



Exploring the role of Trust in the relationship between Empowering Leadership and Employee Job Satisfaction

Arun K. Raj¹, Shalendra S. Kumar²

^{1,2}Fiji National University

ABSTRACT: Exploring the role of trust in the relationship between empowering leadership and employee job satisfaction. The current study intends to investigate how trust functions as a mediator in the relationship between employees' job satisfaction and empowering leadership. It is argued that positive attitudes towards working are promoted through empowering practices of leadership, including delegation, autonomy, and participation in decision making. Nevertheless, there is a lack of empirical studies that investigate the psychology behind how the behaviours of such leaders can contribute to job satisfaction. This paper focuses on the aspect of trust as one of the key elements that describe why and how empowering leadership will result in increased levels of employee satisfaction. The quantitative research method was applied based on a structured questionnaire surveyed on employees in different organizations. The empowerment of leadership, trust and job satisfaction was empowered using standardized measurement scales. The analysis of data was conducted through statistical techniques, such as correlation analysis, regression, and mediation tests, to test the mediating effect of trust. Findings have shown that empowerment of leadership has a important role in employee job satisfaction of workers. Moreover, trust was revealed to be a mediating variable, demonstrates that workers who have faith in their leaders are more likely to respond favourably to empowerment initiatives and show greater employee job satisfaction. Research concludes that empowerment of leadership has a constructive impact on job satisfaction which mainly comes as a result of creation of trust. Leadership behaviour that develops trust, autonomy and a conducive work environment should be developed by organizations seeking to improve the level of employee job satisfaction. The study is new in terms of offering the mediating result of trust on the empowering leadership job satisfaction relationship. It builds on the literature in the field of leaders' organizational behaviour by noting that the concept of trust is a critical psychological process that connects leadership style and attitudes of employees. Further studies are advised to investigate other psychological factors, psychological safety and perceived organizational support to better understand the processes that determine the relationship between empowering leadership and employee job satisfaction.

Corresponding Author:

Arun K. Raj

KEYWORDS:

Empowering Leadership, Trust, Leadership style, Employee Job Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

In today's high-performance workplace, leadership is critical in the process of defining the organizational culture, attitudes of the employees and final performance outcomes. Empowering leadership look right on an main style in the latest years with the focus on offering independence, participating in decisions, meaningful feedback and self-managing capabilities of employees. It is believed that such leadership also results in better performance as well as increased job satisfaction, which is the primary goal of any organization that aims at retaining motivation, minimizing turnover, and developing commitment.

Empowering leadership role is a critical variable in company performance, especially in the aspects of managing Meier and Crocker, (2010) Brown et al., (2009) and Hannus, (2016). Upper-level management should make organisations become more flexible and effective, by eliminating the old hierarchical structure. Leadership styles to empower the team members in a way that semi-autonomy and self-management are put into consideration, Arnold and Drasgow, (2000). Empowering leadership is based on the development of workers power and Latif and Nel Stander, (2015). It's a leadership representation that makes the category a strong point. Members task alone and educate category workers on how to acquire self management skills or own leadership Gao and Ahmad, 2018, Bartol and Zhang, (2010).

In a study carried out by Saragih, (2016) states that at least one of them is mainly reward, advantage, advancement opportunities, administration, work life flexibility, work, setting and affiliation with the working colleague's were strongly correlated with organization. A different study that was carried out by Asghar (2014) determined that 88 percent of the generation like working environments that are teamwork oriented and not competitive. work cultures, 74% prefer flexible working schedules, 88% prefer work-life balance, and 79% prefer. helpful leaders that may be coaches or mentors.

Empowerment of leadership in itself is not a surety of high levels of job satisfaction of the workers. The process by which empowerment is converted into satisfaction tends to mediate/ moderate the psychological constructs. Trust is one such construct and that is trust towards leaders. Trust means how employees think about leadership in terms of ability, honesty, justice and goodwill. As the employees believe in their leaders, they will experience empowering behaviours positively, will feel safer psychologically, and will be willing to participate in their work in its entirety. In the absence of such trust, the process of empowerment can be considered with a grain of salt or can run with anxiety instead of satisfaction.

