

ປັບຈັບທີ່ສັບພລຕ່ອຄວາມຖຸນເກີນບານ (Job Involvement)
: ກຣນີຕື່ກໍາຊາບອັບບັນຫຼັກເອຄລ່ອຈົບ ທີ່ເມນຕ່ົວຈຳກັດ

Factors Affecting Job Involvement:
A Case Study of SCG Cement Co. Ltd.

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บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ของการศึกษาครั้งนี้เพื่อวิเคราะห์ความสัมพันธ์เชิงสาเหตุ (model testing) ระหว่างลักษณะผู้นำแบบปฏิรูป (transformational leadership) และลักษณะงาน (job characteristics) กับการเสริมพลังอำนาจใน (psychological empowerment) ซึ่งเป็นตัวแปรกลาง (mediating variable) ที่ส่งผลต่อความทุ่มเทในงาน (job involvement)

ผลการศึกษาพบว่าไม่เดลที่นำเสนอสอดคล้องกับข้อมูลเชิงประจักษ์ สรุปได้ว่า ไม่เดลที่เดนี้มีความสามารถในการวัดได้ดีและยอมรับได้ นอกจากนี้ยังพบว่าลักษณะผู้นำแบบปฏิรูปมีความสัมพันธ์โดยตรงต่อความผูกพันในงานแต่ไม่ส่งผลต่อการเสริมพลังอำนาจใน ลักษณะงานมีความสัมพันธ์โดยตรงต่อการเสริมพลังอำนาจใน แต่ไม่ส่งผลต่อความทุ่มเทในงาน และการเสริมพลังอำนาจในมีความสัมพันธ์โดยตรงต่อความทุ่มเทในงานและเป็นตัวเขี้ยวom (Mediating variable) ระหว่างลักษณะงานและความทุ่มเทในงาน

Abstract

The main objective of this study is to examine the nature of any causal relationship (model testing) between transformational leadership (TFL) and job characteristics (JC) with psychological empowerment (PE) acting as the mediating variable, upon the job involvement (JI). The extent to which the concept of job involvement can be statistically explained by these parameters is also investigated. The result of the analysis found that the hypothesized model did indeed fit well with the empirical data, and this finding was also statistically supported and verified. The significant paths within the model provide support for several, but not all, of the hypotheses proposed in this study. TFL had a significant and direct effect on JI, but not on PE. JC had a significant direct effect on PE but not on JI. Furthermore, PE significantly mediated the relationship between JC and JI and also had a direct statistical effect on JI.

คำสำคัญ : ลักษณะผู้นำแบบปฏิรูป, ลักษณะงาน, การเสริมพลังอำนาจภายใน,
ความทุ่มเทในงาน

Keyword : Transformational leadership, job characteristic, psychological empowerment, job involvement.

Introduction

It was Allport (1943) who was arguably the first person to introduce the concept of job involvement as a key work-related attitude, and one which impacts directly upon the job performance of an employee. Since that time, research interest in this highly relevant concept has intensified and grown, and this is largely due to its potential to impact in a direct, positive and significant manner upon the outcomes of any organization. It is interesting to note that a search of the PsychINFO database carried out by Reeve et al, (2001) showed that there were 1,203 articles between 1968 and 1998 in which job involvement was a major subject heading. In addition to these, there have also been numerous journal and other articles which have considered measures of this key concept to a somewhat lesser extent. It is crucial to thoroughly understand and identify the key antecedents of job involvement. Based on a review of the research and literature into the topic, there are at least three salient factors that have the potential to impact directly or indirectly on job involvement, and these are transformational leadership, job characteristic and psychological empowerment. These

factors raise a series of highly relevant questions. Is it possible, for example, that job involvement could be enhanced if employees perceived a greater degree of psychological empowerment at work. Will they be encouraged to approach and perform their work in a way which exceeds reasonable expectations as a result of transformational leadership, and are they intrinsically motivated by the job characteristic? If they are, does this mean that they can have a direct effect on job involvement or are their effects indirectly mediated by psychological empowerment? These research questions, therefore, will be statistically hypothesized and tested in this study.

