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The effects of employee empowerment on employee job satisfaction

A study on hotels in Turkey

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Elbeyi Pelit

*School of Tourism and Hotel Management, Afyon Kocatepe University,
Afyonkarahisar, Turkey*

Yüksel Öztürk

Faculty of Tourism, Gazi University, Gölbaşı-Ankara, Turkey, and

Yalçın Arslantürk

*Faculty of Commerce and Tourism Education, Gazi University, Gölbaşı-Ankara,
Turkey*

Abstract

Purpose – The main objective of this study is to determine the impact of employee empowerment on job satisfaction. To serve this purpose, empowerment is taken into consideration as two dimensions – i.e. behavioral and psychological – and the effect of employee empowerment on the level of job satisfaction was examined by taking these two dimensions into consideration as a whole and separately.

Design/methodology/approach – A questionnaire was employed in order to collect data on job satisfaction as well as behavioral and psychological empowerment. The data collected were analyzed through correlation and regression analyses. The study covered 1,854 participants employed at five-star hotels in Turkey.

Findings – The findings suggest that the most positive aspects related to job satisfaction are relations with the colleagues and physical conditions, while the most negative aspect is the wage issue, i.e. unfair payment. Furthermore, correlation and regression analyses indicate that psychological and behavioral empowerment has a significant effect on job satisfaction, and the effect is much greater when psychological and behavioral empowerment are taken as a whole.

Research limitations/implications – The major limitation of this study is that it covers the employees of five-star hotels only. Another important limitation of the study is the exclusion of variables mentioned in the literature. This apart, it is thought that the study will provide some insights for managers in terms of enhancing job satisfaction and the effect of empowerment on job satisfaction as well as making a contribution to the literature.

Originality/value – Studies into the relation between employee empowerment and job satisfaction on the whole focus on only one aspect of empowerment, i.e. either behavioral empowerment or psychological empowerment. This study incorporates behavioral and psychological empowerment together as the components of empowerment, unlike previous studies in the literature, in determining their effect on job satisfaction.

Keywords Employee empowerment, Behavioral empowerment, Psychological empowerment, Job satisfaction, Employees attitudes, Hotels, Turkey

Paper type Research paper



Introduction

Definitions of the nature of empowerment have fallen within a common frame in some aspects. On the other hand, despite a common frame being formed, there is no fully agreed definition of empowerment (Peccei and Rosenthal, 2001; Wilkinson, 1998). The fact that employee empowerment is closely related to management techniques and instruments, such as motivation, job enrichment, communication, trust, participative management, delegation, training and feedback, makes it necessary to examine the concept and its managerial dimension from different perspectives. Authors approaching the construct from the behavior and relationship side, such as Hales and Klidas (1998), define empowerment as sharing knowledge, information and power with subordinates; Cunningham *et al.* (1996) relegate the power to make a decision in a manner that will cover employees without the power to make decisions. Conger and Kanungo (1988) regard empowerment as a motivational concept related to self-efficacy and define empowerment as improving the feeling of self-efficacy of employees. Conger and Kanungo (1988) hold that administrative implementations for empowerment make up only a small portion of empowerment itself, and these implementations will not be enough alone. Thomas and Velthouse (1990) highlight that empowerment cannot be accounted for in only one dimension, and that administrative implementations and the perception of employees should also be taken into consideration. Drawing on the study by Thomas and Velthouse (1990) defining empowerment as “internal motivation that can be explained by four perceptive dimensions, which are sense, competence, choice and impact”, Spreitzer (1995) incorporates these four dimensions in his definition.

Entrepreneurs, managers and researchers in the field of management regard the employee as the major resource bringing competitive advantage to establishments, and they are of the opinion that the involvement and empowerment of employees is key to the success of establishments (Etzioni, 1961; Siegall and Gardner, 2000). When the nature of empowerment is examined, it is observed that empowerment does yield beneficial outcomes. When the constituents of employee empowerment are examined, it is stressed that the construct will yield beneficial results for both employees and employers (Baruch, 1998). Studies conducted on employee empowerment reveal that it gives rise to organizational commitment (Han *et al.*, 2009; Kim, 2002; Sigler and Pearson, 2000; Spreitzer and Mishra, 2002), motivation (Caudron, 1995; Janssen *et al.*, 1997), performance (Çöl, 2008; Locke, 1991; Sigler and Pearson, 2000) and customer satisfaction (Bowen and Lawler, 1992; Chebat and Kollias, 2000). The studies conducted so far have overwhelmingly placed importance on the relationship of psychological and behavioral empowerment with job satisfaction as separate constructs. However, when psychological and behavioral empowerment are treated as a whole, their relationship with job satisfaction will be handled in a more efficient and effective fashion, in that it is thought to be more comprehensive.