An emerging literature identifies trust in leaders as a key psychological process of linking empowering leadership with preferred employee outcomes. Trust as the ability of employees to believe in the ability, honesty, and goodwill of the leaders can make the difference between empowerment as the fulfillment of support and empowerment as a dumping of the burden. Empirical studies on trust have found that trust mediates or is a chain in the connection between empowering leadership and positive results (including employee job satisfaction, reduced burnout and less counterproductive behaviours) in a number of recent empirical papers. As an example, Song et al. (2024) investigated differentiated empowering leadership and discovered chain-mediated changes via trust in leaders and defensive silence; they discovered that trust is a pathway of leader behaviours to influence employee responses. The idea that organizational trust in leaders is one of the explanations of the empowering leadership-wellbeing relationship and that trust enhances the perception of psychological safety, and resources, where they contribute to positive job attitudes is also supported by Wortler et al. (2022) and Joo (2023).

The research on the work engagement of workers has recently established great devotion especially when studies found it relevant in addressing organizational results (Van Dierendonck and Jorge Sousa(2014). Research has disclosed that organization commitment is positively correlated with work engagement Hakanen). et al., (2006), job satisfaction and job performance. Thus, it is theoretically applicable to examine its antecedents Bakker, (2011). Among its several possible antecedents, leadership has been pointed out as a significant cause of work engagement, and certain leadership behaviours have been discovered to contribute to job engagement and empowering leadership management Aryee et al., and Zhu et al., (2009) (2012), servant leadership Authentic leadership (Walumbwa et al.), genuine leadership and Van Dierendonck and, (2014). Innovative leadership Strickland and Babcock-Roberson (2010) and transformative leadership Tuckey et al, (2012). Nevertheless, inadequate research has been completed to investigate the relationships between employee job satisfaction and empowering leadership in a developing country in pacific island countries such as Fiji. Therefore, the significant determination of my research is to develop and experiment model that would connect empowering leadership and employee job satisfaction and investigate mechanisms and the condition of the boundary.

In addition to ignoring the connection between employee job satisfaction and empowering leadership, little prior study has been supported out on the mediating part of trust in both the variables. A distinguished allowance is applied job demands resources to explore cognitive requirements between the empowering leadership and resources are mediators of work engagement Tuckey et al, (2012). This research is based on the person situation suitable model, which underlines the agreement between individual and atmosphere and has a constructive impact on necessary, professional performance and participation in work like voice behaviour. Kr Chen et al.,(2014).

Therefore, the following research issues will be examined in this study:

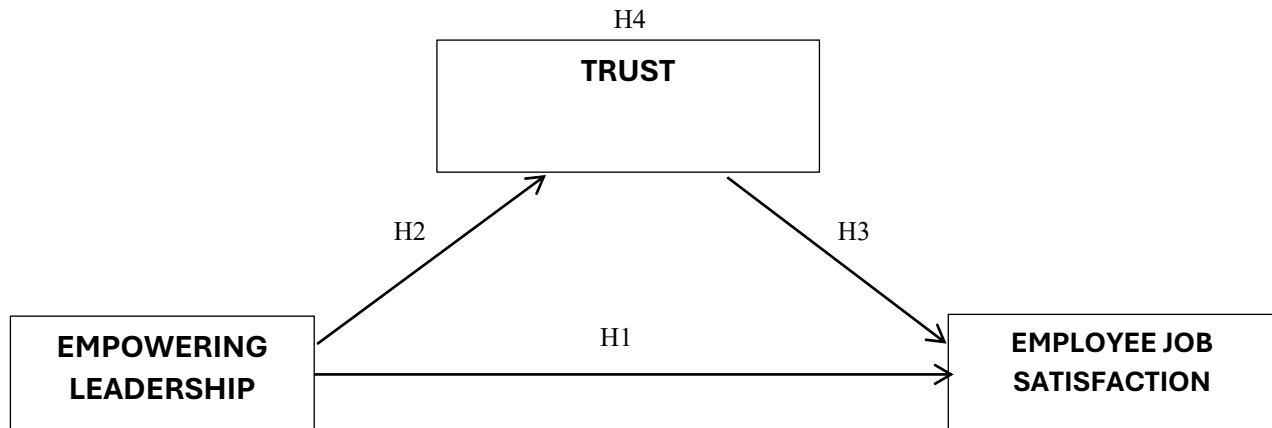
How does empowering leadership influence employee's job satisfaction?

