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THE EFFECT OF EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEES' INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOR: THE ROLE OF AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT

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Abstract

In today's globalized business world where innovation is considered the source of competition, companies develop various strategies to positively influence the behavior of employees, who are the essential factor that achieves innovation. These strategies are built on antecedents, which have a positive effect on employees' innovative behavior. In this study, a model is proposed to reveal the antecedents of the employees' innovative behavior. It is aimed to measure the effect of empowering leadership, psychological empowerment, and affective commitment on employees' innovative behavior, based on the assumption that there is more than one driving force that can affect the employees' innovative behavior. Besides, it is aimed to empirically investigate the roles of psychological empowerment and affective commitment in the relationship between empowering leadership and employees' innovative behavior. The data were collected from 234 white-collar workers of a ready-made clothing company operating in Istanbul. According to the research results; empowering leadership, psychological empowerment, and affective commitment have a positive impact on the employees' innovative behavior. However, psychological empowerment mediates, and affective commitment moderates between empowering leadership and employees' innovative behavior.

Keywords: *Empowering leadership, Employees' innovative behavior, Affective commitment, Psychological empowerment.*

GÜÇLENDİRİCİ LİDERLİĞİN ÇALIŞANLARIN YENİLİKÇİ DAVRANIŞINA ETKİSİ: DUYGUSAL BAĞLILIK VE PSİKOLOJİK GÜÇLENDİRMENİN ROLÜ

Öz

İnovasyonun rekabetin kaynağı olarak kabul edildiği günümüzün küreselleşen iş dünyasında, işletmeler inovasyonu yaratan unsur olan çalışanların davranışlarını olumlu yönde yönlendirmek için çeşitli stratejiler geliştirmektedir. Bu stratejiler, çalışanların yenilikçi davranışlar sergilemesine olumlu etki eden öncüler üzerine kurgulanmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, çalışanların yenilikçi davranışlarının öncülerini ortaya koyması için bir model önerilmektedir. Çalışanların yenilikçi davranışlarını etkileyebilecek birden fazla itici gücün olduğu varsayımından hareketle, güçlendirici liderlik, psikolojik güçlendirme ve duygusal bağlılığın çalışanların yenilikçi davranışına etkisini ölçmek amaçlanmaktadır. Ayrıca, güçlendirici liderlik ile çalışanların yenilikçi davranışları arasındaki ilişkide psikolojik güçlendirmenin ve duygusal bağlılığın rolleri ampirik olarak araştırmak amaçlanmaktadır. İstanbul'da faaliyet gösteren bir hazır giyim firmasının 234 beyaz yaka çalışanından veriler toplanmıştır. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre; güçlendirici liderlik, psikolojik güçlendirme ve duygusal bağlılık çalışanların yenilikçi davranışlarını olumlu yönde etkilemektedir. Ayrıca, güçlendirici liderlik ile çalışanların yenilikçi davranışı arasındaki ilişkide psikolojik güçlendirmenin aracı, duygusal bağlılığında düzenleyici etkisi bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Güçlendirici liderlik, Çalışanların yenilikçi davranışı, Duygusal bağlılık, Psikolojik güçlendirme.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the globalizing world, offering products or services beyond meeting the needs of consumers, is extremely significant for businesses to gain competitiveness and to survive. In this context, the ability of businesses to offer innovative products that can be activating the demands and expectations of consumers by developing various strategies takes businesses one step further. In the business world where change is experienced rapidly, an effective innovation process will significantly support the survival of businesses. In a business environment where the change occurred rapidly, an effective innovation process will significantly support the survival of businesses. Innovation, which is acknowledged as an essential factor that increases productivity and competitiveness, contributes to the quality of employment and life, and delivers economic and social value, constitutes the source of business success. Besides, innovation is considered as a fundamental factor in the long-term survival, growth, and performance of businesses. In this context, innovation is acknowledged as the main source of competitive advantage. In this regard, Schumpeter (1986) emphasizes the significance of innovation and, in a way, the destructive effect of not innovating by arguing the businesses that do not innovate will disappear.

According to Scott and Bruce (1994), although the source of innovation is new ideas, it is stated that those who research, produce, support, and implement these ideas are individual employees. Besides, the argument that innovative behaviors exhibited by employees is a critical factor in achieving organizational success (Jafri, 2010: 63), forces to identify antecedents that encourage the employees' innovative behaviors. In the literature, it is observed that various factors are investigated as the antecedents of the employees' innovative behavior. Some of those; fair rewarding (Janssen, 2000), human resources activities (Bücker and van der Horst, 2017), affective commitment, organizational citizenship behavior (Xerri and Brunetto, 2013), job involvement (Peng, 2020), organizational justice (Akram et al., 2020). Moreover, leadership is acknowledged as one of the main factors affecting the employees' innovative behaviors (Scott and Bruce, 1994: 600). There are some researches on the effects of ethical leadership (Düger, 2020a), leader-member exchange (Peng, 2020), transformational leadership (Choi et al., 2016), entrepreneurial leadership (Bagheri, 2017), democratic, authoritarian, and laissez-faire leadership (Lin and Wu, 2018) styles on employees' innovative behaviors.

Leaders can encourage employees to exhibit innovative behaviors by instilling positive energy, psychologically empowering them, and developing quality relationships with employees (Ma et al., 2013: 1410). Besides, an effective leadership style can catalyze employees to exhibit innovative behavior (Atitumpong and Badir, 2018: 32). In this sense, empowering leadership, as an effective leadership style that involves employees in the decision-making process, increases their sense of self-efficacy and provides autonomy, greatly encourages them to innovate. Empowering leadership is regarded as a much more effective leadership style than directive, transactional, and transformational leadership, especially for knowledge-based workers (Liu et al., 2003: 143). The feature that distinguishes empowering leadership from other types of leadership is that it aims to create independent and self-directed individuals rather than creating individuals who cannot act independently. Although empowering leadership is acknowledged as an effective leadership style, studies on the impact of empowering leadership on employees' innovative behavior are inadequate in the literature (Rao Jada et al., 2019: 916).

