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**LINKING JOB MOTIVATING POTENTIAL TO FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE  
ATTITUDES AND PERFORMANCE: TESTING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF  
PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In this study, we relate job motivating potential to frontline employee job satisfaction, affective commitment and performance levels and test the mediating role of psychological empowerment. Based on a sample of 1129 employee – supervisor dyads, we found that employee psychological empowerment fully mediates the relationship between job motivating potential and the outcome variables. Our findings confirm the importance of job design approaches to empowering employees. Next to proposing potential avenues for further research, we discuss some suggestions on how to put job redesign strategies into practice.

Keywords: empowerment, job motivating potential, employee performance, mediation

## **LINKING JOB MOTIVATING POTENTIAL TO FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES AND PERFORMANCE: TESTING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT**

For theory and practice alike, the promise of empowerment has been satisfied, committed and highly performing employees. Over a decade ago, Conger and Kanungo (1988) noted that “the practice of empowering subordinates is a principal component of managerial and organizational effectiveness” (1988, p. 471). Since then, many scholars have echoed their claim (e.g. Forrester, 2000; Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000; Spreitzer, 1995; 1996; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

Today, despite some decades of academic and practitioner attention, there remains unclarity on the notion of empowerment in organizations. Although robust research on employee empowerment’s nomological net (e.g. Seibert, Silver, & Randolph, 2004; Spreitzer, 1995; 1996) and consensus on a well-grounded definition is emerging (Seibert et al., 2004), this research field has its own limitations and thus, important questions that await to be answered. One important set of questions relate to the consequences of empowerment in the workplace. Another, probably more knotty issue concerns organizational characteristics that impact on the emergence of employee empowerment.

As noted by Carless (2004), an understanding of the work context that facilitates empowerment has important theoretical and practical implications. Research that aimed to investigate antecedents to employee empowerment has used different perspectives. Originally, an important research stream has focused at the organizational level. Most influential has been Bowen and Lawler’s model (1992, 1995) in which employee empowerment is argued to be fostered through delegation of information, knowledge, authority and rewards to the lowest levels of the organization. Spreitzer (1996) identified sociopolitical support, access to information and work climate as important antecedents to employee empowerment. More recently, Seibert, Silver and Randolph (2004) integrated macro and micro views of empowerment. They proposed an empowerment climate construct, reflecting information sharing, autonomy through boundaries and team accountability, and found it to be meaningfully related to work unit and individual performance. Still others (e.g. Kirkman, Rosen, Tesluk, & Gibson, 2004) have focused on empowerment at the team level.

Very little attention has been given to the relationship between job characteristics and employee empowerment. This is surprising as much of the argumentation used in the empowerment literature draws to a smaller or larger extent on Hackman and Oldham’s (1976,

1980) job characteristics model (JCM). The aim of this paper is therefore to explore the relationship between job motivating potential and employee empowerment and to propose and empirically test a model in which employee empowerment mediates the relationship between job motivating potential and employee attitudes and performance levels. This study contributes to the existing literature because it bridges the gap between contemporary empowerment theory and a well-accepted theory on intrinsic job motivation. Furthermore, at the individual level of analysis, we explore the relationship between job characteristics, employee motivation and important individual work related outcomes. Finally, we use a multi-source cross-sectional research design in four service organizations to provide further empirical evidence on the relationships mentioned above.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL**

### **Employee empowerment: a psychological perspective**

Several perspectives to look at empowerment have emerged. The two most prevalent are the structural (macro) and the psychological (micro) approach (Liden et al. 2000; Mills & Ungson 2003, Seibert et al. 2004). Originally, the structural view focused on empowering management practices, including the delegation of decision making from higher to lower organizational levels and increasing access to information and resources for individuals at the lower levels (Bowen & Lawler, 1992, 1995; Rothstein, 1995). In this structural view, the rationale is that employees will behave in an empowered way by making the necessary changes at the structural level.