Does a trust in the work environment mediate the connection among empowering leadership and employee job satisfaction?

Some earlier research has taken the effect into account. Employee happiness, loyalty, trust, and organizational empowerment leadership. Loyalty, contentment with trust, satisfaction with loyalty, and trust on loyalty. Prior research has also examined employee loyalty, work happiness, service trust, and leadership empowerment in other industries. However, there is a lack of research on the relationship between employee job satisfaction, trust, and empowerment leadership.

Thus, the paper will pursue to study the correlation among empowerment leadership, employee job satisfaction, trust between empowering leadership and trust as mediator in the relationship among empowering leadership and employee job satisfaction within the organisation in the Suva central business district area mostly in nongovernment organisation, government organization and private company.

In figure 1, the findings demonstrate that the relationship among empowering leadership and employee job satisfaction can be boosted through trust.

Conceptual Framework**THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT****Empowering leadership is positively related to Employee Job Satisfaction.**

Empowerment Leadership aids as the basis of positive leadership, allowing leaders to cultivate a group of skilled and empowered individuals throughout all levels of the organization. Keller (1995) argues in his research that empowering leadership encourages employee commitment and engagement in the organisation by connecting employee's in the decision creation process. Also, in another research it was found that empowering leadership represents important strategies in the educational environment such as university that can provide positive outcomes for educators. Zaman et al, (2022) and Khawand and Zargar, (2022)

Empowerment leadership gives employees the latitude to choose how to accomplish their tasks. Arnold and Drasgow, (2000) explain that the essential contrast between conventional and empowering leader conduct lies in reallocating authority from the individual at the top to the dispersed membership of the team, with the goal of molding the group into a self-directed operating unit. The authors delineated five essential dimensions of empowerment leadership practice: (1) leading by example, in which the leader visibly devotes effort to both the work and the team, thereby modelling the expectations he or she holds; (2) coaching, meaning to mentor and to cultivate the team so that it develops the competencies to act independently; (3) participative decision making, which creates forums for the members to help shape choices; (4) informing, or transmitting the organization's broader vision, mission, and strategic goals, along with relevant operational insights; and (5) showing concern/interacting with employees, in which the leader systematically manifests care for individual and collective well-being, ensuring that engagement with the team occurs both at the one-on-one and the group level.

Furthermore, leaders who embody these positive attributes are viewed as genuinely supportive mentors: they model desired behaviours, distribute recognition fairly, and create space for team members to make authentic, independent choices in their roles. This approach cultivates feelings of competence and autonomy among employees, which in turn fortifies their confidence in making valuable contributions and forges a deeper, personally satisfying connection to their tasks. Research by Zhang and Bartol (2010) shows that employees who envision empowerment as a constructive experience are especially receptive to increases in autonomy, resulting in heightened psychological empowerment. Individuals who report elevated levels of psychological empowerment, in turn, demonstrate elevated levels of task engagement as well as a strong, durable loyalty to their organization

Moreover, Kasap and Esitti, (2020) contended that the interaction of philosophies among leaders and their colleagues primarily influences employee job satisfaction. Liu et al. (2020) further illustrated that both presented and distributed leadership directly and indirectly enhanced employee job satisfaction. Moreover, empowerment leadership is regarded as an effective approach for fostering employee job satisfaction within the work environment Mufti et al., (2020) and Boamah et al., (2018).

