Examining The Relationship Between Perception of Psychological Empowerment and Career Satisfaction in Health Workers

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between the perception of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction in the context of health workers. Another aim of this study is to determine whether there are significant differences in the psychological empowerment and career satisfaction perceptions of the participants according to their socio-demographic characteristics. For this purpose, a survey was conducted with 684 employees working in public hospitals in Ankara. In the questionnaire, two different scales were used, which are widely used in studies in our country to measure socio-demographic questions, psychological empowerment and career satisfaction, and whose validity and reliability analyzes were made. The data obtained were analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics, T Test, ANOVA and Correlation Test. As a result of the study, a "weak" relationship was found between the meaning, competence and self determination dimensions of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction, and a "high" relationship was found with the impact dimension. However, it was determined that "employees younger than 21 years of age" had lower perceptions of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction than employees in other age groups and employees working as "physiotherapists" had lower perceptions of

psychological empowerment and career satisfaction than employees in other occupational groups.

Keywords: Psychological Empowerment, Career Satisfaction, Health Workers, Physiotherapis

INTRODUCTION

The concept of empowerment, which was first produced by Bandura (1986), was expressed as "being aware of and believing in one's own ability and competence" with the concept of self-efficacy. In the following process, Conger and Kanungo (1988) benefited from Bandura's (1986) concept of self-efficacy and defined empowerment as "increasing the level of self-efficacy belief of employees with the help of formal or informal organizational practices by determining the factors that increase weakness". Thomas and Velthouse (1990), inspired by Conger and Kanungo (1988), stated that it would not be sufficient to explain empowerment with a single dimension and that it depends on the perceptions of individuals. Accordingly, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) defined empowerment as intrinsic task motivation expressed in four dimensions: meaningfulness, competence, choice and influence, which indicate the employee's tendency towards the job role (1). Inspired by Thomas and Velthouse, Spreitzer defined empowerment as a structure consisting of four sub-elements and affecting the employee's motivation towards work (2).

In the following years, different definitions have been made about the concept of empowerment. In some of these, the concept of empowerment is used in meanings such as increasing the decision-making authority of individuals through cooperation, sharing, training and teamwork (3). In another definition, empowerment is defined as expanding the decision-making process in organizations and giving the employee the authority to participate in decisions (4). Spencer and Mclaren (2016) define empowerment as the sharing or distribution of power and authority (5). Hales and Klidas (1998) stated that empowerment involves situations such as rewarding employees and sharing knowledge and power with them (6).

As a result of the studies on the subject, empowerment is divided into "Structural Empowerment" and "Psychological Empowerment". While structural empowerment developed by Kanter focuses on the organization, psychological empowerment developed by Spreitzer focuses on the individual (7). In this study, the psychological empowerment model developed by Spreitzer was used. The explanations of psychological empowerment dimensions defined by Spreitzer (1995) are as follows:

Meaning: It refers to the harmony between the duties, responsibilities and roles required by the job in the organizational environment and the employee's own values, beliefs, goals, attitudes and behaviours. In other words, it is a dimension in which the purpose or intention of the work performed by the employees and their own ideals or standards are evaluated (8).

Competence: It refers to the employee's belief that he/she has the ability to do his/her job in the best way and that he/she feels "sufficient" for his/her job. In other words, competence is the belief that individuals have the capacity to perform their duties and responsibilities in the workplace skilfully and in the way expected of them (4).

Self Determination: This dimension characterizes the freedom of the employee to decide how to do their work and the sense of control over their work. When employees are given a high level of self determination, flexibility, creativity, initiative and resilience outputs increase; whereas at low levels of self determination, employees may feel under control and may experience mood strain and decreased self-esteem (1).

Impact: The degree of influence of the employee on the strategic outputs and managerial and transactional outputs related to his/her work and his/her perceptions about these outputs (9).