Significance of the study

The two foremost and significant contributions of this study are as follows: First an academic contribution. This study contributes to the existing literature because it bridges the gap between contemporary empowerment theory and a well-accepted theory of intrinsic job motivation. The dissertation applies path analysis to explore the factors influencing job involvement, both directly and indirectly. The first path is to investigate the relationship of transformational leadership → psycholo

gical empowerment → job involvement. The second path is to examine the relationship of job characteristic → psychological empowerment → job involvement. Moreover, at the individual level of analysis, by doing so, this research finding will extend existing academic knowledge in the arena of leadership style and job characteristic, and provide an additional mechanism for developing highly motivating job designs, which will have significant practical applications.

Secondly, a practical contribution. Today, more than 70 percent of organizations have adopted some kind of empowerment schemes for at least part of their workforce (Spreitzer, 1995). A Gallop Poll, cited in Robbins (2005, p 170), found that 55% of the employees in the USA have no enthusiasm or motivation for their work, which is a matter of serious concern, as people will obviously perform their best when they are highly motivated. Organizations invest considerable time, effort, and money in initiatives that are designed to gain a better understanding of the factors affecting their performance on a variety of indicators. In the quest to identify which leadership styles work best for organizations, and to determine what will be the most appropriate type of job

design in any given context, a fuller and deeper understanding of these issues is essential.

Literature Review

Theoretical background

Job involvement was initially defined as the degree to which one is actively participating in one's work (Allport, 1943), and this can be enhanced when the value of work becomes part of a worker's self-image (Lodahl and Kejner, 1965 and Lawler and Hall, 1970). Kanungo (1982) stated that when employees psychologically identify with the job that they do, they are more motivated to actively participate in it, as they see their work as important their overall feelings of self-worth Robbins and Judge, (2007, p.73) articulate that highly job involved people are those who are committed to, and actively involved in their work, owing to the feelings of self-esteem that it generates. In a nutshell, employee who has high job involvement is the one who is highly committed to work, strongly believes that work is a core aspect of his/her personal identity and obviously demonstrates that his/her personal goal and work goal are compatible.

Psychological empowerment (PE) has been defined as enhancing employee feelings of self-efficacy by reducing feelings of powerlessness at work (Conger and Kanungo, 1988). Spreitzer (1995) provides a set of psychological states that contribute to feelings of autonomy at work, and these are meaningfulness, competence, self-determination and impact. These will be examined in more detail later in this article. In other words, empowerment at work can produce positive work-related and organizational outcomes. This is because people can be expected to be intrinsically motivated and empowered when they understand the meaningfulness of their job and believe they can perform it competently. Feelings of motivation and empowerment will also arise when employees having more autonomy or self-determination, and know how their work effectively determines the success of their organization.

Transformational leadership (TFL) motivates followers to achieve higher-order needs, and to eventually exceed expectations. It is based on four main behaviors that were identified by Bass and Avolio in 1994. The first of these, idealized influence or charismatic (IC) is how leaders behave as powerful role

models to followers, and it is measured both in behavioral (IC-b) and attributed terms (IC-a). Inspirational Motivation (IM) refers to how leaders motivate and inspire followers by providing them with meaning and challenge in their work, whilst intellectual stimulation (IS) defines leader behaviours that enable followers to become more innovative and creative, by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways. Lastly, individualized consideration (ID) is basically how leaders pay special attention to the needs of each individual for achievement and growth, by acting as a coach or mentor (Bass and Avolio, 1994).

Finally, the 'job characteristic model' (JCM), which was initially proposed by Richard Hackman and Greg Oldham (1976), is based on of five sub-constructs, and first two of these are skill variety (SV), task significance (TS), which are largely self-explanatory. The remaining three are task identity (TI), autonomy (A) and feedback (F). Task identity refers to the extent to which a job is seen as involving a complete, identifiable task, and autonomy is the degree to which a job allows the employee to demonstrate personal initiative in performing their work. The

last sub-construct, feedback, refers to providing employees with information about how they are performing their work. In short, the JCM addresses how a core set of job characteristics impact upon a number of psychological states which promote intrinsic motivation, greater job satisfaction, higher job performance and lower labor turnover.