Furthermore, giving workers more freedom, decision-making power, and influence over their work is known as empowerment leadership. Arshad, (2022). The goal of empowerment leadership is to create an environment where workers feel empowered to take responsibility for their tasks, make choices, and use their knowledge and abilities to further the success of the company. AlMazrouei, (2021). This leadership approach entails giving staff members greater power, giving them more responsibility, and encouraging them to take chances and make decisions. A culture of open communication and cooperation must be fostered, leaders must have faith in their staff, and they must provide them with the necessary tools and assistance. Empowerment leadership may increase job satisfaction by giving workers more influence over their work, which can lead to increased emotions of accomplishment and pride in their efforts, according to study by Bharadwaja and Tripathi, (2020). As a result, the following hypothesis is developed based on the discussion above:

H1- Empowering leadership is positively linked to Employee Job Satisfaction

Empowering Leadership is positively connected to Trust.

Trust among employees is also important in increasing employee job satisfaction. Ababneh, (2020). Although trust and fulfilment will not add value to the direct connection among leaders and accomplishment, trust will have a constructive effect on impact fulfilment Robert and David, (2020). Previously, there was experimental evidence that demonstrated that there is a substantial connection. between employee satisfaction and trustworthiness. Ko and Choi, (2019).

Similar to the influence of trust on satisfaction, there is worker trust too. has a positive effect on the organization in terms of employee loyalty. Martin Santana and Melian Alzola (2020) observe that the majority of present-day research fails to specify the sample size for evaluating the efficacy of a particular intervention. According to Melian-Alzola and Martin-Santana (2020), most current studies do not state the sample size to assess the effectiveness of a specific intervention. Researchers disclose that trust enhances loyalty Kalhor et al., (2020). The findings indicate that customers can be boosted through trust and loyalty Paparoidamis et al., (2019).

Several studies have emphasized the connection between servant leadership and trust. A culture of trust within organizations is fostered by empowering leaders who prioritize serving their valued employees. By demonstrating empathy, engaging in active listening, and adhering to ethical behaviour, empower leaders nurture strong interpersonal relationships founded on mutual respect and transparency.

The favourable expectations people have about the intentions and behaviours of different members of an organization, impacted by their roles, connections, experiences, and interdependencies, are known as leadership trust. Ellis, Winograd, and Shockley-Zalabak (2000). According to Gambetta (1988), trust is a thorough evaluation of an organization's dependability and represents a sense of certainty and support from an employer. Tang and Gilbert (1998). There are two degrees of trust research: macro and micro. Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (2007). We will concentrate on the macro level, which is the overall organizational environment of internal trust, using a measure created by Huff and Kelly (2003). The majority of micro-level trust assessments relate to beliefs about trustworthiness and emphasizing integrity

Additionally, Gustafsson, Gillespie, Searle, Hope Hailey, and Dietz (2021) showed that sustaining trust practices (i.e., cognitive bridging, emotional embodying, and inclusive enacting) depends on workers' comprehension of the fundamental components of trust inside the business. In similar research, Verburg et al. (2018) found that in the high power-distance environment typical of Korean culture, the relationship between control and employee organizational trust is anticipated to be substantial in their study.

Workers frequently react to how they are treated by the company in a way that they believe to be fair Blau (1964). According to Ugwu, Onyishi, and Rodriguez-Sanchez (2014), researchers have looked into the relationship between organizational trust and a number of positive work outcomes, such as employee job satisfaction. Teo and Lee (2005). As a result, the following hypothesis is developed based on the discussion above:

H2 – Empowering Leadership is positively connected to Trust.

Trust is positively related to Employee Job Satisfaction.

Trust is essential for enhancing employee job satisfaction and performance Ababneh, (2020). While trust and satisfaction do not directly influence the relationship between managers accomplishment, trust will have a constructive effect on fulfilment Roberts and David, (2020). Prior essential indication indicates a substantial correlation among trust and workers job satisfaction Ko and Choi, (2019).