Employee empowerment is a wide-ranging activity, and the way that empowerment activities are practiced in accordance with its content brings up a relation between the task performed and the job satisfaction the employees will get. There has been strong emphasis on the relation between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction in previous studies (Aryee and Chen, 2006; Corsun and Enz, 1999; Hechanova *et al.*, 2006; Kuo *et al.*, 2007; Laschinger *et al.*, 2004; Riggs and Knight, 1994; Spreitzer *et al.*, 1997). Regarding behavioral empowerment, another dimension of empowerment, convenient communications, an atmosphere of trust, and motivational tools being provided by

employers lead to a positive impact in creating job satisfaction (Babin and Boles, 1996; Yoon *et al.* 2001).

The studies conducted so far have overwhelmingly placed importance on the relation of psychological and behavioral empowerment with job satisfaction as separate constructs. However, when psychological and behavioral empowerment are treated as a whole, the relationship with job satisfaction will be handled in a more efficient and effective fashion, in that it is thought to be more comprehensive. Taking empowerment as two separate constructs, i.e. behavioral and psychological, will illuminate the relationship between “empowerment” and “job satisfaction” in a more wide-ranging manner. In terms of the managerial aspects, the main objective is the conditions required for empowerment. On the other hand, the perception of the conditions by employees and how employees perceive themselves make up the psychological dimension of the empowerment. Hence, the two dimensions together will elaborate the relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction.

Literature review and research hypotheses

Despite the fact that there have been numerous definitions on the construct of employee empowerment, there has been no full consensus on all sides concerned (Lee and Koh, 2001; Peccei and Rosenthal, 2001). When the literature on employee empowerment is examined, two fundamental approaches can be observed. The first of these is the behavioral dimension (Honold, 1997), dealing with the role of top management in employee empowering. The second is the psychological dimension, encompassing the perception of employees towards the behavior of superiors (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995, 1996; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990) and the conditions prepared for them. However, it is possible to see that some researchers (Appelbaum *et al.*, 1999; Cunningham *et al.*, 1996; Erstad, 1997; Hales and Klidas, 1998; Kanter, 1993; Psoinos *et al.*, 2000; Randolph and Sahkin, 2002) approach the issue from the perspective of the tasks and responsibilities of top management and the actions to be performed by managers. On the other hand, some researchers (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Houston and Cowley, 2002; Lashley and McGoldrick, 1994; Lashley, 1996; Spreitzer, 1995; 1996; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990) focus on how employees perceive the activities of empowerment, not on what top management should do to implement empowerment.

Employee empowerment covers a wide range of activities and the way the empowerment activities are practiced in accordance with its contents that were brought up, it is the relation to the job satisfaction that the employees will get. Employee empowerment is thought to enhance job satisfaction. For example, He *et al.* (2010) show that employee empowerment has positive effects on perceived service quality and job satisfaction. There has been a strong emphasis on the relation between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction in the studies performed (Aryee and Chen, 2006; Kuo *et al.*, 2007; Sahin, 2007; Spreitzer *et al.*, 1997; Wang and Lee, 2009). Behavioral empowerment, convenient communications, an atmosphere of trust, and motivational tools provided by employers lead to a positive impact on job satisfaction (Babin and Boles, 1996; Yoon *et al.*, 2001). Employee empowerment brings decision-makers and employees closer, hence shortening the duration of tasks. Any type of managerial style that can pave the way for developing the feeling of self-efficacy will yield employee empowerment. Empowered individuals will have a

more active role in the organization, will take on initiatives, and their participation in the activities of the organization will be enhanced.

The fact that empowerment is of great importance and benefit to establishments is the focus of the studies in the field (Baruch, 1998; Chang and Liu, 2008; Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Erstad, 1997; Gill *et al.*, 2010; Laschinger *et al.*, 1997, 2001; Quinn and Spreitzer, 1997; Spreitzer, 1995; Wang and Lee, 2009). When this is taken within the perspective of hotel establishments, it might be held that the importance of empowerment becomes two-fold, in that hotels offer services and, as is well known, production and consumption occur simultaneously and problems necessitate on-the-spot solutions to promote customer and job satisfaction (He *et al.*, 2010).