Hypotheses

The effects of transformational leadership (TFL) on psychological empowerment (PE), and job involvement (JI)

A number of studies have asserted the positive effect of TFL on both at individual, team and organizational levels, such as creating greater alignment around strategic visions and missions, organizational earnings and ROI, organizational performance and reductions in levels of staff turnover. (Antonakis, Avolio and Sivassubramaniam, 2003). Research has consistently revealed the positive impact of TFL on each of the four sub constructs of PE identified earlier. The first of these is 'meaningfulness', and Burns (1978: p 43-44), stated that the essence of TFL is the ability of the leader to identify and define followers' real needs and values so well that they

can be motivated to act more purposefully. Secondly, 'competence' is essentially the employees belief in their ability to perform assigned work activities with the requisite degree of skill (Bandura, 1989). Conger and Kanungo (1998) argued that TFL behaviors can empower followers by raising their self-efficacy belief. In one specific study by Kark et al (2003), it was found the same to be true among bank employees. Transformational leadership also affects the self-determination construct, which involves giving employees the skills and the right to choose the way in which they perform their work. Transformational leaders seek power not for self-aggrandizement, but in order to share it. In so doing, they empower others to take an active role in carrying out the value-based mission or vision, as defined by the leader. In this way, self-determination echoes feelings of autonomy or choice over the initiation and continuation of work behaviors and processes (Bell & Staw, 1989). Fourthly, TFL affects the 'impact' construct, which is essentially the degree to which employees experience a sense of making a difference in accomplishing a task by influencing strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at work, for example Ashforth (1989). Further research (Dvir et al, 2002)

reiterated that TFL incorporates empowering behaviors such as the delegation of responsibility to followers, which encourages them to think on their own, and to generate new and creative ideas. In this way, followers feel that they are making a positive and constructive impact. Finally, TFL has the potential to positively affect work-related attitudes, job satisfaction and overall performance at work (Avolio, Bass, Walumbwa and Zhu, 2004; Walumbwa, Orwa, Wang, Lawler, 2005). A study in Thailand has examined the relationship between TFL and JI, and found them to be positively related (Klansakul, 2004). Transformational leaders motivate subordinates to do more than originally expected by raising their awareness of the importance of achieving certain outcomes, as well as ways of attaining them. In so doing, leaders encourage and enable followers to subordinate their own immediate self-interest for the sake of the mission and vision of the organization. It is reasonable, therefore, to present the first set of hypotheses of this study as follows:

Hypothesis 1a : There is a direct and positive association between transformational leadership (TFL) and psychological empowerment (PE)

Hypothesis 1b : There is a direct and positive association between transformational leadership (TFL) and job involvement (JI)

The effects of job characteristic (JC) on psychological empowerment (PE) and job involvement (JI)

Hackman and Oldham (1976) originally proposed their Job Characteristics Theory as a three-stage model, in which a set of core job characteristics impact a set of critical psychological states consisting of experienced meaningfulness, responsibility and knowledge of result which, in turn, influence a number of positive outcomes such as growth satisfaction and motivation. When JC is linked to the four dimensions of PE, it has been found that job meaningfulness was related to the experience of meaning; job autonomy was related to self- determination, and task feedback was related to greater feelings of competence and impact (Kraimer et al., 1999). Furthermore, when employees are required to perform a greater variety of tasks, there are significant improvements in job satisfaction, involvement, organizational commitment and employee turnover (Guimaraes, 1996).