Similar to the influence of trust on workers job satisfaction, employee trust also certainly enhances employee job satisfaction towards the companies Melian Alzola and Martin Santana, (2020). Studies indicate that belief fosters employee job satisfaction Kalhor et al., (2020). More findings demonstrate that trust can positively motivate employee performance Paparoidamis et al., (2019). This study's results highlighted the necessity for the internal marketing concept's development to incorporate workers as consumers. Consequently, workers trust promotes loyalty behaviours Boonlertvanich, (2019) and Hung et al., (2019).

According to Gillespie, Searle and Dietz (2021), it turned out that the insight of the laid down basics of trust in the companies is essential to the employees. As was reported in the study of Singaporean Verburg et al. (2018) between workers organizational trust, the relationship among the workers and authority is expected to be strong in the high influence distance dimension of South Korea culture.

Further studies show that the correlation between trust and job satisfaction of employees at work has drawn attention. Baykal and Altuntas (2010) state that employees are prone to express an increased amount of interest and cheerfulness and, consequently, fulfilment when they see a environment of trust in their work atomphere. Similarly, Matzler and Renzl (2006) discovered that reliance among peers and relations with individuals on the same level, and so on. Improves job satisfaction among leaders and their work colleagues. Mankin (2007) also found that the level of fulfillment correlates with the level of trust. Additionally, trust not merely causes satisfaction directly, but also prefers the appearance of other working environments and factors that cause employee job satisfaction Ferrin and Dirk (2001).

Trust desires to align, willing to assist and to devote oneself to one another, which produces a decrease in stress and anxiety at work Tan and Lau, (2006). In the nonappearance of trust, a state of doubt and uncertainty is created. Doubt over long stages creates a state of anxiety and disappointment among employees. Further causes of work challenges can be unnecessary competition among

workers in the effort to climb the ladder. If managers don't trust inferiors and subject them to unnecessary burden, they will texture nervous and overcome by the necessities of their station and consequently very much discontented. Furthermore, the job observation of risk is a core factor of employee job satisfaction action, thus a reduced degree of recognised. Therefore, the presence of trust in a organisation lowers risk insight and anxiety levels, and promotes a favourable working environment, which results in enhanced degrees of job satisfaction. Thus, based on above discussion this leads to construction of the following hypothesis:

H3-Trust is positively related to Employee Job Satisfaction.

Trust will mediate the connection among Empowering Leadership and Employee Job Satisfaction

The leadership trust impacts the employee's job satisfaction. Supportive, humble, and highly empowering leader can support give workers more confidence in their abilities Castelnovo et al., (2023). Delegation and recognition behaviours are also examples of trust behaviours that have a constructive effect on self effectiveness and performance Rosenbruch et al., (2023). In the light of SCT Bandura, (1997), trust offers a positive social climate that supports the belief of employees on their abilities, hence enhancing self-efficacy. Empirical research also indicates that there is an interactive relationship among the empowering management and workers job satisfaction with trust serving as a mediating variable Dedahanov et al., (2022). Moreover, trust is also indirectly related to self-efficacy due to the improvement of commitment, psychological well-being and autonomy Mitson, (2024).

Furthermore, Trust is also a significant factor in influencing employee job satisfaction. Trust developed based on transformational, servant or inclusive leadership is an arbitrator between the empowering leadership and work attitude that directly influences increased employee job satisfaction Rashid & Ilkhanizadeh, (2022). In academic and economic organisations, trust in leaders increases employee job satisfaction due to the sense of appreciation and worthiness of work (Ashfaq et al., 2023). Trust satisfies employees the most basic psychological need of relatedness (SDT, Deci and Ryan, 2000), which leads to an increase in employee job satisfaction. Trust is viewed as a crucial precondition of the successful implementation of sustainable HRM practices that could be helpful in terms of workers welfare and fulfilment Farmanesh, (2023).