Today, with the increase in contemporary organizational structures in which expertise is prioritized, it is seen that hierarchical levels lose their effect and elements such as collegiality and teamwork gain importance (2). Drucker (1992), on the other hand, states that this new organizational structuring necessitates the empowerment process (10).

Spreitzer stated that psychological empowerment increases employees' sense of personal control, motivates them to participate in work, and has both managerial and organizational positive results. He stated that psychologically empowered employees are confident in their abilities, have control over their jobs, and are aware of their job needs, values, and beliefs (11).

Career satisfaction, another variable in the study, is defined as "an individual's awareness of current career achievements and predictions about future progress" (1,12). In another definition, career satisfaction is defined as the positive psychological or work-related results or achievements that emerge as a result of individuals' experiences in working life (13). Career satisfaction covers a longer period of time than instant job satisfaction (14). It is thought that career satisfaction will have positive effects on the attitudes and behaviors of employees in business life (11).

Çelik (2012) stated that some factors are important for the formation of career satisfaction in employees. According to him, career satisfaction is formed depending on the cultures, needs, preferences, abilities, organizational structures they work in, the resources they use at work, the rewards they receive and the harmony of their roles (15). When the employee feels a high level of career satisfaction, in order to stay at this level, he/she will be able to exhibit all kinds of behaviours that are valuable and important for the organization, especially innovative behaviours, depending on the ethical levels of himself/herself and the organization (16). In this sense, it is obvious that ensuring career satisfaction in employees will provide many benefits not only for the employees but also for the organizations they work for.

When the literature is examined, there are studies showing that career satisfaction has a positive relationship with career commitment (17), job satisfaction (18), organizational commitment, support for organizational change, willingness to stay in the organization, organizational elements such as salary and hierarchical level, while it has a negative relationship with turnover intention (19).

In order for the employee to realise his/her career progression process and to be satisfied with his/her career, empowerment practices should be present in the work environment where he/she works (1,20). In this direction, studies investigating the relationship between psychological empowerment perception and career satisfaction (7,21,22) have determined that there is a positive relationship between these two concepts. In the study conducted by McManus (2018), it was stated that psychological empowerment affects career satisfaction (23). However, in studies conducted in different sectors (24–27), were found that there were significant relationships between psychological empowerment perception and career satisfaction.

METHOD

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the research is to determine whether there is a significant relationship between the perception of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction in healthcare professionals. Another purpose of the study is to examine whether socio-demographic characteristics cause significant differences in employees' perceptions of psychological empowerment (on the basis of dimensions) and career satisfaction. In this direction, the research model was formed as follows in accordance with the purpose of the study.
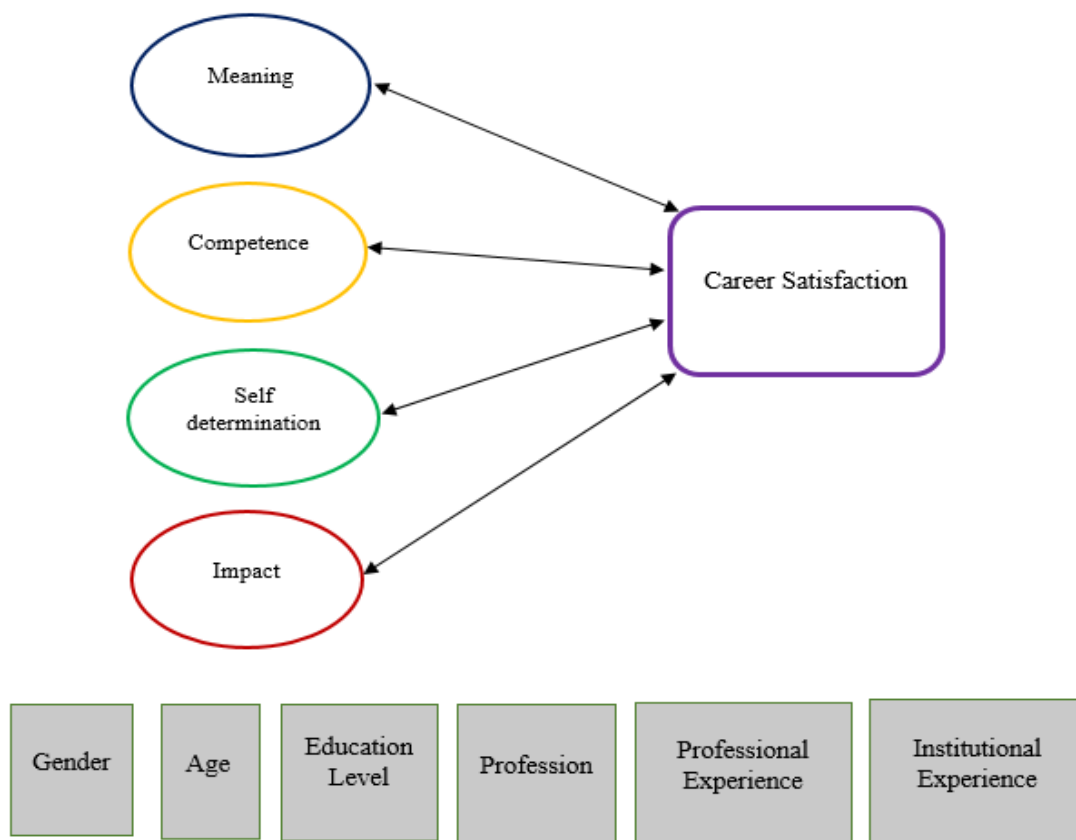