A second group of organizational researchers has looked at empowerment from a psychological perspective. Rather than approaching empowerment as “something managers do to their people” (Quinn & Spreitzer 1997, p. 41), they focus on perceptual or psychological factors of empowerment (Liden et al. 2000). Thomas and Velthouse (1990) defined psychological empowerment as increased intrinsic task motivation, i.e. generic conditions by an individual, pertaining directly to the task, that produce motivation and satisfaction.

Thanks to the work of Conger and Kanungo (1988) and Thomas and Velthouse (1990), important steps have been taken towards clarification of this psychological approach to empowerment, resulting in a growing consensus among organizational researchers on its conceptualization. These authors distinguished between four empowerment dimensions, which reflect four distinct cognitions relating to an employee’s orientation to his or her work. The first empowerment cognition is meaningfulness. It concerns the value of a work goal or

purpose, judged in relation to an employee's own ideals and standards (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Spreitzer, 1995, 1996). It refers to congruence between requirements of a work role and an employee's beliefs, values, and behaviors (Brief & Nord, 1980; Spreitzer, 1995). The second empowerment cognition is competence. It is an employee's belief in being capable to perform task activities skillfully (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy concept reflects this competence dimension. Self-determination, the third empowerment cognition, involves causal responsibility for a person's actions. It is the employee's perception on the autonomy in the initiation and continuation of work behaviors and processes (Bell & Staw, 1980; Deci, Connely, & Ryan, 1989). Finally, impact is the fourth empowerment cognition. It reflects the degree to which an employee can influence strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at work (Ashforth, 1989). As pointed out by Lee and Koh (2001), the general notion of impact has been studied under various labels, including learned helplessness (Overmeier & Seligman, 1967) and locus of control (Rotter, 1966). Impact is the converse of learned helplessness (Martinko & Gardner, 1982), however, it differs from locus of control. Internal locus of control is a general personality characteristic, while the impact cognition endures with the work context (Spreitzer, 1995).

### **Linking job motivating potential to employee outcomes: the mediating role of psychological empowerment**

Hackman and Oldham's JCM (1976, 1980) identified a set of job characteristics that are proposed to motivate employees intrinsically: skill variety (i.e. the perceived variety and complexity of skills and talents required to perform the job); task identity (i.e. the extent the job is seen as involving a whole, identifiable task); task significance (i.e. the extent that the job affects the well being of others); autonomy (i.e. the extent the job is seen as allowing for personal initiative in performing the work); and feedback from the job (i.e. the extent that the job, itself, provides information about job performance). The model further states that the five core job characteristics can be combined into a single index of motivating potential score\* (MPS) that reflects the overall potential of a job to influence an individual's feelings and behaviors (Fried & Ferris, 1987).

The JCM further posits that the way jobs are perceived in terms of these five core job characteristics impact three particular psychological reactions to the job. These reactions,

referred to as ‘critical psychological states’, include ‘experienced meaningfulness’ (i.e. the extent to which the work is seen as making a difference to others), ‘felt responsibility’ (i.e. the extent to which employees assume responsibility for their work), and ‘knowledge of results’ (i.e. the extent to which employees are aware of the quality of their work). These critical psychological states conceptually resemble very much the cognitions reflecting employees’ psychological empowerment that were identified by Thomas and Velthouse (1990) and further validated by Spreitzer (1995). As argued by Liden and Arad (1996) and Liden et al. (2000), this suggests that the nature of tasks, as defined by the job characteristics approach, contributes directly to perceptions of psychological empowerment. Consequently, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. Job motivating potential is positively related to employee psychological empowerment.

Theoretical arguments have been proposed that link psychological empowerment to individual outcome variables such as employee job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment and performance levels. Below, we provide theoretical arguments that relate each of the four empowerment cognitions to these outcome variables.