A number of studies (Arvey *et al.*, 1989; Ezzedeen, 2003; Griffin, 2001; Gu and Siu, 2009; Gunlu *et al.*, 2010; Kuşlivan and Kuşlivan, 2005; McCain *et al.*, 2010; Oshagbemi, 2000; Ryu *et al.*, 2010; Spector, 1997; Tepeci and Bartlett, 2002) found that there are a number of factors affecting job satisfaction related to the establishment, such as employment status (permanent, temporary), duration of employment, location of the establishment, content of the work (the work itself, its nature), employment position, opportunities to sharpen skills, the routine of the work, wages, promotion opportunities, opportunity for self-development, managerial style of superiors, relations with colleagues, benefits, job security, physical conditions, shifts, job-family adaptation, organizational support, participation in the decision-making process, organizational culture, organizational climate, job orientation, employee empowerment, understaffing and job-employee adaptation, as well as such demographic factors as age, gender, marital status, and level of education. Moreover, authors have underlined the fact that evidence on which factors count more in job satisfaction is scant. Measuring job satisfaction provides feedback in terms of diagnosing potential problems as well as productivity issues (Flores and Rodriguez, 2008). New findings along with the new implementations make it necessary for management to employ them in order to be effective and efficient. The effects and extension of new findings and their managerial implications as well as perceptions of managers by employees will yield clues to the operational use of new findings and implementations.

Studies into psychological empowerment (Hechanova *et al.*, 2006; Dewettinck and Van Amejide, 2007; Laschinger *et al.*, 2004; Spreitzer, 1995, 1996; Spreitzer *et al.*, 1997) pay particular attention to job satisfaction. What is more, studies of behavioral empowerment (Hardy and O'Sullivan, 1998; Sağlam, 2003) and psychological empowerment (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Çöl, 2008; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990) bring the question of the level of impact of behavioral and psychological empowerment on job satisfaction to the surface. In this perspective, two hypotheses were developed:

- H1. The behavioral empowerment activities implemented in hotel establishments affect the job satisfaction of employees positively.
- H2. The psychological empowerment activities implemented in hotel establishments affect the job satisfaction of employees positively.

On the other hand, in the literature, studies thus far have focused on either the psychological dimension or the behavioral dimension of employee empowerment rather than focusing on both dimensions and their relations to job satisfaction.

However, an approach towards taking behavioral and psychological dimension together as a whole will contribute more to explaining the relations between “empowerment” and “job satisfaction”. When the concept of administrative implementations is dealt with, the administration attempts to provide the conditions necessary for empowerment. However, this alone is not enough, and the perception of the employees regarding managerial implementations is of great significance, which makes up the psychological aspect of empowerment (Baker *et al.*, 2007; Bolat, 2003; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). In order to perform a comprehensive examination and analysis on the relation between empowerment and job satisfaction, the concept of empowerment should be dealt with encompassing both psychological and behavioral dimensions. Therefore, the two dimensions of empowerment should be taken into consideration in determining the relationship with job satisfaction. Thus, the third hypothesis of the study is:

- H3.* A collective implementation of psychological and behavioral empowerment activities in hotel establishments affects the job satisfaction of employees at a higher level than behavioral and psychological empowerment taken individually.

Methodology

The population of this study consists of the employees of five-star hotels in Turkey. Due to the facts that hotels in Turkey are spread over a vast geographical area and that the number of employees in these establishments is very high, a sample group was chosen. It is likely that access to all the potential participants would have caused problems, and time and cost constraints would have proved prohibitive. Stratified and cluster sampling methods were used together; first, the population was stratified as city and resort hotels, and then the cities where the hotels are located were taken as clusters. In the process of clustering the cities, we paid special attention to choosing hotels from cities with a relatively greater number of five-star hotels in both strata (i.e. city and resort). Hotels from four cities were chosen: the hotels in Antalya and Muğla were chosen both because they are among the most active resort towns in terms of tourism activities and because they are among the cities with the largest number of five-star hotels. The other two cities, Ankara and Istanbul, were chosen because they are among the most important cities in Turkey in terms of city hotel establishments. All these factors were considered and the study was conducted primarily on employees working in five-star hotels in these cities and also on the employees working in hotels run in other cities as much as possible. One thousand, one hundred and seventeen out of 1175 questionnaires were received back from resort hotels, whereas 764 out of 825 questionnaires were received back from city hotels. From all the questionnaires distributed, only 1,854 questionnaires – 1,098 from resort hotels and 756 from city hotels – were included in the analysis. The remaining questionnaires were excluded for reasons such as incomplete data and coding and so on.

In order to find out the managerial empowerment activities (behavioral empowerment) the empowerment scale developed by Niehoff *et al.* (2001) was used. In addition, a questionnaire with 27 statements was formed, referring to the empowerment scales used in the studies in the literature (Cacioppe, 1998; Dobbs, 1993; Kanter, 1993; King and Ehrhard, 1996; Laschinger *et al.*, 2004; Spreitzer, 1995, 1996) and also referring to the information provided in the related literature. The

questionnaire included statements about the distribution of information and resources, authority and responsibility, participation, reliability and employee support, job enrichment, motivation, communication, teamwork, training, learning, rewarding and feedback. The construct validity of the questionnaire has been tested because the questionnaire is made up of the statements used in other studies in the literature. For that reason, to identify the employees' perceptions of psychological empowerment, Spreitzer's (1995, 1996), "psychological empowerment perception" inventory was used. The inventory for psychological empowerment has 12 statements, consisting of three statements for each dimension and covering titles such as value, sufficiency, choice-free will and influence. The questionnaires were designed in accordance with five-point Likert scales.