Research in a leading Thai hospital has also found that JC has a significant and positive correlation with PE (Taweevatthanakijborworn, 2005). This relationship can perhaps best be explained with reference to the 'two-factor theory of motivation (Herzberg et al, 1959), which argues that motivation arises from the job content itself and this results in an increase of perceived PE and subsequently in greater JI. In view of the above, this study also hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 2a : Job characteristics (JC) are positively related to psychological empowerment (PE).

Hypothesis 2b : Job characteristic (JC) is positively related to job involvement.

The effects of psychological empowerment (PE) on job involvement (JI)

The degree to which an individual personally finds work meaningful is an important pre-condition of job satisfaction. Research on self efficacy also shows that individuals who are confident in their ability are happier at work than those who fear failure. Furthermore, individuals that feel they are directly involved in achieving organizational outcomes, are also more

likely to derive greater job satisfaction. Finally, a sense of control or self-determination over the work an employee performs is more satisfying, as achievement can be attributed to that person rather than to others (Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Herzberg et al., 1959; Martinko & Gardner, 1982; Liden et al. 2000.). There is strong theoretical evidence that supports the existence of a positive relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction. This is because employees who possess a strong sense of PE will have a significantly higher level of a psychological engagement with their work, Spreitzer (1995). Research has also consistently found that PE has positive effects on organizational outcomes, work-related attitudes and job satisfaction (Aryee and Chen, 2006; Carless, 2004, Liden et al, 2000; Seibert et al 2004; Sparrowe, (1994). PE has also been identified as having a direct effect on organizational commitment (Avolio, et al. 2004b; Liden et al., 2000), as well as the propensity for employees to turnover (Sparrowe, 1994; Koberg et al., 1999). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 can be stated as follows:

Hypothesis 3 : There is a direct and positive association between psychological empowerment and job involvement.

The mediating role of psychological empowerment (PE)

The work of Avolio, Zhu, and Bhatia (2004) thoroughly investigated a sample of 520 staff nurses in a large public hospital in Singapore, and found that PE did indeed mediate the relationship between TFL and organizational commitment. It is possible, therefore, that PE links TFL to JI, as well as JC to JI. Transformational leadership can also influence JI via PE, according to Avolio et al (2004). Moreover, PE can potentially encompass the critical psychological states that were postulated by Hackman and Oldham (1980) and mediate the relationship between JC and JI. Dewettinck et al (2006) asserted that psychological empowerment fully mediates the relationship between job characteristics and employee job satisfaction, affective commitment, and performance levels. The following final sets of hypotheses in this study are, therefore:

Hypothesis 4a : Psychological empowerment (PE) will mediate the relationship between transformational leadership (TFL) and job involvement (JI).

Hypothesis 4b : Psychological empowerment (PE) will mediate

the relationship between job characteristic (JC) and job involvement (JI).

Method

Sample and sampling procedure

Five hundred and forty-five questionnaires were distributed to four different plants of SCG Cement Co. Ltd by their HR managers, and respondents were given an assurance of anonymity in the instructions. Of these, 255 were returned (a return rate of 47%), but only 230 qualified for the subsequent data analysis. Qualitative data was obtained from more open-ended questions and the structured in-depth interviews with plant HR managers, section heads (Cell Manager), employees. Furthermore, the use of focus groups were used to clarify ambiguous issues arising from the questionnaires and thoroughly understand the day to day operation, and business context related to this study.

Measurements

JI was measured by the Job Involvement Questionnaire (JIQ), which was formulated by Kanungo (1982). The MLQ, designed by Bass and Avolio

(1995), was also selected to measure the TFL parameter. The Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) developed by Hackman and Oldham (1980), and the twelve-item empowerment scale identified by Spreitzer (1995) were applied to measure JC and PE respectively. All data-gathering instruments were translated into Thai and a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used. As proposed by Lawshe (1974), the content validity ratio (CVR) was conducted using the judgment of eight experts in the field, to re-validate all scales. (Six are lecturers in departments of psychology at three universities in Thailand, one is an OD consultant from a leading, international consulting firm, and the eighth works for a leading bank in Thailand.) The CVR analysis revealed that all items were qualified, and the Cronbach Alpha analysis of the pilot study confirmed that all parameters of measurement were also qualified ($\alpha = .928, .904, .878, .777$ for TFL, JC, PE and JI respectively). Furthermore, multicollinearity was also tested. The correlation coefficients in relation to the exogenous variables (TFL and JC) and the mediating variable (PE), were at a low to moderate level, with the lowest at .092, which is the correlation between Intellectual Stimulation (IS) and Competence (C).