Figure 1. Research Model

Research Questions

- Is there a significant relationship between psychological empowerment perceptions and career satisfaction levels of healthcare workers?

- Do socio-demographic characteristics create significant differences in health care workers' perceptions of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction?

Population and Sample of the Research

The population of the research consists of health workers working in public hospitals in Ankara. Due to time constraints, sample selection was made with the simple random sampling method in the study. The sample number reached for the research consists of 684

employees. It is stated that 384 people are sufficient for the sample size in a research with a population size of 10.000.000 people (28). In this direction, it was decided that the sample number in the study was sufficient.

Data Collection Tools

Questionnaire application consisting of three sections and twenty-three expressions was used in the research. In the first part of the questionnaire, six questions consisting of socio-demographic characteristics, in the second part of the " Psychological Empowerment Scale " consisting of twelve statements to determine the empowerment perceptions of the employees, in the third part; The "Career Satisfaction Scale", which consists of five statements, was used to measure career satisfaction levels. Information about the scales used in the research is as follows.

Psychological Empowerment Scale: The twelve-item scale developed by Spreitzer (1995) was used to determine the psychological empowerment level of the participants. The scale consists of four dimensions, each consisting of three statements. Agreeing with the statements in the scale was measured with a 5-point Likert Type Measurement tool. As a result of the reliability analysis, the meaning (.857), competence (.788), self determination (.759) and impact (.898) dimensions of the scale and the overall cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale were determined as (.790) and it was accepted that the scale was reliable.

Career Satisfaction Scale: A five-statement scale developed by Greenhaus et al. (1990) was used to determine the level of career satisfaction. Agreeing with the statements in the scale was measured with a 5-point Likert Type Measurement tool. As a result of the reliability analysis, the Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale was determined as (.900) and it was accepted that the scale was reliable.

Analysing the Data

Data on the demographic characteristics of the participants; analyzed by frequency and percentage analysis. Mean values and standard deviation were used for scale dimensions. T Test and ANOVA Tests were used to analyze whether socio-demographic characteristics create significant differences in employees' perceptions of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction levels. Finally, the relationships between the scale dimensions were measured using the Correlation Test. The significance level in the study was taken as $p<0.01$.

Ethical Aspect of Research

In order to conduct the survey in the research, the necessary research permission was obtained from the Hitit University Non-Interventional Research Ethics Committee with the letter numbered 2021-91.