An employee's innovative behavior means going beyond the scope of core business requirements and responsibilities. Accordingly, it is assumed that other factors may have a positive effect on employees' innovative work behaviors. Affective commitment, stated as the employees' emotional belonging to the organization, is considered as an important factor influencing innovative behaviors. Employees who have an affective commitment also have a high sense of belonging, become a participant in organizational activities, and are willing to perform extra effort to achieve the goals of the organization (Rhoades et al., 2001: 825). It is observed that employees who feel an affective commitment to the organization demonstrate a high level of willingness to perform better and exhibit innovative behaviors (Jafri, 2010: 66). Psychological empowerment, which reflects the employees' emotional control power over the work, is thought to have a positive effect on employees' innovative behaviors. Employees who are psychologically empowered feel that they have achieved work autonomy and independence. This situation lays form a basis for employees to exhibit innovative behavior (Ramamoorthy et al., 2005: 144).

In the literature, although there are a limited number of studies that address the effects of empowering leadership (Mutonyi et al., 2020; Rao Jada et al., 2019), psychological empowerment (Afsar and Badir, 2016), and affective commitment (Jafri, 2010; Nazir et al., 2019; Odoardi et al., 2019; Xerri and Brunetto, 2013) on employees' innovative behavior from different perspectives, no study has been found that addresses the impact of other factors on the relationship between empowering leadership and employees' innovative behavior. This study proposes a model to reveal the antecedents of the employees' innovative behavior. In this context, it is suggested that empowering leadership, psychological empowerment, and affective commitment are predictors of employees' innovative behavior. It is aimed to measure the effect of empowering leadership, psychological empowerment, and affective commitment on employees' innovative behavior, based on the assumption that there is more than one driving force that can affect the employees' innovative behavior. Besides, it is aimed to empirically investigate the roles of psychological empowerment and affective commitment in the relationship between empowering leadership and employees' innovative behavior. This study aims to contribute to the literature by focusing on explaining the employees' innovative behavior from an extensive perspective.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Empowering Leadership

Empowering leadership refers to a relational leadership style that reveals the necessary conditions for involving employees in the decision-making process, increasing their sense of self-efficacy, enabling them to participate, eliminating the feeling of powerlessness, and being autonomous in their areas of responsibility (Ahearne et al., 2005: 946). Arnold et al. (2000) define empowering leadership as *"behaviors that facilitate team members' performance by raising their level of autonomy, encouraging subordinates to express opinions and ideas, promoting teamwork, information sharing, and collaborative decision-making"*. Srivastava et al., (2006) define empowering leadership as a leader that sharing his power with his subordinates to motivate them. Empowering leadership is investigated from two perspectives at studies in the literature: the leader's behavior and the employees' attitudes. Leadership behaviors generally focus on areas such as power-sharing, autonomy, and allocate responsibility. Employee attitudes focus on employees' motivation and positive role behavior, which occur as a result of the empowering behaviors of the leader (Tung and Chang, 2011: 44). Arnold et al. (2000) generally consider empowering leadership behaviors as leadership, participant decision-making, coaching, informing, and being interested in followers. Besides, Amundsen and Martinsen (2014) stated that empowering leadership has three significant roles: (1) power-sharing (2) motivational support, and (3) development support. Empowering leadership has a great significance in increasing the potential of employees and organizational effectiveness (Wong and Kuvaas, 2018: 272).

2.2 Innovative Behavior

Innovation is defined as *"the development and implementation of new ideas by employees interacting in an institutional order"* (Van de Ven, 1986: 590). Midgley and Dowling (1978) defined individual innovativeness as *"the individual's openness to new ideas and deciding to adopt an innovation independent of the experience of other employees"*. In other words, innovative behavior is defined as *"a multi-stage process in which new ideas are developed to solve problems in the organization or to improve products, services or processes"* (Carmeli et al., 2006: 78). In this context, the innovative behavior of employees is beyond the development of new ideas, it is a process that includes encouraging employees for new ideas and the application of new ideas (Zehra and Waheed, 2017: 452).

Scott and Bruce (1994) evaluated individual innovation as a multi-stage process and stated that there are different activities and different individual behaviors required at each stage. It consists of three basic processes: creating ideas, developing ideas, and realizing ideas. Similarly, Nazir et al. (2019) suggest that innovative behavior occurs as a result of three stages. These are respectively; defining problems, creating innovative ideas and solutions, and supporting innovative ideas and solutions. However, it is necessary to spread these behaviors to all employees and participate in all employees in the organization, for the sustainability of innovative work behaviors.

Innovative behavior involves the formal work tasks of the employees as well as beyond them. Therefore, innovative behavior consists of a combination of in-role and extra-role behaviors (Odoardi et al., 2019: 103). Employees' innovative behavior includes thinking about present problems and improving business processes, identifying people's unmet needs, following up new trends and changes, proposing new solutions, sharing information, and addressing problems in new ways (De Jong and Den Hartog, 2007: 42; Yidong and Xinxin, 2013: 443). As a result, employees are the initiators and sustainers of innovation, which is considered as the main source of competition with their behaviors (Düger, 2020a: 707).

