


Chapter 15

Empowered to Innovate: Exploring How Psychological Empowerment Drives Creativity at Dhofar Municipality

Moaz Nagib Gharib

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7794-7900>

Dhofar University, Oman

Mohammed Alkathiri

Dhofar University, Oman

Mohammed Alsatouf

Aleppo University, Saudi Arabia

ABSTRACT

The study aims to assess the impact of psychological empowerment on the creative behavior of employees in Dhofar Municipality in the Sultanate of Oman and also to evaluate the levels of psychological empowerment dimensions meaning, competence, impact, autonomy, and creative behavior present in Dhofar municipality. An electronic questionnaire was employed to measure these variables from a random sample of 304 employees. The descriptive analytical approach was utilized to test the hypotheses, using the statistical analysis program SPSS. Based on the sampled participants' perspectives, the findings indicated that high levels of psychological empowerment and innovative behavior exist within Dhofar Municipality. Additionally, the results revealed that meaning, competence, and impact exert positive and significant effects on innovative behavior. The study's key recommendations emphasized the importance of psychological empowerment within the municipality by fostering a culture of creativity, enhancing efficiency, and encouraging employees to engage in creative problem-solving.

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INTRODUCTION

Psychological empowerment is one of the factors that organizations care about in relation to their human resources, as employees are considered the most important reason for the success and excellence of organizations. Rooted in social cognitive theory and popularized by Spreitzer's (1995) seminal work, the concept posits that employees thrive when granted autonomy, meaningful work, and confidence in their abilities. Empirical studies consistently link psychological empowerment to heightened motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational performance (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Al-Nawajha, 2016). Psychological empowerment is of utmost importance because it directly affects employee motivation, job satisfaction, and overall organizational effectiveness (Shousha, 2011). Recent work by Lee & Lee (2023) underscores how digital tools, such as AI-driven feedback systems, amplify empowerment by fostering real-time skill development and autonomy in hybrid work environments. However, practical challenges persist: organizations often conflate structural empowerment (e.g., delegating authority) with its psychological counterpart, overlooking the intrinsic mindset shifts required for sustainable empowerment. While Western contexts dominate the literature (e.g., Gong et al., 2009), studies in Arab settings remain scarce, often conflating administrative and psychological empowerment (Abu Al-Haija, 2019). A study conducted by Al-Maskari and others (2022) revealed that in the GCC, collectivist cultures place a unique concentration on relational empowerment—like spreading trust within teams—rather than focusing solely on individual autonomy. This finding challenges the idea that empowerment is a one-size-fits-all concept. Additionally, psychological empowerment plays an important role in helping individuals build self-efficacy and confidence in their skills, which ultimately enhances job performance and supports career advancement, as noted by Al-Anzi (2021).

This chapter aims to fill existing gap by exploring psychological empowerment specifically within Oman's government sector, a setting characterized by both bureaucratic traditions and fast modernization. For policymakers, the findings provide actionable strategies to align Oman's Vision 2040 goals with employee-centric practices. For researchers, the study advances cross-cultural empowerment theories, challenging assumptions about universal applicability. The main question in this chapter is: How does psychological empowerment influence creative behavior among employees in Oman's public sector?

Implementing psychological empowerment often faces systemic obstacles and barriers, especially in hierarchical and risk-averse environments in public sector. For example, a case study focusing on Saudi Arabia's public sector showed that even with structural reforms like decentralized decision-making, employees felt a lack of psychological ownership due to the ongoing dominance of top-down management

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