Trust arbitrates the relationship among empowering leadership and employee job satisfaction and the leader's style increases adaptability, task accomplishment and organisational steadiness Perrier (2024). Trust builds a positive work experience that enhances dedication and health Kuráth et al., (2023).

Employee job satisfaction among the employees is not always directly related to empowering leadership. Research hypothesizes that there is a mediator between this relationship and trust. The employees could have increased confidence in the leaders. This is because it will be understood to imply fairness and integrity Zhang and Bartol, (2010). On its part, this trust enhances the level of job satisfaction of the employees since they enjoy a secure environment where they feel honored, valued, and assured of their jobs. This is to say that the employees can not fully benefit from the empowerment except when they are convinced that their leader is acting in their best interest. The absence of trust may result in anxiety or uncertainty because of empowerment and limit the positive effect that it has on job satisfaction.

The mediation effect of trust has been supported by a number of research works. As an example, Ferrin (2002) have initiate that the trust in managers plays a strong mediating role in the relationships between the behavior of the leaders and the boldness of the workers including the levels of job fulfilment. Similarly, it has also been demonstrated through empirical research that job satisfaction is indirectly influenced by the empowering leadership; thus, the focus should be directed to the relational processes in the performance of the leadership Zhang and Bartol, (2010). Thus, based on above discussion this leads to formulation of the following hypothesis

H4 – Trust will mediate the connection among Empowering Leadership and Employee Job Satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Procedure

Participation and Procedure. The quantitative research method was applied based on a structured questionnaire surveyed on employees in different organizations. The empowerment of leadership, trust and job satisfaction was empowered using standardized measurement scales. The analysis of data was conducted through statistical techniques, such as correlation analysis, regression, and mediation tests, to test the mediating effect of trust. To study the hypothesis, data covering 157 was gathered over a random sampling. The data was collected from employees within the United Nations Population Fund, Fiji Pharmaceutical and Medical Supplies and Vinod Patel Company Ltd in Fiji through self-administered questionnaires. To evaluate empowering leadership, employee job satisfaction, and trust, random sampling was used to include employees who work under leadership in nongovernment organisations, private companies and government department around Suva, Fiji Island. The respondents included: administrative, Human resource management, procurement and supply chain, finance and programme staff. The research stated no missing data. The gain data from research was entered into SPSS and ultimately moved to AMOS. To shape a robust study model, the statistical significance of all constructs was thoroughly assessed. The p-value was set at 0.5, indicating that there is a 95% likelihood that the mean population lies within the specified range of values. The research included age, occupational experience, and salary scale as a control variable (see Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Age	20 to 25	26 to 30	31 to 35	36 to 40	Over 41 years
	14.6%	12.7%	11.5%	21%	40.1%
Occupational experience	1 to 3 years	4 to 7 years	8 to 11 years	12 to 14 years	Over 18 years
	14.0%	15.3%	12.1	58.6%	0%
Salary scale	≤ FJD10,000	FJD 10,001 to 20,000	FJD 20,001 to 30,000	FJD 30,001 to 40,000	Over FJD 40,001
	6.4%	36.3%	19.7%	14.0%	23.6%

Measure

The participant willingly answered the questionnaire containing of numerous questions rated on a five-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). EP were assessed over a self-completed questionnaire. The instrument consists of five questions as suggested by Bornman and Puth, (2017). The items were modified to suit the current studies. EPS consisting of five-item scales was adapted from Barrick et al. (2015). The sample questions for this scale are from the module of Empowering leadership. EPS consists of five questions was drawn from previous research known to be suitable for the evaluation of this construct. The sample included Employee job satisfaction questions such as, “I’m satisfied with my work and responsibilities, and I am satisfied with the recognition I receive for my work. The assessment of TRT consists of five questions also that had background study of Trust with the five Likert scale questions.