2.3 Psychological Empowerment

Empowerment is expressed as a personal phenomenon in which employees take responsibility for their own actions and also a tool that enables them to make their own decisions (Erstad, 1997: 325). Ahearne et al. (2005) state that there are two main approaches to empowerment. The first of these is based on authorization in an institutional context. This empowerment approach involves giving employees increased autonomy and decision-making authority to fulfill their primary task work (Leach et al, 2003: 28). The second empowerment approach is based on the psychological dimension that reflects the employees' emotional control over the work. Conger and Kanungo (1988) define psychological empowerment as "determining the conditions that increase weakness in the process of developing a sense of self-efficacy among organization members and it is eliminated through organizational practices and effective information". Ramamoorthy et al. (2005) define psychological empowerment as "autonomy and perception of power that can make unique and positive employees' innovative behaviors of tick". Psychological empowerment is based on a sense of empowerment in the process of making their own decisions and sharing responsibility (Düger, 2020b: 1220).

Spreitzer (1995) states the psychological empowerment as a motivational structure with four cognitive elements in terms of employees' orientation to the work role. In order to fully understand psychological empowerment, Spreitzer (1995) discussed it with four dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Meaning expresses how important the work is for the individual and to what extent he cares. Competence is a person's belief in their specialist knowledge and capacity to successfully carry out work activities. Self-determination is a set of perceptions regarding autonomy in the performance of work-related duties and self-decision making. Impact refers to an individual's belief that it can affect results in the workplace. Spreitzer (1995) argued that these four cognitive elements should be present at the same time in order for employees to become fully psychologically empowered; that is, in the event that any cognitive element is missing, the perceived empowerment will be limited.

2.4 Affective Commitment

Affective commitment, one of the three components of organizational commitment; it is defined as the emotional attachment of employees to the organization, and it also reflects that the employees' intention to stay in the organization (Shore et al., 2008: 635). Affective commitment is defined as "the power of an employee to identify with the workplace and feel as a part of it" (Mowday et al., 1979: 226). Similarly, Meyer et al. (2002) defined affective commitment as "an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement with the organization".

Affective commitment refers to the degree to which employees identify with the organization and enjoy being a part of the organization. In addition, affective attachment motivates employees to believe in the goals and values of the business and to help the business achieve its goals (Jafri, 2010: 66). Meyer et al. (2002) argue that affective commitment is significantly associated with employees' positive behaviors towards work, such as organizational citizenship behavior. Affectively committed employees tend to put the organization benefit before their personal benefits to demonstrate their commitment to the organization by exhibiting behaviors like a good organizational citizen (Rhoades et al., 2001: 825).

Affective commitment supports employees' willingness to go beyond formal job descriptions and to contribute constructively to the organization. Indeed, this situation indicates that affective commitment forms the motivation basis for the extra role behavior of employees (Carmeli and Nihal Colakoglu, 2005: 80). It is

known that affective commitment is an antecedent of in-role and extra-role behaviors such as task performance (Riketta, 2002: 257) and organizational citizenship behavior (Battistelli et al., 2013), and also employees are less likely to quit their jobs (Allen and Meyer, 1990: 1).

3. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VARIABLES AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 Empowering Leadership and Innovative Behavior

Empowering leadership, as a leadership style that has some characteristics such as sharing power with subordinates, participatory decision-making, increasing subordinates' self-efficacy, responsibility and flexibility, and reducing the feeling of powerlessness (Ahearne et al., 2005: 946; Srivastava et al., 2006: 1239), provides a great contribution to the improvement of individual, team and organizational results. Empowering leadership contributes positively to employee satisfaction (Wong and Kuvaas, 2018), affective commitment and self-confidence (Kim and Beehr, 2018a-b), creativity and work effort (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2015), knowledge sharing and team effectiveness (Srivastava et al., 2006), work performance (Kundu et al., 2019), task performance (Lee et al., 2017) and team performance (Tung and Chang, 2011).

Empowering leadership expands employees' control area and deliver them autonomy, which helps them to be more engaged in their work and to be more internally motivated. This situation encourages employees to have a spirit of continuous improvement and development, to displays higher productivity and performance, and to offer more value for the organization (Liu et al., 2003: 143). Employees who empowered by leaders achieve a high level of psychological empowerment to display innovative behavior. This situation causes employees to be internally motivated and thus finding the work more meaningful and to seek innovative solutions (Rao Jada et al., 2019: 918). Gkorezis (2016) argues that empowering leaders give their employees flexibility and autonomy, while at the same time enable employees to do research, and this situation forms a basis for innovation in the business environment. Cheong et al. (2016) similarly state that, with the empowerment of employees, increases the autonomy to take independent actions and possibility of exhibiting the innovative behavior of employees.

Empowering leadership behaviors have also negative effects as well as positive effects on employees. Fernandez and Moldogaziev (2012) argue that employees who are over-empowered by leaders may have too much autonomy, which may lead to failure to fully set goals and performance expectations and, as a result, inhibit the innovative behavior. In addition, Humborstad et al. (2014) argue that under-empowerment can limit the performance of employees and negatively influence their job duties. Based on all these discussions, the hypothesis assuming that empowering leadership will lead to an increase in employees' innovative behavior is suggested below:

H₁: Empowering leadership is positively related to employees' innovative behaviors.

3.2 Empowering Leadership and Psychological Empowerment

Structural empowerment, individual characteristic, work design, leadership, and organizational support are recognized as significant antecedents of psychological empowerment (Maynard et al., 2012: 1242). Seibert et al. (2011) state that leadership influences the psychological empowerment of employees more than any other antecedent. In this context, empowering leadership creates an environment that increases the employee's self-confidence by delegating authority and responsibility and, as a result, enables employees to experience psychological empowerment (Maynard et al., 2012: 1246).