The scale used to measure the job satisfaction levels of the employees is the employee job satisfaction scale developed by Weiss *et al.* (1967), with 20 dimensions measuring job satisfaction. The scale, known as the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), includes more comprehensive dimensions in comparison with other job satisfaction scales (Blake *et al.*, 2004; Hancer and George, 2003; Herrera and Lim, 2003; Irving *et al.*, 1997; Nysted *et al.*, 1999). The scale was designed in a way to identify the extent to which the employees are satisfied with the present conditions of the hotel on a five-point Likert scale.

The correlation between the variables in the study was examined through Bartlett's test and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) adequacy test. Within this frame, the p value of Bartlett's test is 0.002 ($p < 0.05$). Moreover, the KMO value, an indicator of the sample adequacy, is calculated to be 0.83. These values show that the scales employed in the study are appropriate for the factor analysis. The factor analysis of the job satisfaction scale explains 73.18 percent of the total variance. The two factors (dimensions) related to empowerment, in which 39 statements are included, explain the 79.32 percent of the total variance. The variance of the dimension of behavioral empowerment has the highest explanatory percentage with 47.65 percent, while it is 31.67 percent for psychological empowerment. The factor loadings of the statements for behavioral empowerment used in other studies in the literature are above the critical level of 0.40 (Harman, 1967; Ural and Kılıç, 2006) and range from 0.585 to 0.714. The Cronbach' α coefficients are 0.95, 0.86, and 0.91 the for behavioral empowerment scale, psychological empowerment scale and job satisfaction scale, respectively.

Results

Of 1,854 employees, 59.2 percent were male and 40.8% were female. Looking at their educational background, 10.8 percent graduated from secondary school, 43.7 percent graduated from high school, 24.9 percent have an associate degree, 18.8 percent have an undergraduate degree and 1.8 percent have a graduate degree. Regarding the duration of their employment in the tourism sector, 20.2 percent of the employees had been employed in the tourism sector for two or fewer years, 37.4 percent for 3-5 years, 26.2 percent for 6-8 years, 12.1 percent for 9-11 years, and 4.4 percent for 12 years and/or more.

In the study, the percentage-frequency and arithmetic mean of the perceptions of the employees were estimated and interpreted for each statement in the questionnaire regarding their behavioral and psychological empowerment perceptions and job satisfaction levels, which paved the way for a detailed analysis for each statement in

the scales under consideration. “To be able to communicate with the managers anytime they want”, “To be assured that special attention is paid to providing the necessary physical resources”, “To be encouraged in teamwork and to be supported by the manager in problem solving processes” are among the points the employees reported as having the lowest level. It was found that the topics that the respondents rated as negative generally centered on being assigned responsibility and autonomy. When statements regarding the behavioral dimension of empowerment are considered, it can be said that these practices generally have their roots in management policy on the part of the manager.

On the other hand, the point with the lowest score regarding employees’ perceptions of the psychological empowerment was that their decisions on the task they undertake were not taken seriously; this is likely to stem from managerial and administrative policies and decisions. When we consider that empowerment is not all about providing employees with opportunities but also about supporting employees to internalize and consider empowerment in all dimensions, we can clearly conclude that managers should undertake activities to improve and increase the perception levels of the employees. In this respect, it can be suggested that managers should attach more importance and priority to in-service training and feedback, particularly. Also, 78.4 percent of respondents stated that they were not content with their salary.

It was also found that employees are not content with some other issues, such as the freedom to take initiative for the tasks they undertake, the chance to work individually (on their own), to assign tasks to co-workers, the firm’s policy and its implementation, promotion opportunities and the opportunity to be able to undertake different tasks. These results reveal that employees are not satisfied with the policies of the establishment due to the fact that they do not have enough say in decision making processes and they are not allowed to work individually. Employees stated that they are deprived of the opportunity to undertake different tasks, and this might lead to the possibility that the job becomes monotonous and causes boredom and dissatisfaction for employees. All of this highlights that managers should enforce implementations such as job enrichment and/or rotation, which are also a significant part of empowerment.