*Job satisfaction.* Bearing on motivation theoretical perspectives, each of the four empowerment cognitions has been linked to employee job satisfaction. First, it has been stressed that the degree to which an individual finds work personally meaningful is an important precondition of work satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Herzberg et al. 1959; Liden et al. 2000) and low levels of meaning have been linked to apathy at work and, hence, lower levels of work satisfaction (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Second, research on self-efficacy indicates that individuals who possess confidence in being able to succeed are happier with their work than those who fear that they may fail (Martinko & Gardner, 1982). Third, individuals that feel that they have been directly involved in outcomes that affect the organization should derive a sense of job satisfaction. Fourth, as argued by Niehoff, Enz and Grover (1990), a sense of control or self-determination over one’s work is satisfying because any accomplishments can be attributed more to oneself than to other individuals. Thus, there is strong theoretical evidence for a positive relationship between empowerment (comprising

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\* The formula for calculating MPS is as follows:  $(\text{skill variety} + \text{task identity} + \text{task significance})/3 * \text{autonomy} * \text{job feedback}$



the four cognitions of meaningfulness, competence, self-determination and impact) and job satisfaction. These arguments lead us to propose the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 2. The level of psychological empowerment is positively related to employee job satisfaction.*

*Organizational commitment.* Organizational commitment refers to an individual's attachment, loyalty, and identification with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1984). Liden et al. (2000) argued that empowerment may contribute to a sense of commitment to the organization through a process of reciprocation. Individuals tend to appreciate organizations that provide opportunities for decision latitude, challenge, and responsibility, as well as for the feelings of meaning, impact, self-determination and mastery that result from these conditions. They are likely to reciprocate by being more committed to the organization (Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-La Mastro, 1990; Kraimer et al., 1999). Thus, the concept of reciprocation provides a theoretical explanation why empowerment should result in increased identification and attachment to the organization. Consequently, we propose the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 3. The level of psychological empowerment is positively related to employee affective commitment.*

*Employee performance.* A major promise of empowerment theory is that empowered individuals should perform better than those who are relatively less empowered (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Spreitzer (1995) argues that empowered employees are likely to be seen as effective because they proactively execute their job responsibilities. This is because they see themselves as competent and able to influence their jobs and work environments in meaningful ways. Liden et al. (2000) argue that individuals who feel that their jobs are meaningful, and who impact on others within and outside the organization by completing their job responsibilities, are motivated to perform well.

Gecas (1989) argued that a personal sense of self-worth and confidence in one's job competence should translate into higher levels of performance. Theory further suggests that individuals who believe that they can have an impact on the system in which they are embedded will be seen as more effective (Ashforth, 1989).

In contrast, individuals who do not believe that they can make a difference, will be less likely to try as hard in their work, and hence will often be seen as less effective. Thus, based on these arguments we propose the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 4. Psychological empowerment is positively related to employee performance.*

## **METHOD**

### **Sample and data collection**

Web-based and paper and pencil survey questionnaires were administered during normal working hours to frontline employees and their supervisors in four service organizations: a bank, a temporary staffing organization, a hospital and a health insurance company. All employee respondents spend considerable time in direct contact with customers. The employee survey focused on job and work unit experiences. Supervisors were requested to rate several performance indicators per employees. Employees and supervisors were asked, before filling out their questionnaire, to meet and to agree upon a fictitious work unit and individual employee code they were asked to mention on their survey. With these codes, we were able to match employee responses with employee performance ratings by the supervisor, without compromising confidentiality and anonymity. To foster collaboration, one week prior to sending out our request to fill out the survey, respondents received a motivating mail from their CEO or HR-director. Respondents were given two weeks to respond. After that time, a reminding mail was sent, again by top management of the companies. For those who filled out the paper and pencil version of the survey, a package was sent by mail to the respondents, containing a motivating letter from the CEO, the survey and a pre-paid envelope to return the completed survey to the researchers.

In total, 2439 employee surveys and 365 supervisor surveys were sent out, of which 1748 employee surveys and 255 supervisor surveys were filled out and returned to the researchers. This results in a total response rate of 71.7 % for the employee sample and 69.9 % for the supervisor sample. After deletion of cases with missing values, 1127 employee-supervisor dyads remained for analysis.

A majority of the total employee sample is female (71.6 %) with an average age between 31 and 35 years. 0.3 % has a primary school diploma, 24.5 % has a high school diploma, 56.9 % a bachelor and 18,4 % a master degree. Average seniority is between 6 and 10 years.

## Measures

Table 1 provides the basic statistics and inter-correlations between the different constructs. We discuss the measures below.