Zhang and Bartol (2010) mentioned four significant contributions of empowering leadership to clarify the effect of empowering leadership on psychological empowerment. First, empowering leadership supports employees to understand the significance of their contribution to the work and thus make the work more meaningful to employees. Second, an empowering leader expresses trust in employees by delegating authority and responsibility to them. Thus, the leader expects high performance from the employees. Third, empowering leadership provides autonomy by encouraging employees to decide how to do their work and allows for self-determination. Finally, empowering leadership encourages employees to participate in the decision-making process to prompt a sense of influence. This situation gives employees a feeling that they can have more control

over the work and make a difference in work results (Zhang and Bartol, 2010: 110). Based on all these discussions, the hypothesis assuming that empowering leadership will lead to an increase in employees' innovative behavior is suggested below:

H₂: Empowering leadership is positively related to psychological empowerment.

3.3 Psychological Empowerment and Innovative Behavior

Psychological empowerment, which reflects employees' sense of autonomy and control over the work, is a significant motivational tool. In other words, as a result of psychological empowerment, the desire to shape the work role and content of the employees, and active orientation of them to work (Spreitzer, 1995: 1444), the autonomy and motivation of the employees increase. This increases the probability of employees to exhibit innovative behaviors. Employees who have a certain autonomy, find their work meaningful, believe that they have an effect on work and processes, that is, feel empowered, have a high motivation to exhibit innovative behavior (Afsar and Badir, 2016: 8). As a result of psychological empowerment, employees gain work autonomy and independence and can learn new things through trial and error. This situation also forms a basis for innovation. With the work autonomy that employees gain, they can produce more new ideas by eluding the bureaucratic rules and regulations that limit innovation. Besides, employees' perceptions of autonomy positively influence the innovative behaviors of the employees and exhibit participatory behaviors in innovation processes (Ramamoorthy et al., 2005: 144). Innovation also includes the risk of failure, and psychological empowerment of employees helps to reduce this risk (Afsar and Badir, 2016: 9). However, Alge et al. (2006) argued that delegated employees develop a desire to innovate and make positive changes in the organization with the effect of empowerment. Based on all these discussions, the hypothesis assuming that empowering leadership will lead to an increase in employees' innovative behavior is suggested below:

H₃: Psychological empowerment is positively related to employees' innovative behaviors.

3.4 Affective Commitment and Innovative Behavior

Employees' affective commitment to the organization is a significant factor in the emergence of high loyalty and commitment. However, employees with affective attachment feel a high sense of belonging to the organization, participate in organizational activities, and are willing to make extra effort to achieve the organization's goals (Rhoades et al., 2001: 825). Employees with affective attachment are more willing to align their individual goals with the goals of the organization and to exhibit positive behavior towards organizational goals. Furthermore, these employees are more concerned about the welfare of the organization (Nazir et al., 2019: 1291). Employees who feel affective attachment tend to have positive emotions and high levels of intrinsic motivation and thus triggering the emergence of individual creativity (Odoardi et al., 2019: 104). Jafri (2010) states that employees with affective commitment feel a deep sense of belonging to the organization, and this situation causes employees to display better performance and exhibit innovative behaviors. Besides, employees who have an affective commitment to the organization, exhibit organizational citizenship behavior and naturally worry about the well-being of the organization, and tend to approach organizational problems in an innovative way (Xerri and Brunetto, 2013: 3166). Based on all these discussions, the hypothesis assuming that empowering leadership will lead to an increase in employees' innovative behavior is suggested below:

H₄: Affective commitment is positively related to employees' innovative behaviors.

3.5 The Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment

It is considered that employees who are empowered psychologically will have positive attitudes and beliefs towards the work and the organization and will exhibit more participatory approaches (Garg and Dhar, 2016: 380). As a result of psychological empowerment, employees with high self-motivation behave with a sense of self-efficacy and do not hesitate to take initiative and responsibility for the work, they also share their positive opinions and ideas with the manager and other employees within the company (Wang et al., 2016: 608). Empowered employees feel that they have the skills, abilities, capacities, self-worth, and self-confidence. These

feelings encourage employees to exhibit extra-role behavior in terms of being innovative and influencing others (Afsar and Badir, 2016: 10).

Zhang and Bartol (2010) emphasized that in order for a leader's empowering behavior to have the intended effect, employees should feel empowered psychologically. It is acknowledged that empowering leadership positively affects psychological empowerment (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2014: 492). Moreover, psychological empowerment has a mediating role in the relationship between empowering leadership and many variables, such as extra-role behavior (Raub and Robert, 2010), behavioral empowerment (Boudrias et al., 2009), job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Konczak et al., 2000), creativity (Zhang and Bartol, 2010), and intention to stay (Dewettinck and van Ameijde, 2011). It is considered that empowering leadership alone is not enough for employees to exhibit innovative behaviors. Therefore, it is assumed that the effect of empowering leadership on employees' innovative behaviors will occur depending on psychological empowerment. Based on all these discussions, the hypothesis assuming that psychological empowerment has a mediator role in the relationship between empowering leadership and employees' innovative behavior is suggested below:

H₅: Psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between empowering leadership and employees' innovative behavior

3.6 The Moderator Role of Affective Commitment

The leader grants autonomy to the employees by exhibiting empowering behaviors, shares his power with them and supports their development, empowering leaders who have these behaviors, cause to increase the motivation and effectiveness of the employees and causes them to exhibit positive attitudes towards the work and the organization (Kim and Beehr, 2018a: 2022). Affective commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991: 67), which demonstrates the deep emotional relationship of employees to the organization, develops as a result of the interaction between the leader and the employees. Therefore, an affective commitment expressed as a positive emotion is likely to increase the influence of the leader's behavior.