The correlation between the job satisfaction levels of the employees and their perceptions of behavioral empowerment, psychological empowerment and overall perceptions of empowerment was found through simple correlation analysis, and then the Pearson correlation coefficient between each variable was estimated. In addition to the simple correlation analysis between job satisfaction and empowerment and its sub dimensions, the determination coefficient (R^2) was found in order to estimate the change in dependent variable (job satisfaction) by independent variables (psychological and behavioral empowerment). Moreover, simple regression was applied in order to analyze the relation between empowerment and job satisfaction, and between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. On the other hand, in order to analyze the relation between general empowerment (behavioral and psychological) and job satisfaction, multiple linear regression was applied. Here, behavioral empowerment and psychological empowerment were taken as independent variables and the effect of these variables on the dependent variable was investigated. Whether the linear regression models in the study were significant or not was tested through a variance analysis. The significance of regression models, whether it as a whole or

based on coefficients, indicates that the correlation between the variables can be explained by “linear regression models”. The comparisons in the analyses of correlation and regression were not performed in terms of each statement, but were performed through the averages of all the statements (20 for job satisfaction, 27 for behavioral empowerment, and 12 for psychological empowerment in the scale used).

Table I reports the results of the correlation analysis between employee empowerment and employee job satisfaction. In this analysis, job satisfaction was taken as the dependent variable and empowerment and its sub-dimensions (behavioral-psychological) as independent variables.

According to the findings in Table I, a significant correlation at 0.001 significance level was found between empowerment and its sub dimensions and job satisfaction levels. In other words, the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between job satisfaction and empowerment and its sub dimensions is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Also, it can be observed from Table I that there is a positive, moderate level ($r = 0.44$) of correlation between employee job satisfaction and psychological empowerment, whereas there is a positive high level of correlation ($0.60 < r < 0.80$) between employee job satisfaction and empowerment in general ($r = 0.76$) and behavioral empowerment ($r = 0.72$). When the determination coefficients (R^2) in Table I are analyzed, it can be seen that 19 percent of the total variance in job satisfaction results from psychological empowerment and 52 percent results from behavioral empowerment. The determination coefficient estimated for empowerment in general was found to be 0.570. It can be said, in other words, 57% of the total variance in job satisfaction stems from empowerment in general.

These coefficients also affected the correlation coefficients between the dependent variable (i.e. job satisfaction) and the independent variables (i.e. empowerment and its sub-dimensions). In Table I, the highest level of correlation between employee job satisfaction and empowerment, along with its sub dimensions were found to be between job satisfaction and empowerment in general ($r = 0.75$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.001$) and it is followed by the correlation between job satisfaction and behavioral empowerment ($r = 0.72$). The correlation between job satisfaction and psychological empowerment ($r = 0.44$), on the other hand, is lower when compared to the above-mentioned variables (empowerment in general and behavioral empowerment), as can also be seen in Table I.

According to the results, we can conclude that the most significant factor in employee empowerment and job satisfaction is empowerment in general, consisting of

Variables	Pearson correlation coefficient	Job satisfaction	Determination coefficient (R^2)
Behavioral empowerment	r	0.720	0.519
	p	0.000***	
Psychological empowerment	r	0.438	0.192
	p	0.000***	
Empowerment in general	r	0.755	0.570
	p	0.000***	

Note: *** $p < 0.001$

Table I.
The correlation matrices regarding the correlation between job satisfaction and empowerment and its sub-dimensions ($n = 1,854$)

both the behavioral and psychological dimensions of empowerment. The results can be interpreted as follows: both behavioral and psychological empowerment implementations in an establishment enhance employee job satisfaction, and when the empowerment activities are performed in such a way as to cover both dimensions of empowerment (behavioral and psychological), the increase in employee job satisfaction becomes more remarkable. However, it should be noted that the correlation analysis employed in the study does not allow us to conduct a cause-effect analysis. It can only provide some insights into how the variables change, and in what direction they change. The results of the simple regression analysis are reported in Tables II and III.

The results suggest that the regression models are significant, and the determination coefficients are $R^2 = 0.519$ and $R^2 = 0.192$, respectively. These results indicate that behavioral empowerment has more predictive power in explaining job satisfaction more than psychological empowerment. The results reported in Table IV support the findings in Tables II and III.

According to the findings in Table IV, the multiple linear regression analysis between the employees' perception levels of employee job satisfaction and behavioral and psychological empowerment was found to be significant ($F = 1,026.44$; $p < 0.001$), which indicates that at least one regression coefficient, obtained from the multiple linear regression model, is different from 0, which is a clear sign of the fact

Table II.

Simple linear regression analysis regarding the correlation between job satisfaction and behavioral empowerment ($n = 1,854$)

Independent variables	β_j	$S(b_j)$	t	p	R^2	Significance
Constant	0.995	0.059	16.995	0.000***	0.519	$F = 1,994.513$ $p = 0.000$
Behavioral empowerment	0.690	0.015	44.660	0.000***		

Notes: Job satisfaction = $0.995 + 0.690$ (behavioral empowerment); *** $p < 0.001$

Table III.

