, there was no mediation, because the job characteristics were unrelated to performance in the first place. A weakness of this study, however, is that the measure of job characteristics excluded the most direct measure of role empowerment, namely autonomy, and hence the most likely antecedent of psychological empowerment. We shall consider this further in the next section.

The last study we highlight is that by Kirkman and Rosen (1999). They also examined, cross-sectionally, whether psychological empowerment was a mediator of the relationship between antecedents (team leader behaviours, production/service responsibilities, team-based human resource policies, and social structure) and outcomes (e.g., productivity and customer service). However, their investigation was based on a sample of some 100 teams, from three manufacturing companies and one insurance company. They administered the team-level measure of experienced empowerment described

earlier (p. 7) which, because of the high correlations between the four subscales, they used to provide a single empowerment score.

There were three key findings. First, all four antecedents (holding the others constant) were positively related to team psychological empowerment. Second, teams reporting greater empowerment had higher productivity and provided better customer service (in both cases as assessed by external team leaders). Third, the observed relationship between the antecedent variables and performance (and overall index of productivity and customer service together with a measure of proactivity) was accounted for by psychological empowerment, with the sole exception of team leader behaviours (which retained a direct effect on performance over and above that mediated by team empowerment).

Taking Stock

It is evident from the studies reviewed, together with many others in the literature (e.g., Arnold et al., 2000; Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, & Almost, 2001), that the construct of psychological empowerment has attracted a great deal of attention. Nonetheless, research on this topic is still in its infancy. Thus, although one may reach preliminary conclusions, the main lessons concern issues for future inquiry.

Perhaps the strongest conclusion is that the theoretically expected four-dimensional nature of psychological empowerment has been supported across diverse samples. However, this observation requires qualification. A study by Fulford and Enz (1995) found that while meaningfulness and self-efficacy were distinct dimensions, impact and self-determination came together as a third. Siegall and Gardner's (2000) exploratory factor analysis found support for the dimensions of meaning, competence, and impact, but self-determination did not emerge unless they lowered the statistical criteria below normal levels. Also, the problem of discriminant validity was an issue for Kirkman and Rosen's (1999) team-level measure, in that the four dimensions they found were so highly related that they aggregated them into a single index for analytic purposes. This has been a problem from the outset as is evident from Spreitzer's (1995a) comment in the original measurement study, that 'The limited discriminant validity found ... suggest[s] that continued refinement of the measures is necessary' (p. 1461).

The identification of stable and distinct dimensions of psychological empowerment is also likely to be important for conceptual and theoretical reasons. A possibility that has been largely neglected is that the components are sequentially related. For instance, it seems likely that self-determination (i.e., choice or experienced autonomy) is a prerequisite for one or more of the other components. This perspective is supported by Kraimer, Sibert, and Liden's (1999) analysis suggesting that 'self-determination must be present for impact to occur' (p. 140). Drawing on Liden and Arad's (1996) model of

empowerment, Kraimer et al. commented: 'Self-determination indicates power potential, and impact reflects actual power. Thus, potential power is a necessary condition for actual power in the workplace' (p. 140). They, accordingly, recommended that Spreitzer's model should include a direct pathway between self-determination and impact. Equally, it is plausible that self-determination is a precursor of meaning, or that competence leads to impact. The emphasis thus far on dimensions of psychological empowerment has discouraged investigation of possible relationships among these dimensions. This should be a priority for future research.

Another important issue concerns the relationship between role and psychological empowerment. Investigators have tended not to include in their studies the one aspect of role empowerment, namely the degree of autonomy or responsibility afforded to job incumbents, that would be expected to predict directly self-determination or choice (i.e., experienced autonomy) (Gagné et al., 1997 are an exception). The most likely reason for this is that measurement of the two concepts is confounded. This arises because, to measure psychological empowerment, Spreitzer (1995a) adapted the autonomy items from Hackman and Oldham's (1975) Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS), which was designed to measure role empowerment. For example, one of the three items in the self-determination sub-scale of psychological empowerment is 'I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job' (Spreitzer, 1995a, p. 1465), and one of three items in the autonomy scale of the JDS is, 'The job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work' (Cook, Hepworth, Wall, & Warr, 1981, p. 184). The basic problem is that, though psychological and situational empowerment are conceptually distinct at the operational level, where reliance is placed on self-report measures the distinction is almost impossible to uphold (Liden et al., 2000). Given that psychological empowerment is quintessentially an experiential construct, leaving no alternative but to use self-report measures, the implication is that future work should deploy objective, or at least independent, corresponding measures of role empowerment.

Similarly, there is a need, wherever possible, for objective or independent measures of outcomes. Asking employees the extent to which they feel their work has impact, for example, would seem to be necessarily related to self-reports of performance, making findings somewhat tautologous. As we have seen, research so far has fared better in this respect, but nonetheless self-report outcome measures are not uncommon.

Another requirement is for future research to move beyond the cross-sectional research designs that so far have exclusively been used. Cross-sectional research may be acceptable in the development of a new research area, where it is a cost-effective strategy for developing measures and obtaining circumstantial evidence for substantive predictions. The point has been reached, however, where it is essential to move to longitudinal and

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