The highest correlation was in the relationship between Idealization (IC-a) and Inspirational Motivation (IM), which was at .768. According to Wanichbuncha (2003, p 27-30), if the correlation coefficient is greater than $\Rightarrow .80$ or less than $-.80$ for two variables, then this is a warning of potential problems caused by high multicollinearity. When the independent variables are highly correlated, it is not possible to determine the separate effect of any particular independent variables on the dependent variable. In this study, the highest correlation of .768 was recognized as being an acceptable value. Therefore, there was no multicollinearity problem, and so these results did not harm further analysis with structural equation modelling.

Results of the study

In using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach, the causal relationships in the proposed model are represented by a series of structural equations that were then tested simultaneously. This is to find out the extent to which the model represents the data. The SPSS version 14.0 and AMOS Version 6.0 were applied in this study.

Table 1 : Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Table

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Transformational leadership (TFL)	3.83	.49	(.93)			
2. Job characteristic (JC)	3.47	.51	.919**	(.87)		
3. Psychological empowerment (PE)	3.47	.49	.131	.168	(.83)	
4. Job Involvement (JI)	3.68	.39	.062	.120	.806**	(.86)

Note: n = 230, and the values on the diagonal shown in brackets, are the internal reliabilities

Table 2 : Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Index	Factor Loading			
	TFL	JC	PE	JI
Individualization (IC)	0.797			
Inspirational Motivation (IM)	0.868			
Intellectual Stimulation (IS)	0.856			
Idealization Attributed (ID-a)	0.791			
Idealization Behavior (ID-b)	0.876			
Feedback (F)		0.646		
Autonomy (A)		0.777		
Task Identity (TI)		0.574		
Task Significance (TS)		0.821		
Skill Variety (SV)		0.567		
Impact (I)			0.481	
Self Determination (SD)			0.728	
Competence (C)			0.678	
Meaningfulness (M)			0.603	
Job involvement 1				0.314
Job Involvement 2				0.317
Job Involvement 3				0.784
Job Involvement 4				0.714

Index	Factor Loading			
	TFL	JC	PE	JI
Job Involvement 6			0.724	
Job Involvement 7			0.793	
Job Involvement 8			0.720	
Job Involvement 9			0.392	
Job Involvement 10			0.717	

According to Wanichbuncha (2003, p 27-30), the factor loading value must equal or exceed ≥ 0.30 , and based on the factor loading values given in Table 2, it can be concluded that the items designed to measure a particular latent variable (e.g. TFL, JC and PE) do, in fact, actually measure that variable. This statistical analysis confirms that the structural equation modelling findings can be further applied.

The results of the study revealed that:

1) The hypothesized model fitted well with the empirical data (Chi-square

= 202.809, df = 208, p = .589; CMIN/DF = .975; GFI = .932; AGFI = .902; NFI = .930; IFI = 1.0; CFI = 1.0; RMSEA = 0; RMR = .027).

2) PE significantly mediated the relationship between JC and JI (path coefficient = .659; p < .05 and indirect effect = .204). JC had a direct effect to PE, but not to JI (coefficient = .659; p < .05). The direct effect of PE to JI was also confirmed (path coefficient = .309; p < .05), whilst TFL also had a direct effect on JI, but not to PE (path coefficient = .134; p < .05). The remaining empirical evidence did not demonstrate any significant relationship.