The simple linear regression analysis regarding the correlation between job satisfaction and psychological empowerment ($n = 1,854$)

Independent variables	β_j	$S(b_j)$	t	p	R^2	Significance
Constant	1.818	0.085	21.059	0.000***	0.192	$F = 439.724$ $p = 0.000$
Psychological empowerment	0.450	0.021	20.970	0.000***		

Notes: Job satisfaction = $1.818 + 0.450$ (psychological empowerment); *** $p < 0.001$

Table IV.

The multiple linear regression analysis regarding the correlation between job satisfaction and behavioral and psychological empowerment ($n = 1,854$)

Independent variables	β_j	$S(b_j)$	t	p	R^2	Significance
Constant	0.778	0.071	10.977	0.000***	0.526	$F = 1,026.439$ $p = 0.000$
Behavioral empowerment	0.642	0.018	36.108	0.000***		
Psychological empowerment	0.102	0.019	5.350	0.000***		

Notes: Job satisfaction = $0.778 + 0.642$ (behavioral empowerment) + 0.102 (psychological empowerment); *** $p < 0.001$

that there is a correlation between the variables. Therefore, these results indicate that there is a correlation between the dependent variable (i.e. employee job satisfaction) and the independent variables (i.e. behavioral and psychological empowerment). When the multiple determination coefficient ($R^2 = 0.526$), reported in Table IV, is considered, it can be concluded that 52.6 percent of the total variance in job satisfaction stems from the independent variables (behavioral empowerment and psychological empowerment). In other words, the effect of the independent variables (i.e. behavioral empowerment and psychological empowerment) on the dependent variable (i.e. job satisfaction) is 52.6 percent.

Also, it can be seen from Figure 1 that empowerment as a whole (psychological and behavioral) has a greater effect on employee job satisfaction. As a matter of fact, this can be suggested as the verification of what we have been emphasizing throughout the study, in contrast to previous studies. Taking empowerment as a whole (psychological and behavioral) and enforcing activities and implementations within this framework is thought to have a greater effect on job satisfaction.

Conclusion and implications

In this study, which aimed to determine the effect of employee empowerment on job satisfaction of employees, the majority of the employees surveyed reported that they were not satisfied with the salary they received from hotel businesses. Similarly, there are many other studies (Bilgiç, 1998; Oshagbemi, 2000; Spector, 1997; Tepeci and Bartlett, 2002) to arrive at the conclusion that employees working in the tourism sector are not satisfied with their salaries. It is a clear fact that employee dissatisfaction is closely related to the payment policies of the establishment. Still, in a service industry, hotels should make enough efforts to ensure alternating (overwork payment, rewarding etc.) and fair payment systems are in place, since job satisfaction is not all about providing feasible tasks, physical conditions and social facilities, but is also directly related to factors enabling employees to lead a financially reasonable and comfortable life.

Another result arising from the study is that job enrichment and/or rotation practices, which are important components of empowerment, should be given more importance by enterprises. Indeed, these practices as an important component of empowerment will contribute to the morale and motivation of employees and their job satisfaction and organizational devotion and will be reflected positively. Similarly, in

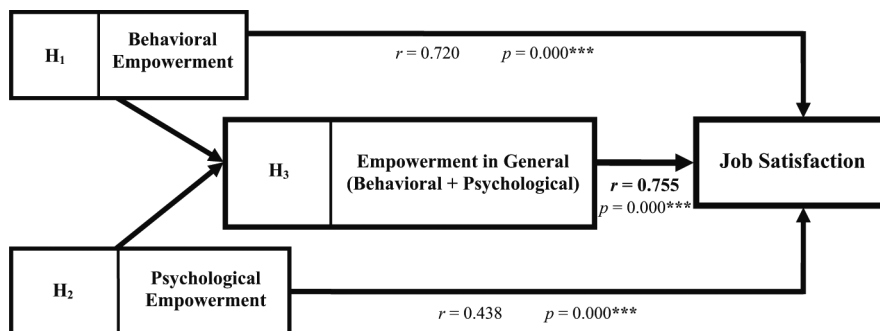


Figure 1.
Findings regarding the
research hypotheses

related studies (Caudron, 1995; Janssen *et al.*, 1997; Kim, 2002; Sigler and Pearson, 2000; Spreitzer and Mishra, 2002), it was concluded that an empowered employee would have a higher level of motivation and organizational commitment as well as job satisfaction.