Employees generally consider their leaders as representatives of the organization. Therefore, every behavior of the leader also reflects the company management or organization. Rousseau (1998) reveals that the psychological contract theory perceives employees' promises of the leader as the promises of the organization. Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) state that according to social exchange theory, the positive behavior of the leader will increase the loyalty of the employees and they will have a sense of commitment to the organization. Eisenberger et al. (2010) emphasize that according to the organizational support theory, employees consider the support they perceive from leaders as the support they receive from the organization. These theories prove that the leader is perceived as a person representing the organization. In this context, as a result of empowering leadership behavior, it supports the development of employees, and gives autonomy and authority to determine their own destiny and also it will increase the employees' desire to establish an emotional linkage with the organization, and therefore organizational affective commitment will occur (Kim and Beehr, 2018a: 2023). As a consequence, it will be ensured that employees exhibit extra-role behaviors beyond positive attitudes and behaviors with the increase of affective commitment of employees. Therefore, it is assumed that affective commitment strengthens the relationship between empowering leadership and innovative behavior, which is acknowledged as a positive employee behavior. Based on all these discussions, the hypothesis assuming that affective commitment has a moderator role in the relationship between empowering leadership and employees' innovative behavior is suggested below:

H₆: Affective commitment moderates the relationship between empowering leadership and employees' innovative behavior

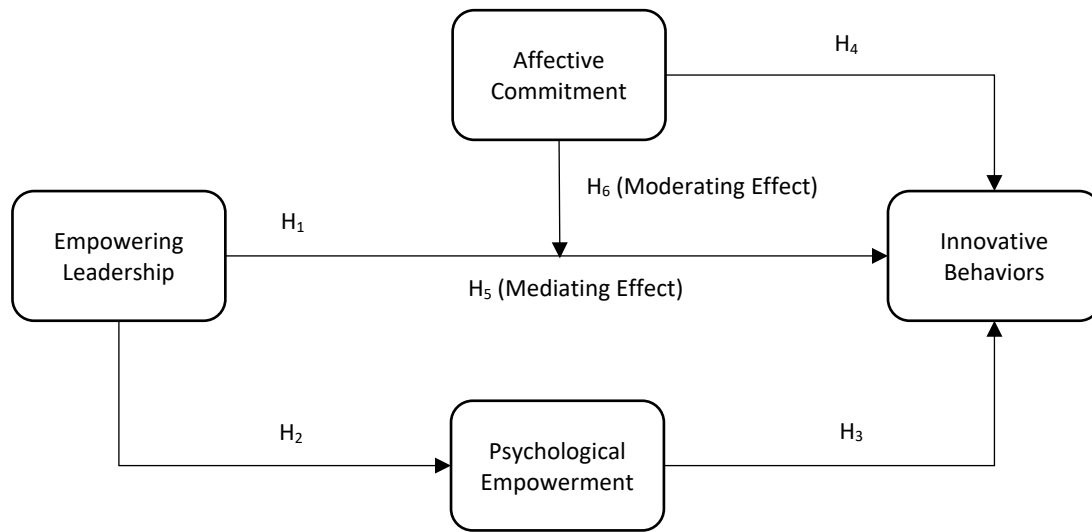


Figure 1. Research Model

4. METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Purpose, Scope and Method of the Research

In this study, a model is proposed to reveal the antecedents of innovative behavior. In this context, it is aimed to measure the effect of empowering leadership, psychological empowerment, and affective commitment on employees' innovative behavior. In addition, it is aimed to empirically investigate the roles of psychological empowerment and affective commitment in the relationship between empowering leadership and employees' innovative behavior. In the scope of the research, the white-collar workers of a ready-made clothing company with high brand awareness operating in Istanbul were chosen as the main population. The ready-made clothing industry has been selected as the research area because it is an important export item for Turkey and innovation has a critical significance in this industry. In the company, which has a total of 4,000 (400 of them are white-collar workers) employees in March 2020, 350 questionnaires were handed out to white-collar workers by hand and online using the convenience sampling method, and 234 (67%) available questionnaire forms were returned. The questionnaires consist of two parts; in the first part, there are 6 statements about determining demographic variables, and in the second part, there are 41 statements about the scales of empowering leadership, innovative behavior, psychological empowerment, and affective commitment.

4.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Since the research is a quantitative study, the data were obtained by the survey technique. A total of four scales are used in the research, consisting of empowering leadership, innovative behavior of employees, psychological empowerment, and affective commitment. In this study, the empowering leadership scale developed by Konczak et al. (2000) was used. This scale consists of five sub-dimensions (delegation of authority, accountability, self-directed decision making, information sharing, and skill development) and 17 statements. The innovative behaviors scale consisting of a single dimension and 6 statements developed by Scott and Bruce (1994) is used. The psychological empowerment scale consisting of four sub-dimensions (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact) and 12 expressions developed by Spreitzer (1995) is used. Affective commitment scale consisting of a single dimension and 6 statements developed by Meyer et al. (1993) is used. The expressions used in the scales were used in the 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly Disagree - 5 = Strongly Agree). The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed in the framework of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, correlation analysis, linear regression analysis, moderation (Model-1), and mediation analysis (Model-4) by using AMOS, SPSS program, and Process Macro (Hayes, 2013).