Limitations of the Research

The research was conducted with the employees working in public hospitals in Ankara. Therefore, it should not be considered that the results of the research can be generalized for Turkey. In addition, those who were not on duty on the dates of the research and those who did not want to participate in the study were excluded from the scope of the research. It was accepted that those who answered the questionnaire questions answered the statements sincerely.

FINDINGS

In this study; 58.3% of the participants were male, 58.7% were over 30 years old, 43.5% had a bachelor's degree or higher, 67.3% had been working in the same institution for 10 years or less. Again, 53.8% of the participants had 10 years or less professional experience and 27.5% worked as nurses (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics on Demographic Characteristics (n=684)

Variables		n	%	Variables		n	%
Age	<21	73	10.7	Gender	Female	285	41.7
	21-30	209	30.6		Male	399	58.3
	31-40	253	36.9	Institutional Experience	<1 year	84	12.3
	>41	149	21.8		1-5 years	196	28.7
Education Level	Primary education	24	3,5		6-10 years	180	26.3
	High school	163	23.8		11-15 years	76	11.1
	Associate degree	200	29.2		16-20 years	56	8.2
	Graduate	233	34,1		>21 years	92	13.5
	Postgraduate	64	9.4	Professional Experience	<1 year	40	5.8
Profession	Physician	61	8.9		1-5 years	144	21.1
	Nurse	188	27.5		6-10 years	184	26.9
	Physiotherapist	54	8.0		11-15 years	128	18.7
	Medical secretary	124	18.1		16-20 years	64	9.4
	Administrative Staff	115	16.8		>21 years	124	18.1
	Other	142	20.7				

The "Psychological Empowerment Scale" used in the study consists of four dimensions; dimensions have reliability levels between 0.759 and 0.898. Another scale used in the study is the "Career Satisfaction Scale". The scale consists of one dimension and has a confidence level of 0.900. As a result of the reliability analysis, it is accepted that the dimensions with a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of 0.70 and above are reliable (29). Accordingly, it was decided that the psychological empowerment and career satisfaction scales used in the study were reliable (Table 2).

Table 2. Reliability Analysis of Scale Dimensions

	Scale Dimensions	Number of Statements	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Psychological Empowerment Scale	Meaning	3	0.857
	Competence	3	0.788
	Self determination	3	0.759
	Impact	3	0.898
Career Satisfaction Scale		5	0.900

The averages formed as a result of the answers given by the participants to the statements in the psychological empowerment and career satisfaction scales; The studies in the literature (30–32)were analyzed and interpreted. According to this; Values between 1.00–2.33; "low participation", values between 2.34–3.66; "moderate participation" and finally values between 3.67–5.00; It was rated as "high participation". Finally, when interpreting the perception averages, low participation; low perception, moderate participation; medium level of perception and high participation; expressed as a high level of perception.

When the participation averages of the participants in the dimensions of the psychological empowerment scale were evaluated; It was found that they had a "moderate" perception in the dimensions of meaning (3.39), competence (3.02) and self determination (3.58). However, it is possible to say that the perception levels of the participants' impact (4,12) dimension and career satisfaction scale (4,13) are "high" (Table 3).

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviation Values of the Variables

Scales	Scale Dimensions	Average	Standard Deviation
Psychological Empowerment Scale	Meaning	3.39	.82
	Competence	3.02	.95
	Self determination	3,58	.87
	Impact	4.12	.73
Career Satisfaction Scale		4.13	.88

When interpreting the relationship levels between the variables examined in a study; <0.25; very weak correlation, 0.26-0.49; weak correlation, 0.50-0.69; moderate relationship, 0.70-0.89; high correlation and >0.90; interpreted as a very high level of relationship (33). Table 4 shows the strength of the relationship between the dimensions of the psychological empowerment scale and the career satisfaction scale and the significance levels of these relationships.