This study concludes that behavioral and psychological empowerment has a positive effect on the job satisfaction levels of employees. As a result of the correlation analyses conducted to identify the level of this effect, a high positive correlation ($r = 0.720$) was found between behavioral empowerment and job satisfaction. On the other hand, the correlation level between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction (0.438) was found to be average. The correlation level between job satisfaction and empowerment as a whole was found to have a high ($r = 0.755$) positive correlation, similar to the result of the analysis of behavioral empowerment. The correlation level between the variables is also supported by the results of the simple and multiple linear regression analyses for the correlation analyses between empowerment and job satisfaction.

Previous studies about this subject generally focused on either correlating behavioral dimension of empowerment and job satisfaction (Babin and Boles, 1996; Laschinger *et al.*, 1997; Yoon *et al.*, 2001) or correlating psychological dimension of empowerment with job satisfaction (Dewettinck and Van Ameijde, 2007; Kuo *et al.*, 2007; Riggs and Knight, 1994; Spreitzer *et al.*, 1997), rather than analyzing the two dimensions of empowerment (behavioral and psychological) jointly. The results of this study showed that when both dimensions of empowerment are taken as a whole, the effect level of empowerment on employee job satisfaction yields a higher rate, which differentiates this study from the other studies that have been conducted on the subject. Moreover, there is a need for studies conducted in a way that involves both the behavioral and psychological dimensions of empowerment, because studies conducted within this framework will provide a more comprehensive source in terms of putting the related activities into practice. In addition, when we consider the fact that there are a limited number of studies comprising both dimensions of empowerment, it is obvious that studies within this framework will contribute greatly to the related literature and to enterprises as well, and will enable establishments to be more conscious about empowerment implementations and to have a stronger and sounder grounding for empowerment implementations. In this respect, it can also be said that this study will contribute to the literature.

To meet the demands of customers as well as they want and as fast as their demand, is one of the criteria of quality service and the provision of this quality service which is no doubt closely and directly related to certain factors such as the way the service is provided by the employee providing the service, his/her speed, working environment, knowledge, competence and skills, authority in terms of problem solving and so on. Invigorating the conditions in this environment so as to live up to the expectations of employees as well will affect employee job satisfaction positively and will have positive outcomes in terms of customer satisfaction due to the quality of the services provided. Activating implementations intended for employee empowerment will considerably contribute to the establishments by providing competitive advantages especially in sectors where employees and employers face a fierce competition. Quick-mindedness, problem-solving skills and competence in human relations are very important for employees working in the tourism sector, which requires great physical and mental exertion. Therefore, ensuring that employees possess these skills and

competences, which have a great importance for empowerment, and to working on any possible deficiencies (by encouraging participation in in-service training and professional development programs, etc.) will be among the factors affecting the quality of the services provided. In addition to these points, managers should discuss with employees the content and goals of the empowerment activities that are going to be practiced in the department they are responsible for, and they should support and help employees become accustomed to these activities. This is necessary because a detailed and thorough analysis of employees' competences and deficiencies by their managers would provide significant ease and benefits in terms of obtaining the desired outcomes from these empowerment activities.

The willingness of both employees and managers is one of the indispensable factors for managers. When empowered, employees will have the advantage of providing unsatisfied customers with various alternatives by utilizing their creativity and personal skills in quick decision making to respond to the customer as fast as possible (Fisher, 1989). Otherwise, all the opportunities and facilities will not function properly and this would result in a lack of integration and adaptation on the part of employees. Koch and Godden (1997), who significantly criticized and reviewed employee empowerment issues, suggested that in case of the reluctance of the parties involved in the empowerment process, employee empowerment practices would not work as planned and all the efforts towards empowerment would be nothing but a waste of time, money and resources. By considering this, it is essential that managers should design the opportunities/facilities to be provided in accordance with the needs and competences of their employees and should ensure that all employees are actively involved in all these processes. This would provide a lot of benefit in the long run for establishments to consider the opinions and expectations of employees regarding implementation. To be satisfied with the opportunities empowerment will offer and to see that their opinions are considered in the decision making processes will certainly improve the level of employees' job satisfaction (Bowen and Lawler, 1992; Carless, 2004; Chow *et al.*, 2005; Erstad, 1997; Janssen *et al.*, 1997; Seibert *et al.*, 2004;) and organizational commitment (Gunlu *et al.*, 2010; Henkin and Marchiori, 2003; Spreitzer and Mishra, 2002).