Table 3 : Direct and Indirect Effect Matrix

Variables		Job Characteristic	Transformational Leadership	Psychological Empowerment
Psychological Empowerment	Direct Effect	.659*	-.037	.000
	Indirect Effect	.000	.000	.000
	Total Effect	.659	-.037	.000
Job Involvement	Direct Effect	-.188	.134*	.309*
	Indirect Effect	.204*	-.012	.000
	Total Effect	.015	.122	.309

P≤.05

The Structural Equation Model can, therefore, be stated as follows:

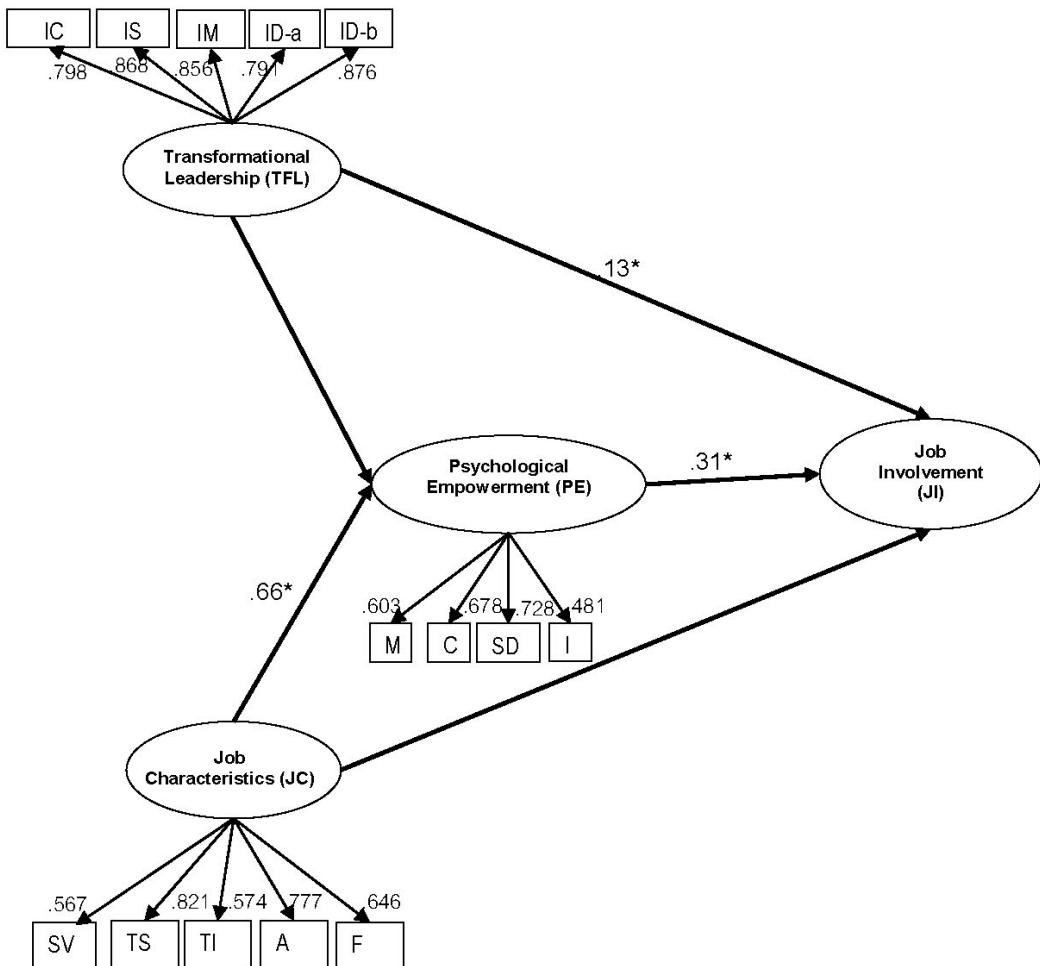
1) Psychological Empowerment = $-.037 \text{ TFL} + .659^* \text{ job characteristic}$, R squared = 41.8%

2) Job Involvement = $.134^* -.188 \text{ job characteristic} + .309^* \text{ psychological empowerment}$, R squared = 47.3 %

Note: Path coefficients are standardized. *p<.05.