Table 4. Correlation Coefficients of Variables

		1	2	3	4	5
1 Meaning	(r)	1				
	p					
2 Competence	(r)	,604**	1			
	p	,000				

3 Self Determination	(r)	,482 **	,540 **	1		
	p	,000	,000			
4 Impact	(r)	,402 **	,332 **	.395 **	1	
	p	,000	,000	,000		
5 Career Satisfaction	(r)	,376 **	,316 **	,448 **	,720 **	1
	p	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	

** p<0.01 significance

According to the findings; it was determined that there were significant relationships between the dimensions of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction in the range of 0,316 to 0,720. When the relationships between the dimensions of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction were evaluated, the lowest significant relationship was found in the "competence" dimension (0,316; weak level), while the highest relationship was found in the "impact" dimension (0,720; high level) (p<0,01). In addition, meaning (0,376) and self determination (0,448) dimensions of psychological empowerment have weakly significant relationships with career satisfaction (Table 4). Based on the findings, it can be said that all dimensions of psychological empowerment have positive relationships with career satisfaction.

Another issue examined in the study was to examine whether socio-demographic characteristics lead to significant differences in the participants' perceptions of psychological empowerment (on the basis of dimensions) and career satisfaction. In order to decide which analyses will be used for the difference tests to be conducted in this direction, it was checked whether the variables were normally distributed. As a result of the tests, it was observed that the skewness and kurtosis coefficients of each sub-variable took values between -1,5 and +1,5. Statistically, skewness and kurtosis values between -2 and +2 and/or between -3 and +3 express normal distribution values (33). For this reason, it was decided to use parametric tests in the implementation phase of the difference tests.

Table 5. Difference Tests for Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Variables

| Socio-Demographical Characteristics | Variables | | | | |
	Meaning	Competence	Self Determination	Impact	Career Satisfaction
Gender	t = -2,036 p,094	t = -.1.868 p,124	t = -1,665 p,146	t = -.871 p,384	t = -1.382 p,167
Age	**F = 6,524 p,000****	**F = 6.183 p,000****	**F = 6,802 p,000****	**F = 7,016 p,000****	**F = 6,042 p,000****
Education	F = .311 p,733	F = 0.701 p,148	F = .415 p,661	F = 1,146 p,320	F = .252 p,827
Profession	**F = 6.378 p,000****	**F = 5,922 p,000****	**F = 7,093 p,000****	**F = 7,520 p,000****	**F = 5,862 p,000****
Institutional Experience	F = .977 p,431	F =,961 p,489	F = .490 p,782	F = .804 p,527	F = .276 p,945
Professional Experience	F = .519 p,736	F = 1,723 p,129	F = 1.872 p,117	F = .992 p,454	F = .657 p,634

Table 5 shows the results of T-Test and ANOVA analyses on whether the participants' socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, profession, institutional experience and professional experience create a significant difference in their perceptions of psychological empowerment dimensions and career satisfaction. According to the findings, it

was found that the participants' socio-demographic characteristics such as age and profession created significant differences in their perceptions of psychological empowerment dimensions and career satisfaction, while other socio-demographic variables did not create any significant differences (p>0.01). Post hoc analyses were conducted to determine which subgroups were the source of the differences for the socio-demographic variables in which significant differences were found. After the post hoc analyses, it was seen that the perceptions of psychological empowerment (on the basis of dimensions) and career satisfaction levels of the "employees younger than 21 years old" were lower than the employees in other age groups. In addition, it was determined that the psychological empowerment perceptions (on the basis of dimensions) and career satisfaction levels of "physiotherapists" in the professional socio-demographic variable were lower than the employees in other occupational groups.

Literature Findings

The literature findings of the studies related to the national and international fields and measuring the relationship between the perception of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction are listed as follows:

Joo and Lim (2013), in their study with 427 participants in Korea, found positive significant relationships between the meaning dimension (r= 0.44), competence dimension (r= 0.39), self determination dimension (r= 0.36) and impact dimension (r= 0.41) of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction (34).