Table 2. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation of Variables for the Study

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age	3.59	1.480	1					
3. OCP exp	3.15	1.133	.805**	1				
4. Salary	3.12	1.303	.481**	.487**	1			
5. EL	4.2713	.61561	-.007	-.008	-.121	1		
6. ESJ	4.2968	.65539	-.038	-.079	-.253**	.757**	1	
7. TRT	4.2849	.58421	-.018	-.038	-.172*	.840**	.827**	1

Note: * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Note: EL=Empowering Leadership, ESJ=Employee Job Satisfaction, TRT=Trust

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviation

Item	Mean	SD
EL1	4.21	0.793
EL2	4.39	0.676
EL3	4.23	0.823
EL4	4.27	0.765
EL5	4.25	0.816
EJS1	4.39	0.657
EJS2	4.38	0.694
EJS3	4.25	0.759
EJS4	4.25	0.798
EJS5	4.21	0.870
TRT1	4.34	1.480
TRT2	4.34	0.705
TRT3	4.24	0.685
TRT4	4.25	0.833
TRT5	4.21	0.740

TRT6	4.29	0.689
TRT7	4.34	0.691
TRT8	4.36	0.671
TRT9	4.25	0.679
TRT10	4.24	0.759

First, EP was hypothesized to correlate positively with EPS. The findings of the analysis (see Table 4) show that EP is positively correlated with EPS ($\beta = 0.7974$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. Second, the findings ($\beta = 0.2257$, $p < 0.001$), also confirm full support for H2, showing a positive correlation between EPS and TRT (Table 4). Third, as anticipated, TRT will positively correlate to EP. The findings ($\beta = 0.7274$, $p < 0.001$), fully support H3 (Table 4).

Table 4. Mediation of EA between EM and ECB

Parameter	Dependent	R ²	F	P	Coefficieent	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Constant EL	EPS	0,7060	372.2662	0.0000	0.8789	0.1783	4.9282	0.5266	1.2312
					0.7974	0.0413	19.2942	0.7158	0.8790
Constant EL EPS	TRT	0.6964	176.6118	0.0000	0.2159	0.2194	0.9843	-0.2175	0.6493
					0.2257	0.872	2.5886	0.0535	0.3979
					0.7274	0.0919	7.9179	0.5459	0.9089
Direct effect of X to Y					.2257	.872	2.5886	.535	.3979
The indirect effect of X to Y					.5800	.1093		.3819	.8156
The total effect of X to Y					.807	.559	14.4159	.6953	.9161

DISCUSSION

The paper sought to discover the part of empowering leadership (EL) in employee job satisfaction (EJS) mediating by trust (TRT). The results showed that there existed a substantial connection among empowering leadership and the job satisfaction of the employees. This highlights the fact that increasing employee job satisfaction is not limited to financial gains and recognition but also entails empowerment. The employee job satisfaction received is in being trusted and given the power to take initiative Libertine Gertrude R. Macaspac, (2024).

The aspect of autonomy and independence is important because it implies the level of trust that the management has to give its subordinates to help them carry out their roles successfully. Research carried out by L.A. Allen and Vaishnav, (2019) shows delegation of authority includes responsibility sharing with employees to allow managers to concentrate on other tasks effectively. This delegation is an indication of the confidence of the manager in his or her employees. Also, further research has revealed that delegation have a optimistic result on effectiveness, efficiency, and achievement Hammadat et al., (2015).

Also, empowerment of employees can be attained through giving out certain objectives that employees should achieve. These are the objectives that must be quantifiable and used as the benchmark of measuring the performance of the employees. Research has also proved the beneficial impact of management by objectives and performance appraisals on the performance of goals achieved, thus bringing more satisfaction to the employees (Rahman and Islam, 2010).

The results of the study have highlighted the significance of empowerment in enhancing job satisfaction by employees and there is a need to re-strategize in management. Employee job satisfaction has proven to have optimistic effects on the achievement of the employees Baluyos et al., (2019).