Path-coefficient analysis was carried out in accordance with the causal relationship shown in the path diagram (Figure 1, below) to quantify the inter-relationships between the latent variables. It was found that JC had the largest direct effect on PE (p<.05; Path coefficient = .659). PE also had a direct effect on JI (p<.05; path coefficient = .309), and finally, it was also found that TFL had a direct effect on JI (p<.05; path coefficient = .134). One further finding was that transformational leadership has a very small, negative, but direct effect on PE (Path coefficient = -.037). This means that this finding was statistically insignificant, and can be discounted.

Figure 1 : Path-analytic framework of job involvement.



Furthermore, an analysis of the coefficient of determination with regard to the model, Square Multiple Correlation, or R² was found to be .416 for 'PE' and .473 for 'JI', and this clearly demonstrates the validity of the model. A good model should have a coefficient of determination $\geq 40\%$ (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1993, p. 26). The data analysis revealed that PE and JI could indeed be explained by the model, by 41.6 and 47.3 respectively.

To summarize, it can be seen that TFL had a significant and direct effect on JI, but not on PE. It follows, therefore, that hypothesis 1a was accepted. The results of this study also confirmed the JC had a significant direct effect on PE, the Hypothesis 2a and this, therefore, was also accepted. Furthermore, PE significantly mediated the relationship between JC and JI, thereby validating hypothesis 4b, and hypothesis 3 was also accepted because PE had a direct statistical effect on JI. Contrary to expectations, however, hypotheses 1b, 2b and 4a were rejected.

Discussion and Conclusion

The impact of TFL on the performance of subordinates is often

explained as stemming from their development and empowerment, which increase both their ability and motivation at work (Bass, 1997). It is possible, therefore, that this, can then result in a greater degree of JI. Therefore, the proposed direct, positive effect from TFL to JI represents a meaningful contribution, as it provides empirical support for the view that employees are involved in reciprocal relationships with their leaders. Moreover, these assertions are consistent with the current practice of supervisors at SCG Cement. Interviews with the company's personnel managers and supervisors confirmed that all 'Cell Leaders' (or section heads) are encouraged to implement 'empowerment' practice, and this practice has been institutionalized across all four plants. Furthermore, this initiative requires the Cell Managers to adopt the right leadership style to empower and develop their team members so as to enable them to become a 'self-directed' team. To successfully promote 'self-directed teams' leaders have to release individual differences of each and every employee (individual consideration) and coach every member of staff (i.e. to provide intellectual stimulation). They also have to motivate and inspire team members,

by providing meaning and challenge to their work (inspirational motivation) and, finally, they have to behave in ways that cause followers to identify with them (ID). As a result, we can see that employees can identify with the overall group effort so intimately and closely, that they almost automatically acquire greater feelings of self-worth. This is because they can identify with collegial goals and can see how their role contributes to the collective realization of said aims. This, in turn, directly leads to a greater sense of job involvement (JI).

Job characteristics (JC) have been viewed as being determinants of attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, and this finding is consistent with previous research with regards to work-related attitude. This finding also supports the view that JC has a direct effect upon PE, which is considered to resemble the 'psychological state', as postulated by Hackman and Oldham (1976). In other words, it is clear that JC, or the job itself, can create intrinsic motivation and enhance psychological empowerment (PE).

This shows that there is also a strong theoretical basis for maintaining that there is a positive relationship between PE and work JI. It would appear logical, therefore, to claim that

the ultimate determinant of JI is indeed a feeling, among employees that they are psychologically empowered. It is also true to say that perceived PE is crucial in order to significantly produce positive outcomes at work. Employees must essentially want to do the work, or alternatively, feel that it is worthwhile (i.e. it has meaning). In addition, they must feel that they possess adequate competence, and a feeling of self-determination, and that they can have an impact on the organization in which they work.