Çiçek and Işık (2019), in their study conducted with 203 participants in Istanbul, found that meaning (β = .325; $p < 0.001$) and self determination (β = .206; $p < 0.05$) dimensions of psychological empowerment have significant effects on career satisfaction. In the same study, it was found that the competence and impact dimensions of psychological empowerment did not have significant effects on career satisfaction (35).

Demirer (2020), as a result of a study conducted with 181 white-collar employees in manufacturing enterprises in Turkey, found that there was a weak (r= 0.463) positive significant relationship between perception of empowerment and career satisfaction (8).

Türe and Akkoç (2020), as a result of a study conducted with 442 nurses working in a University Hospital in Eskisehir, found that there was a weak (r= 0.38) positive significant relationship between perception of empowerment and career satisfaction (11).

In a study conducted by Erer (2021) with 262 participants in Konya province, it was concluded that employees had high levels of psychological empowerment (3.92) and career satisfaction (3.89). In addition, in the same study, a moderate positive (r = 0.693) significant relationship was found between the perception of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction (1).

Tharanganie and Perera (2021), in their study with 254 participants in Sri Lanka; found weak positive (r= 0.373) positive and significant relationships between the perception of empowerment and career satisfaction (20).

Smithikrai (2022), conducted a study with 1.161 participants in Thailand and found that employees' perceptions of empowerment positively affected their career satisfaction (β = .17, $p < .001$) (14).

Sun et al. (2022), conducted a study with 2.104 participants in China and concluded that employees' psychological empowerment (3.89) and career satisfaction levels (3.83) were high. In addition, in the same study, a moderate positive (r= 0.67) significant relationship was found between the perception of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction (36).

RESULTS

As a result of this research, which has the main purpose of determining the relationship between the perception of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction in healthcare workers, positive significant relationships were found between the perceptions of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction levels of the employees. This result is similar to many studies (1,8,11,20,34,36) in the literature. As a result of the statistical analyses, it was seen that there were "weak" relationships between the meaning, competence and self determination dimensions of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction, and "high" relationships between the impact dimension and career satisfaction. If make a general comment about the situation, it can be said that as the perceptions of psychological empowerment of the employees increase, their career satisfaction also increases. When the high level relationship between the impact dimension of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction is evaluated, it can be concluded that the more effective the employee feels about the strategic, managerial and operational outputs of his/her job, the higher his/her satisfaction with his/her career will be. For this reason, having practices for empowerment of employees in organizations can contribute to increase their career satisfaction by making them feel effective and competent.

However, the participants' perceptions in the meaning, competence and self determination dimensions of psychological empowerment are at "medium" level, while their perceptions in the impact dimension of psychological empowerment and career satisfaction are at "high" level. It is seen that the results of this study are similar to some studies (1,36) in the literature.

The study also analyzed whether socio-demographic characteristics lead to significant differences in the participants' perceptions of psychological empowerment (on the basis of dimensions) and career satisfaction. As a result of the analyses, it was found that the participants' socio-demographic characteristics such as age and profession caused significant differences in their perceptions of psychological empowerment dimensions and career satisfaction, while other socio-demographic variables did not cause any significant differences. When the differences were analyzed in detail, it was concluded that the perceptions of psychological empowerment (on the basis of dimensions) and career satisfaction levels of the employees younger than 21 years old were lower than the employees in other age groups and physiotherapists were lower than the employees in other professional groups. Accordingly, it can be said that the employees who are in the first years of their profession and who are younger than other employees cannot perceive empowerment and career satisfaction at the level of those employees when compared to others. On the other hand, the fact that physiotherapists need a lot of technical knowledge while performing their profession may have prevented them from perceiving psychological empowerment and career satisfaction sufficiently.

When empowerment practices are made in organizations, employees will be able to harmonize both the job and the organization with their own values, and it will become easier to progress in their careers over time, and they will be satisfied with the career level they have achieved. This situation will reveal positive working conditions for both the individual and the organization. For this reason, it is considered important for managers of organizations to include empowerment practices while designing business policies.

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