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Insert Table 1 About Here

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**Job motivating potential.** The job motivating potential reflects five job characteristics: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. We used the original scale developed by Hackman and Oldham (1980). Each of the five dimensions were measured with 2 positively worded items and one negatively worded item (e.g. “My job requires me to do many different activities, using a variety of my skills and talents”). The negatively worded items were reversed scored. As proposed by Hackman & Oldham (1980), we combined the five core job characteristics into a single index of motivating potential score (MPS). Items were rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from ‘totally dissatisfied’ to ‘totally satisfied’. Reliability for the global MPS-scale (Cronbach’s alpha) in this sample is .76.

**Psychological empowerment** was measured by the scale developed by Spreitzer (1995). Each of the four empowerment dimensions (i.e. meaningfulness, competence, autonomy and impact) are measured by three items (e.g. “The work that I do is very important to me”). Items were rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from ‘totally dissatisfied’ to ‘totally satisfied’. Reliability of the global scale - 12 items - in this sample is .85.

**Job satisfaction** was measured by six items from Churchil, Ford & Walker (1974) and Hartline & Ferrell (1993). These items (e.g. “Indicate how satisfied you are with your co-workers”) tapped into different aspects of employee satisfaction. Items were rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from ‘totally dissatisfied’ to ‘totally satisfied’. Reliability for the scale (Cronbach’s alpha) in this sample was .68.

**Organizational commitment** was measured by eight items (e.g. “I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for”) from the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday, Steers, and Porter 1979). These items reflect the

affective component of organizational commitment. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from ‘totally disagree’ to ‘totally agree’. Reliability for the scale (Cronbach’s alpha) in this sample was .87.

**Supervisor rated performance** was measured by four items adapted from Singh (2000). Supervisors were asked to compare performance aspects of their employees and to rate individual (economic and service related) performance over the last six months on a 7-point scale ranging from ‘Not good at all’ to ‘top performer’. For economic performance, supervisors were asked to rate cost consciousness and productivity. For service performance, supervisors were asked to rate customer focus and contribution to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Items were combined into one overall performance scale. Reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) of this scale is .84.

## **Analysis**

Measurement properties were assessed by examining the factor structure underlying the items and the correlations between constructs. The hypotheses were simultaneously tested in a structural model, using maximum likelihood estimation in AMOS (Arbuckle and Wothke, 1999). Each construct was represented by two standardized composite indicators, except for the empowerment construct where the four empowerment dimensions (meaningfulness, competence, self determination and impact) were used as separate indicators. Using SEM has several advantages. First, it provides a systematic basis for evaluating the ‘fit’ of the hypothesized model to data based on a  $\chi^2$ -statistic, incremental fit indices (e.g. nonnormed-fit-index, comparative fit index) and other indicators of absolute fit including Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (MacCallum & Austin, 2000). Second, it provides control over measurement error that can constitute over 50 percent of the observed variance and often introduces substantial bias in estimated effects and hypothesis testing (Ping, 2001).

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), a variable functions as a mediator when it meets the following conditions: (a) variations in levels of the independent variable

significantly account for variations in the presumed mediator, (b) variations in the mediator significantly account for variations in the dependent variable, and (c) when controlling for the relationships between the independent variable and the mediator and for the relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable, a previously significant relation between the independent and dependent variables is no longer significant, with the strongest demonstration of mediation occurring when this path is zero (Baron & Kenny, 1986: 1176).

They further propose that, to test for mediator, one should estimate the three following regression equations: first, regressing the mediator on the independent variable; second, regressing the dependent variable on the independent variable; and third, regressing the dependent variable on both the independent variable and on the mediator. Separate coefficients for each equation should be estimated and tested (Baron & Kenny, 1986: 1177). We followed their recommendations in our analyses.