4.3 Research Findings

When the demographic characteristics of 234 employees participating in the study are investigating; 30.8% are women, 69.2% are men, 44.4% of them are single and 55.6% are married. 14.5% of the employees are in the 18-25 age group, 36.8% in the 26-30 age group, 40.2% in the 31-39 age group, 7.6% in the 40-54 age group, and 0.9% in the 55 age and above. 12% of the participants are primary education, 36.8% high school, 15.8% associate degree, 32.4% undergraduate, and 3% graduate degree. In addition, 31.2% of the participants have a working period of less than 1 year, 54.7% 1-5 years, 13.2% 6-10 years, and 0.9% 11-20 years.

In order to clarify the factor structures of the scales used in the research model, and to determine their reliability and validity, factor analysis was performed first. The scales were subjected to factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis for individual principal components using the Varimax rotation method. According to the exploratory factor analysis result; a statement of the accountability dimension is removed from the analysis because it is loaded in different dimensions at the same time. Also, according to the confirmatory factor analysis results; one statement each belonging to meaning and competence dimensions, and twice statements each belonging to innovative behaviors and affective commitment variables were removed from the analysis because it has low factor loadings. The findings of the renewed exploratory factor analysis are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Exploratory Factor Analysis Findings

Variables	Sub-Dimension	Number of Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha Value	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
Empowering Leadership	Delegation of Authority	3	(0.690-0.867)	0.923	0.887
	Accountability	2	(0.797-0.880)		
	Self-Directed Decision Making	3	(0.779-0.806)		
	Information Sharing	2	(0.771-0.789)		
	Skill Development	6	(0.601-0.817)		
Innovative Behaviors	Innovative Behaviors	4	(0.706-0.886)	0.811	0.750
Affective Commitment	Affective Commitment	4	(0.753-0.873)	0.846	0.728
Psychological Empowerment	Meaning	2	(0.862-0.905)	0.840	0.756
	Competence	2	(0.849-0.879)		
	Self-determination	3	(0.831-0.903)		
	Impact	3	(0.838-0.897)		

According to the factor analysis results; it was determined that the factor loads of the statements related to empowering leadership were between 0.601-0.880, the Cronbach Alpha value of the scale was 0.923 and the KMO value was 0.887. The factor loads of the statements related to Innovative behaviors ranged from 0.706-0.886, the Cronbach Alpha value of the scale was 0.811 and the KMO value was 0.750. The factor loads of the statements related to the affective commitment scale were in the range of 0.753-0.873, the Cronbach Alpha value of the scale was 0.846 and the KMO value was 0.728. The factor loads of the expressions related to psychological empowerment were in the range of 0.831-0.905, the Cronbach Alpha value of the scale was 0.840 and the KMO value was 0.756. According to Kalaycı (2016), these results indicated that the factor structures of all scales are uniformly distributed and highly reliable.

The fit index values obtained according to the confirmatory factor analysis results of empowering leadership, innovative behaviors, psychological empowerment, and affective commitment scales are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Fit Indices for Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Variables	(X²/sd)	NFI	CFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR
Empowering Leadership	2.56	0.908	0.941	0.082	0.889	0.044
Innovative Behaviors	5.84	0.966	0.971	0.144	0.975	0.026
Affective Commitment	4.55	0.932	0.935	0.141	0.950	0.040
Psychological Empowerment	3.53	0.920	0.941	0.104	0.921	0.039

As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis, it is observed that the goodness of fit values for the scales are in the acceptable fit value range. The GFI (the goodness of fit index) value of the empowering leadership scales is below the acceptable fit index value range. According to Shevlin and Miles (1998), the GFI value is sensitive to sample size and factor loadings, so it is not possible to expect the GFI value at the lower limit of 0.90 for all analyzes. Since the fit index values except GFI were within the acceptable range in the analysis results, it was accepted that the scales indicated sufficient fit. It is also observed that p significance is $p < 0.01$ and the t values for the statements exceed 2.56. These results reveal that the scales are statistically significant.

As a result of the correlation analysis, the means, standard deviations, and correlation values of the scales were calculated. These values are given in detail in Table 3.

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviation, and Correlation Values

	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1	Empowering Leadership	3.8357	0.6436	1			
2	Innovative Behaviors	3.9274	0.7162	0.536**	1		
3	Affective Commitment	3.8814	0.7971	0.666**	0.492**	1	
4	Psychological Empowerment	3.8615	0.5627	0.608**	0.602**	0.590**	1

**Significant at $p < 0.01$

According to Table 3, it is observed that the averages of the scales are high and there is a positive significant relationship between each variable. It was determined that there is a high level of a positive relationship between innovative behavior and empowering leadership, psychological empowerment, and affective commitment.

4.4 Testing Research Hypotheses

According to the correlation analysis, it was determined that there was a relationship between all variables. The strength and direction of the effects of the relationships between variables were measured according to the research hypotheses with linear regression analysis. In order to determine the roles of psychological empowerment and affective commitment in the relationship between empowering leadership and employees' innovative behavior, initially, analyzes were performed for mediating and moderating effects. As a result of these analyzes, it was determined that psychological empowerment has a mediating role and affective commitment has a moderator role. Process Macro Model-4 analysis was applied to determine the mediating role of psychological empowerment in the relationship between empowering leadership and innovative behaviors. Analysis results are given in Table 4 in detail.