Overall, the research adds to the figure of information on leadership by demonstrating that trust acts as a mediating element and that empowered leadership increases employee work satisfaction more dramatically. Building trust is crucial for enabling leadership to function effectively when businesses shift toward collaborative cultures and decentralized decision-making Zhang and Bartol, (2010). According to earlier studies, trust increases workers' readiness to embrace empowerment and interact favourably with managers, which eventually boosts job satisfaction and accomplishment results Breevaart, (2014).

As a result, organisations looking to increase employee job satisfaction should implement leadership techniques that blend tactics for empowerment with actions that foster trust, such being open, moral, and supportive. These results support previous research that showed trust serves as a crucial relational resource that enhances the beneficial outcomes of empowered leadership Amundsen & Martinsen, (2015); Blau, (1964). In summary, cultivating a culture that combines high leader-employee trust with employee empowerment is likely to result in a more engaged, motivated, and contented staff.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATION

Some of the applied implications of the results in this study to an organization that wants to enhance the job satisfaction of its employees by empowering its leadership and trust include a number of implications. To start with, the organizations must put money in the leadership development programs that give a focus on empowering behaviours like delegation, participative decision-making, and contribution to employee autonomy. Leadership empowerment has also been found to boost worker motivation and good working attitudes when the employees feel that the leaders believe in them Zhang and Bartol, (2010). Not only do leaders who exhibit such behaviours empower the employees, they create a situation in which an employee can make a level of trust and in the end, this leads to job satisfaction. Second, the culture of trust, open communication, and transparency should be established within organizations. The mediating role of trust is significant in enhancing the effectiveness of the empowering leadership over the employees in relation to positive attitude and job satisfaction Ahearne, Mathieu, and Rapp, (2005). This means that the management should focus on truthfulness, fairness and consistency of the behaviour in order to ensure that employees have a sense of safety in their association with leaders. It will be advantageous to develop transparent communication lines, encouragement of accountability and ethical leadership behaviour to support trust and emotional protection in the work environment Breevaart (2014).

Moreover, the organization should enforce organizational policies that can enable inclusiveness and shared decision making to make the employees feel appreciated and engaged. When workers recognize that their voice is heard and they are granted responsibilities that are of importance, the employees develop trust towards the leadership which consequently leads to increased satisfaction and organizational commitment Amundsen and Martinsen, (2015). This process can also be reinforced with regular feedback mechanisms and employee consultations that will make employees feel heard and respected. In addition, trust and empowerment should be reinforced by human resource systems by making open performance appraisals and equal reward schemes, and employee development opportunities. Here, through the incorporation of empowerment and trust into HR processes, organizations will gain a favourable environment that allows employees to be motivated and loyal to the organization Cheong, Spain, Yammarino, and Yun, (2016). Finally, the organizations must constantly measure the level of trust and job satisfaction using surveys and reflective leadership evaluations. Companies can modify the approaches to leadership and support systems where necessary by proactively surveying employee perceptions.

Finally, by combining the initiatives of empowering leadership with trust-building, employee job satisfaction, performance, and employee turnover decreases may be achieved with the overall success in nongovernment organisations, private companies and government departments.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

The study has brought closure to the literature with its great findings. The research suffers limitations because it takes into account the information of a single area in Fiji with specific organisations. The dynamics have however shifted in other parts of Fiji and working places. Secondly, this article has limitations because it evaluated the information using a structural equation model, but regression analysis was conducted in scholarly research. Third, the study has limitations since it has not investigated the mediating effect of the performance and conflict management of employees. However, this research has certain suggestions to be made in the future studies. Future research should identify the antecedents that might affect the employees to empower the leadership style that would substantially add to the literature. Moreover, the controlling influence of the emotional empowerment of employees on the connection among conflict management and sustainability of the organization needs to be tested in the future. Furthermore, in this study, the results have been established using the sample of the employees at the middle level of management. Nevertheless, it is significant to account that future study must involve the gathering of data by the line workers to identify what they see in terms of organizational performance and employee management. These new directions would enhance the body of knowledge pertaining to the organization's sustainability.

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