## RESULTS

### Convergent and Discriminant Validity of the Constructs

Table 1 reports the mean scores, standard deviations, reliability and correlations between the key constructs in our model. Because the four empowerment dimensions were used as separate indicators in our structural model, we provide the basis statistics for each empowerment dimension. Table 2 provides the factor structure underlying all items used in this study. The rotated factor solution provides evidence for the convergent and discriminant validity of our constructs. The loadings from each item to its underlying factor are substantial and at least twice as big as the loading on any other factor. Furthermore, Table 1 indicates that correlations between constructs vary from .07 to .64. The highest correlation is between MPS and self determination. This is not surprising because one of the MPS dimensions is autonomy, which is nomologically very similar to self-determination. They are conceptually different however as the autonomy dimension of the MPS reflects the degree of autonomy that is provided in a job (structural level), while self-determination reflects a cognitive state (psychological level).

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Insert Table 2 About Here

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### Structural relationships between constructs

In accordance to Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure to test mediating effects, we first assessed a structural model with direct relationships between MPS and our outcome variables. In terms of overall fit, Table 3 reveals the following fit statistics:  $\chi^2 = 37,69$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $GFI = .99$ ,  $NFI = .99$ ,  $NNFI = .99$ ,  $CFI = .99$ ,  $SRMR = .03$ ,  $RMSEA = .04$  (90% CI = .02 to .05).

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Insert Table 3 About Here

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The relative fit indicators exceed .99 and the absolute fit indicators suggest that the residuals are small ( $< .04$ ) and tightly distributed (cf. 90 % confidence interval of RMSEA = .02 to .05). Consistent with this, the parsimony fit indicator, NNFI, exceeds .99, indicating that the model has adequate over-identifying restrictions for parsimony. Based on these statistics, we conclude that our model provides an adequate fit to the data. Table 3 further reveals that MPS is positively and significantly related to employee job satisfaction ( $B = .18$ ,  $p < .001$ ), affective commitment ( $B = .20$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and supervisor rated performance levels ( $B = .27$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, it is useful to further examine the mediating role of psychological empowerment. The results of the mediation model are presented in Table 4.

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Insert Table 4 About Here

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The fit statistics ( $\chi^2 = 239,62$ ,  $df = 46$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $GFI = .97$ ,  $NFI = .94$ ,  $NNFI = .93$ ,  $CFI = .95$ ,  $SRMR = .05$ ,  $RMSEA = .06$  (90% CI = .05 to .07) indicate that the model provides an adequate fit to the data. The regression weights show that MPS is positively related to psychological empowerment ( $B = .29$ ,  $p > .001$ ). This finding provides support for Hypothesis 1. Furthermore, we find that employee empowerment is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction ( $B = .43$ ,  $p > .001$ ), affective commitment ( $B = .68$ ,  $p > .001$ ) and supervisor rated performance levels ( $B = .49$ ,  $p > .001$ ). This provides support for Hypothesis 2, Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4. Table 4 also shows that the direct relationships between MPS and our outcome variables are not significant when the mediating relationships through psychological empowerment are included. This indicates that psychological empowerment is fully mediating the relationship between MPS and employee job satisfaction, affective commitment and performance levels. Baron & Kenny (1986) suggest that this is strong evidence for a single, dominant mediator.

## DISCUSSION

While a considerable amount of investigations have focused on work context antecedents to psychological empowerment at various levels (organizational, team and individual), very few studies have sought for empirical evidence on the antecedent role of job characteristics (for a notable exception, see Liden et al., 2000). This is surprising as much of the argumentation used in the empowerment literature draws to a smaller or larger extent on Hackman and Oldham's (1976, 1980) job characteristics model. The aim of this paper was therefore to explore the relationship between job motivating potential and employee empowerment and to propose and empirically test a model in which employee empowerment mediates the relationship between job motivating potential and employee attitudes and performance levels. Our results provide compelling support for the above mentioned mediation hypothesis, indicating that job characteristics are important in explaining employee job satisfaction, affective commitment and performance levels. Furthermore, our results indicate that these beneficial effects stem from increased levels of employee empowerment.