In addition, job characteristics are important in indirectly explaining JI. A critical factor, however, is that perceived PE must be present. At SCG Cement, the two strategies that potentially enhance JC and PE are the rigorous implementation of Total Preventive Management (TPM), and moving from a hierarchical to a flatter organizational structure, or some form of banding). Most of the staff, from operational to managerial levels, is empowered to have more authority, with the role of manager being one of facilitation and supervision, rather than command and control. The TPM itself has a significant and highly prominent role in promoting the involvement of staff at all levels, as well as their feelings of empowerment. These two factors are

crucial if PE, and consequently JI, are to be more fully enhanced.

Based on the statistical and empirical testing of the hypotheses, the results of this study provide the following implications for management, if they wish to improve JI.

First of all, they can promote good job characteristics by revisiting job analysis description. For example, small tasks might be combined into larger, more complex tasks, so that skill variety and task identity increase. Then secondly, in terms of work design, the tasks could be grouped into units so that as much of the work as possible can be performed in just one unit. This would lead to a sense of ownership of the job, thereby increasing both task identity and task significance. Thirdly, jobs could be enriched by vertical loading, such as devolving responsibility from higher organizational levels. Redistributing decision-making power in this way could increase employees' responsibility for the work that they do, as well as their perceived job autonomy. Finally, it is advisable to promote feedback channels by continuously assessing performance, and by regularly reporting on the quality of that performance.

Second, increasing participative management as they do at SCG Cement, for example, by adopting TPM, is one of the key mechanisms for building empowered and self-directed teams. The staff is empowered to create and implement their own business initiatives, and this is crucial for feelings of self-determination and autonomy. Psychological empowerment relates to an internal belief about being in control of one's future, and of being able to make choices about how, when and where one's skills are to be applied and advanced. Then employees are confident that they will be given the opportunity to apply the new knowledge that they have acquired.

Finally, TFL, as introduced by Bass (1985), has been shown to have a significant and positive relationship with the performance of followers in many pieces of research. Transformational leaders can change their followers' awareness of what is important, and move them to view themselves, as well as the opportunities and challenges of their environment, with a new perspective. In other words, transformational leadership accounts for ratings of performance above and beyond those attributed to the less inspirational and motivating nature of purely transactional leadership.

To summarize the findings across the various models tested, it appears that transformational leadership has a positive impact on job involvement, but not on psychological empowerment. These findings support previous research and theory and, as such, are not surprising. Additionally, this relationship was not mediated by psychological empowerment, and yet job characteristic (JC) has both a direct and indirect effect on psychological empowerment and job involvement respectively. Furthermore, the relationship between job characteristic and job involvement was clearly found to be mediated by psychological empowerment.

Study limitations

In common with all studies, it is recognized that this study also has several limitations.

First of all, the participants volunteered to participate in the present study and the sample was, therefore, not strictly random. Also, owing to the fact that less than 100 percent of the questionnaires were returned, a non-responsive bias might exist. The demographic composition of the present study, and individual differences in terms of personal characteristics and attitude

could have affected the results. These factors have not been included for investigation in the study.

Secondly, another important limitation is that the data for the empirical test was provided by staff in Band 2 — Band 4 who were currently working at SCG Cement Co. Ltd. Consequently, more research using distinct employee samples (e.g. managerial level) and other business contexts is needed in order to check the 'generalizability' of the findings. The present study was carried out in the context of a specific work setting (a case study in the private sector) and, therefore, caution should be taken in seeking to generalize the results.

Thirdly, job involvement might be affected by other variables, such as perceived organizational support, their relationship with their peers, as well as organizational commitment (particularly continuance commitment) and other individual-level variables (for example, the need for achievement, the locus of control, etc.). These and other contingent variables which are not included in this model might have either a direct or an indirect effect on job involvement.

Finally, another significant limitation is the cross-sectional design of this study. Clearly, it is important to

interpret the results with caution, especially with respect to causality. It is also impossible to eliminate a certain degree of common method error. In order to overcome these limitations,

further research should adopt a longitudinal design in order to establish any causal relationships between the research variables which have been tested in this study.

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