Table 4: Regression Analysis and Mediator Effect

Hypotheses		R ²	β	SE	t	p
a	Empowering Leadership ---> Psychological Empowerment	0.369	0.608	0.046	11.655	0.000
b	Psychological Empowerment ---> Innovative Behaviors	0.363	0.602	0.067	11.487	0.000
c	Empowering Leadership ---> Innovative Behaviors	0.288	0.536	0.062	9.677	0.000
c'	Empowering Leadership ---> Psychological Empowerment ---> Innovative Behaviors	0.409	0.270	0.071	4.257	0.000
	Affective Commitment ---> Innovative Behaviors	0.242	0.492	0.051	8.605	0.000
Bootstrap results for indirect effect						
			β	SE	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI
ab paths			0.266	0.038	0.1937	0.3407
Indirect effect and significance using Sobel test						
			β	SE	z	p
ab paths			0.266	0.055	6.1003	0.000

According to the regression analysis results; empowering leadership has a positive and significant effect on psychological empowerment ($\beta=0.608$, $t=11.655$, $p<0.001$), psychological empowerment has a positive and significant effect on innovative behaviors ($\beta=0.602$, $t=11.487$, $p<0.001$), empowering leadership has a positive and significant effect on innovative behaviors ($\beta=0.536$, $t=9.677$, $p<0.001$), affective commitment has a positive and significant effect on innovative behaviors ($\beta=0.492$, $t=8.605$, $p<0.001$). According to the regression analysis results, the values of the relationship between the variables are observed that p significance is $p<0.01$, the β values being positive and the t values for the statements exceed 2.56. According to these results, H_1 , H_2 , H_3 , and H_4 hypotheses were accepted.

To measure the mediating effect of psychological empowerment, “Bootstrap” developed by Preacher and Hayes (2004) and regression analysis developed and consisting of three stages by Baron and Kenny (1986) were used together. First of all, the effect of empowering leadership on psychological empowerment was analyzed (path a) $\beta=0.608$ ($p<0.01$). Afterwards, the effect of psychological empowerment on innovative behavior (path b) $\beta=0.602$ ($p<0.01$) and the effect of empowering leadership on innovative behavior were analyzed (path c) $\beta=0.536$ ($p<0.01$). According to the results, it was determined that there is a positive significant relationship between the variables. With the inclusion of psychological empowerment in the model in which empowering leadership influences innovative behavior, the effect of empowering leadership on innovative behavior (c') decreased to $\beta=0.270$ ($p<0.01$). This reduction occurred indicates that there is partial mediation. The Sobel test was conducted using the MedGraph-I program developed by Jose (2013a) to determine whether the partial mediation was significant. It was concluded that the obtained results ($z= 6.10$, $p<0.01$) were significant. As a result of the regression analysis in the Process Macro (Model-4) method, it was concluded that the indirect effect (path ab) was $\beta=0.266$ and the lower and upper confidence intervals were 0.1937-0.3407. Preacher and Hayes (2004) state that in order for the β value to be significant, the lower and upper confidence intervals in the Bootstrap method should not contain zero, that is, the lower and upper confidence interval values should be either positive or negative. According to this result, the partial mediating effect of psychological empowerment was significant and H_5 hypotheses were accepted.

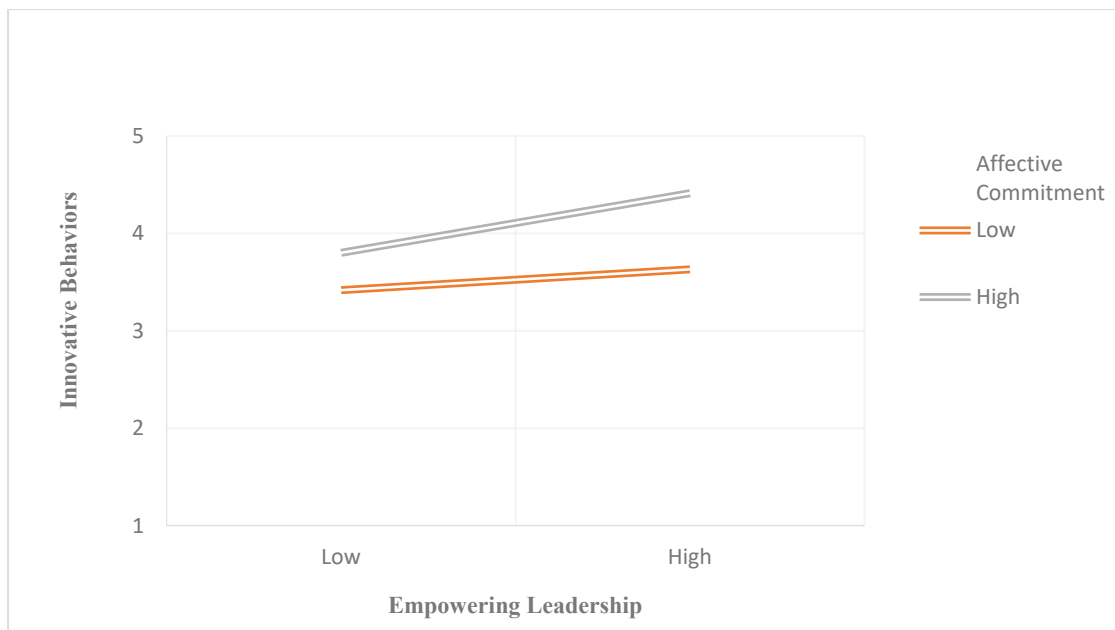
Regression analysis was performed using the Process Macro (Model-1) developed by Hayes (2013) to determine the moderator effect of affective commitment in the relationship between empowering leadership and innovative behavior. The results of the analysis are given in Table 5.