In the literature on how to create empowering workplaces, the high-involvement model (Lawler, 1986; 1992) has taken a dominant position. In this approach, transmission of extensive information, resources, and power throughout an organization is emphasized to enable employees to influence decision making (Lawler, 1992). Specific practices that exemplify a high involvement system include shared decision-making, performance based pay, open flow of information and extensive leadership development and training. While this perspective has been beneficial in facilitating managerial action to boost empowerment at work, it also has its limitations because of its organizationally-centric perspective and its focus on decision-making prerogatives to empowerment. Considering empowerment at the individual level and defining it as increased intrinsic task motivation (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990), we believe it is fruitful to reconsider job design options to empower employees, rather than limiting the focus to decision-making prerogatives to empowerment. JCM is a useful model in this respect because it considers, next to autonomy, two other important empowerment precursors, namely job meaningfulness and feedback. Such a perspective opens up possibilities to explore alternative paths to create an empowered workforce and might help in developing more balanced organizational empowerment programs.

Though this study indicates the usefulness of job design approaches to empower frontline employees, further research is clearly needed.

One fruitful avenue for further research is a closer examination of possible contingencies that might influence the usefulness of empowerment through job redesign. Bowen and Lawler (1992) argued that empowerment might be beneficial in some contexts, while the benefits may not extend the costs in other. They proposed that basic business strategy, the tie to customers, used technology, the business environment and finally management's maturity into people management issues and characteristics of employees themselves (such as growth need and interpersonal skills level) are important contingencies that should be taken into account. Further research that empirically backbones these claims is however needed. Future research could also investigate the job redesign implementation process and its implications towards the design and features of other HR-systems.

This might shed some further light on why many organizations (and especially HRM departments) seem to be hesitating to initiate job redensing initiatives. Possible reasons might be the quite substantial nature of such change processess, uncertainties about the changing role of supervisors and managers in empowered organizations and the complexity of getting alignment with other HR-systems (such as performance management and reward management). Another reason might be that practitioners are not convinced about the benefits of job redesign initiatives, especially when taking into account the complexities mentioned above.

### **Study limitations**

As with all studies, ours has several limitations. First, because of the cross-sectional nature of our study, common-method variance may have biased the validity of the structural relationships. Therefore, we used a second data-source, supervisor ratings, to capture individual employee effectiveness levels. Second, cross-sectional research designs do not allow to empirically test causal relationships. Therefore, future studies could use longitudinal or field experimental designs to provide a more rigorous test of the proposed causal relationships. A third important limitation is that data for our empirical test were provided by frontline service employees and supervisors from four Western-European service companies. Consequently, more research in distinct employee samples (e.g. non front line jobs) and other business contexts is needed to check the generalizability of our findings.



## **Managerial implications**

This study provides sound evidence that job characteristics are important in explaining frontline employee job satisfaction, affective commitment and performance levels. Furthermore, it is shown that in order to increase employee levels of psychological empowerment, the design of work has to be aimed at increasing: (1) skill variety, (2) task identity, (3) task significance, (4) autonomy and (5) feedback. Hackman and others distinguish five basic strategies for designing jobs to increase the motivating potential of employees (Hackman, Oldham, Janson, & Purdy, 1975; Tosi, Rizzo, & Carrol, 1994; Treven & Kajzer, 1999). First, they argue that small tasks could be combined into larger, more complex tasks, so that skill variety and task identity increases. Second, they propose to group tasks into units so that as much of the work as possible can be performed in the same unit. This should lead to a sense of ownership of the job, increasing task identity and task significance. Third, they argue that establishing links between employees and customers could strengthen the feedback cycle. Fourth, jobs could be enriched by vertical loading, such as, adding responsibilities from higher organizational levels. Such a redistribution of decision power could increase employees' responsibility for work as well as perceived job autonomy. Finally, they argue for opening feedback channels, by continuously assessing performance and by regularly reporting about the quality of performance.

Employee motivation is of critical importance in today's competitive work environment because a motivated workforce helps to give a company a sustained competitive advantage (Pfeffer, 1998). In this study, we show that empowering employees through job (re)design is a valuable option to increase frontline employee job satisfaction, commitment and performance levels. Evidence is provided indicating that employee psychological empowerment can be enhanced through job design interventions that increase skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback.