The effect of empowerment on the behavior and attitudes clearly signifies the importance of the implementation of this notion in hotel establishments. As a result, it can be suggested that hotel managers should thoroughly analyze the increase caused by empowerment, as suggested in previous studies, in the organizational commitment levels of employees (Henkin and Marchiori, 2003; Kim, 2002; Sigler and Pearson, 2000; Spreitzer and Mishra, 2002;), in their motivation (Caudron, 1995; Dewettinck and Van Ameijde, 2007; Janssen *et al.*, 1997), in their performance (Locke, 1991; Sigler and Pearson, 2000), and in customer satisfaction (Bowen and Lawler, 1992; Chebat and Kollias, 2000). They should also value that empowerment implementations lead to an increase in employee job satisfaction, as revealed by the results of this study, and they should enforce such implementations for the benefit of their establishments. Also, a high rate of turnover in the hospitality sector is among the topics emphasized in previous studies (Bonn and Forbringer, 1992; Iverson and Deery, 1997; Moncarz *et al.*, 2009). In particular, considering the positive effect of job satisfaction on the reduction of turnover (Ongori, 2007; Porter *et al.*, 1974; Tütüncü, 2003), empowerment activities are becoming more important. Both related studies (Kuo *et al.*, 2007; Sahin, 2007; Wang

and Lee, 2009; Yoon *et al.*, 2001) and the results of this survey shows employee empowerment's positive contribution to improving the job satisfaction of employees. From this situation, it can be said that employee empowerment can be used indirectly to reduce employee turnover.

The nature of service delivery necessitates on-the-spot solutions and responsiveness. Empowered employees will be able to use individual skills and initiative to offer on-the-spot solutions and responsiveness, which are thought to enhance service quality. Service quality is definitely concerned with the way services are delivered, job environment, and authority of the employees over specific issues. Empowering the above-mentioned factors in line with the expectations of the employees will be reflected in customer satisfaction as well as job satisfaction.

Since hotel establishments are highly service-oriented, there is face-to-face interaction and hence complaints are made to employees delivering services. This could lead to stress, unease and conflict from the perspective of employees. At this point, the attitude that managers take towards employees is of great importance in terms of motivation and job satisfaction. In particular, customer contact service employees play a boundary-spanning role in the hospitality industry where they interact with many individuals from inside (fellow employees and managers) and outside (guests) their organizations. Since excellent customer service requires employees to be empowered to make many service decisions independently and on the spot, reduced employee desire for empowerment does not favor the interests of hospitality organizations. Therefore, it is important to find strategies that can help to improve employees' desire for empowerment (Gill *et al.*, 2010).

Employee empowerment has a greater importance, especially in the service sector, where the production and provision of the service takes place in the presence of customers and where customer satisfaction is closely related to the quality and presentation of the service. In the service sector, customers understandably desire that their needs and wants are met as quickly as possible. When empowered, the employee will have the advantage of providing the unsatisfied customer with various alternatives by utilizing his/her creativity and personal skills in quick decision-making to respond to customers as fast as possible (Avcı and Karatepe, 2000).

The same thing is valid for tourism establishments, since it may lead to wasted time and, more importantly, customer dissatisfaction when the employee has to wait for the manager to solve a problem. When an employee happens to make statements such as "I'm sorry but it's not me who set this rule", "It's not my fault" or "I have to consult my manager but I can't find him", this is a clear sign regarding the management policies of the establishment. However, if employees are given the power to feel that it is their own business, they will act more responsibly and will do their job more willingly, which will positively affect the job satisfaction level of the employee. The results of this study fully support the above-mentioned views.

Limitations and research avenues

Although this study was conducted in hotel establishments, we can suggest that all establishments, regardless of their field, will undoubtedly obtain more efficient outcomes by considering both the behavioral and psychological dimensions of empowerment, rather than considering empowerment as a single entity. The outcome of this study is supported by the fact that studies conducted regarding this subject

have generally focused on the correlation between one single dimension of empowerment and employee behavior, and that these studies have generally suggested that the approach/dimension employed in the study will positively affect employee job behavior.

This study suggests that both dimensions of empowerment (behavioral and psychological) and the activation of practices in accordance with this will have a greater effect on employee job satisfaction level, especially in hotel establishments. In this respect, we can conclude that this study will contribute to the related literature and to the way employee empowerment activities are practiced in establishments, when managers and researchers intending to conduct research into the subject consider both dimensions of empowerment rather than handling them singly and separately. Such an approach will provide benefits in terms of having a stronger and sounder grounding for both managers and the related literature.

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About the authors

Elbeyi Pelit (PhD) is Assistant Professor at the School of Tourism and Hotel Management, Afyon Kocatepe University, Turkey. His research interests include management and organization in business, human resource management, tourism and hotel management, business ethics and tourism education.

Yüksel Özümk (PhD) is a Professor in the Faculty of Tourism, Gazi University, Turkey. His research interests include tourism marketing, public relations and human resources management. Yüksel Özümk is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: oyuksel@gazi.edu.tr

Yalçın Arslantürk (PhD) is a Lecturer in the Faculty of Commerce and Tourism Education, Gazi University, Turkey (e-mail < arslanturk@gazi.edu.tr >). His research interests include tourism, tourism education, sustainable tourism, human resources management and language.