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**TABLE 1****Means, standard deviations and correlations among constructs<sup>a</sup>.**

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Motivating potential score	52.96	19.49	.69 <sup>b</sup>							
2. Meaning	4.07	.67	.41 <sup>c</sup>	.71						
3. Competence	4.05	.56	.34	.33	.78					
4. Self determination	3.62	.78	.64	.29	.32	.87				
5. Impact	3.02	.82	.39	.24	.25	.40	.91			
6. Satisfaction	3.51	.55	.35	.28	.07	.27	.23	.68		
7. Affective Commitment	3.45	.64	.29	.41	.17	.27	.18	.54	.87	
8. Performance	4.59	1.07	.23	.18	.12	.21	.24	.11	.11	.84

<sup>a</sup> =  $N = 1127$ . Construct mean and standard deviation based on average mean and standard deviation of observed items' raw score per construct

<sup>b</sup> = Entries on the diagonal are Cronbach's alphas.

<sup>c</sup> = Correlations  $> .06$ ,  $p < .05$ ; correlations  $> .09$ ,  $p < .01$ ; correlations  $> .10$ ,  $p < .001$

**TABLE 2**

**Factor structure**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
mps1								,655
mps2								,766
pemp1						,859		
pemp2					,847			
pemp3				,795				
pemp4			,870					
pemp5						,794		
pemp6					,892			
pemp7				,797				
pemp8			,910					
pemp9						,589		
pemp10					,450	,138		
pemp11				,918				
pemp12			,832					
js2	-,123						,367	,130
js3	-,127						,439	,121
js4	,252					-,101	,601	
js5	,232					-,102	,670	
js6						,109	,339	
js7					-,141	,140	,512	
oc1	,604						-,150	
oc2	,813							
oc3	,439							
oc4	,688							
oc5	,869							
oc6	,782							
oc7	,630						,126	
oc8	,727						-,124	
lep1		,527						
lep2		,694						
lsp1		,898						
lsp2		,915						

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.  
Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

**TABLE 3****Estimated parameters and fit statistics for the direct effects model**

<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>Dependent Variable</b>					
	Job satisfaction		Affective commitment		Performance	
	B (S.E.)	t-value	B (S.E.)	t-value	B (S.E.)	t-value
Job Motivating potential	<b>.18 (.05)</b>	<b>3.60***</b>	<b>.20 (.04)</b>	<b>5.00***</b>	<b>.27 (.05)</b>	<b>5.40***</b>
	$R^2 = .08$		$R^2 = .06$		$R^2 = .06$	

\*\*\* =  $p \leq .001$  (critical t-value one-tailed = 2.58)  
 Fit:  $\chi^2=37.69$ ,  $df = 16$  ( $p < 0.01$ ), NFI = 0.99, NNFI = 0.99, CFI = 0.99, SRMR = 0.03, RMSEA = 0.04 (90 % CI = 0.02 to 0.05).



**TABLE 4**

**Estimated parameters and fit statistics for the mediation model**

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable							
	Psychological empowerment		Job satisfaction		Affective commitment		Performance	
	B (S.E.)	t-value	B (S.E.)	t-value	B (S.E.)	t-value	B (S.E.)	t-value
Job Motivating potential	<b>.29 (.04)</b>	<b>7.25***</b>	.05 (.03)	1.67	.00 (.04)	0.00	.08 (.05)	1.60
Psychological empowerment	---		<b>.43 (.06)</b>	<b>7.17***</b>	<b>.68 (.07)</b>	<b>9.71***</b>	<b>.49 (.08)</b>	<b>6.13***</b>
	$R^2 = .19$		$R^2 = .21$		$R^2 = .26$		$R^2 = .15$	

\*\*\* =  $p \leq .001$  (critical t-value one-tailed = 2.58)  
 \*\* =  $p \leq .01$  (critical t-value one-tailed = 2.33)  
 \* =  $p \leq .05$  (critical t-value one-tailed = 1.65)  
 Fit:  $\chi^2=239.62$ ,  $df = 46$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), NFI = 0.94, NNFI = 0.93, CFI = 0.95, SRMR = 0.05, RMSEA = 0.06 (90 % CI = 0.05 to 0.07).

**FIGURE 1**

**Conceptual model and hypothesized relationships**