Table 5: Moderator Effect of Affective Commitment

Variables	Coefficient	SE	t	p	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI
Interaction term of Empowering Leadership x Affective Commitment	0.1932	0.0671	-2.8808	0.004	0.611	0.3253
Conditional effect of empowering leadership on innovative behaviors at low and high values of affective commitment						
Low	0.2787	0.093	2.995	0.003	0.0953	0.4620
High	0.5685	0.095	5.958	0.000	0.3805	0.7565
Model Summary	R	R²	F	p		
	0.5864	0.3438	40.176	0.000		
R² increase due to interaction		ΔR²	F	p		
0.0237		82.993	0.004			

The interaction term of empowering leadership x affective commitment ($\beta=0.1932$; $p<0.01$) is significant. Summary values of the model for moderator effect $R^2=0.344$; $F=40.18$; $p<0.01$ appears to be significant. The ratio of empowering leadership to explain innovative behavior increased from 29% to 34% (See Table 4). It was concluded that the R^2 value, which increased as a result of the interaction, increased 2.4% at the $p<0.01$ significance level. As a result, it has been concluded that affective commitment has a moderator role in the effect of empowering leadership on innovative behavior. Accordingly, the H_6 hypothesis was accepted.

A graph was obtained using the ModGraph-I program developed by Jose (2013b) to better determine the moderator effect of affective commitment at different levels. The moderator effects are given in cases where affective commitment has low and high values in Graph 1. When affective commitment is at a low level, $B=0.279$ ($t=2.995$) at a significance level of $p<0.01$ and at a high level, $B=0.568$ at a significance level of $p<0.01$; ($t=5.958$). These results indicated that when affective commitment increases, the moderator effect increases accordingly.



Graph 1: Interaction Level of Affective Commitment as a Moderator

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It is an undeniable fact that in today's markets where change is occurring rapidly, companies that cannot innovate have reduced their competitive ability and face the risk of withdrawing from the market. It is observed that companies that are constantly innovating have achieved a higher organizational performance level, increasing their market share and profitability. Employees' innovative behavior is considered a critically significant factor for companies to gain a competitive advantage and survive in the competitive business environment in the long term. In this context, it has become extremely significant to identify the antecedents that encourage the innovative behavior of employees, which are the basis of innovation. Accordingly, a model is suggested for employees to reveal the antecedents of their innovative behavior. It is aimed to measure the effect of empowering leadership, psychological empowerment, and affective commitment on employees' innovative behavior, based on the assumption that there is more than one driving force that can affect the employees' innovative behavior. Besides, it is aimed to empirically investigate the roles of psychological empowerment and affective commitment in the relationship between empowering leadership and employees' innovative behavior.

As a result of the research, it has been determined that empowering leadership positively influences the employees' innovative behaviors. It is observed that when the leaders share their power with the employees, expand areas of responsibility, and grant autonomy to the employees, it causes the employees to exhibit extra-role behavior in order to contribute to the business and the organization within the framework of innovation. The leader delegates authority and responsibility to employees empowers them and reflects their trust in them. This situation leads to an increase in the motivation and performance of the employees. It is thought that empowering leadership will facilitate the transition to holacracy management, which is evaluated as the management approach of the future and focuses on giving employees autonomy, authority, responsibility, and decision-making authority. The result of this research is similar to the studies in the literature (Mutonyi et al., 2020; Rao Jada et al., 2019). In addition, it was concluded that empowering leadership influences psychological empowerment positively. Maynard et al. (2012) recognize that empowering leadership is an important antecedent of psychological empowerment. Empowering leadership enables employees to understand the significance of their contribution to the work and provide them the opportunity to self-determination, and empower employees psychologically, as a result, the leadership leads to exhibit positive behavior of employees. The result of this research is similar to the studies in the literature (Dewettinck and van Ameijde, 2011; Zhang and Bartol, 2010).

This study proves that psychological empowerment positively influences employees' innovative behavior. Employees' sense of control over their work contributes to the emergence of innovative ideas as well as working more efficiently. Employees who are empowered psychologically are much more likely to engage in constructive behaviors towards the work and the organization, and they are willing to fulfill extra-role as well as in-role tasks. The result of this research is similar to the studies in the literature (Afsar and Badir, 2016). According to another result of the study, it was concluded that affective commitment positively influences the innovative behaviors of the employees. Employees with affective commitment feel a high sense of belonging to the organization, participate in organizational activities, and are willing to perform extra effort to achieve the goals of the organization (Rhoades et al., 2001: 825). In this context, increasing the affective commitment of the employees leads to better performance and innovative behaviors. The result of the research is similar to various studies (Jafri, 2010; Nazir et al., 2019; Odoardi et al., 2019; Xerri and Brunetto, 2013) in the literature that deals with the relationship between affective commitment and innovative behavior from various perspectives.

As a result of the mediation analysis, it was concluded that psychological empowerment has a partial mediating effect on the relationship between empowering leadership and employees' innovative behavior. According to this result; empowering leadership alone is not enough for employees to exhibit innovative behaviors. The effect of empowering leadership on employees' innovative behavior is realized via the employees' feeling of control of work. In other words, the effect of empowering leadership on innovative behavior depends on the level of psychological empowerment. Finally, according to the analysis results, it was concluded that affective commitment has a moderator effect on the relationship between empowering leadership and employees' innovative behavior. According to this result; the strength of the relationship between empowering leadership and innovative behavior increases with the moderating effect of affective commitment. Employees' sense of

belonging to the organization and considering that they are a part of the organization leads to an increase in the effect of empowering leadership and, consequently, an increase in the impact on the emergence of innovative behaviors.

White-collar workers are considered as a significant force that makes ready the company for the future, guides them and enables them to achieve their goals for almost every sector. The motivation, success, and performance of white-collar workers influence the performance of blue-collar workers and the outcomes of the organization. In this context, it is expected that the organizational behaviors of white-collar workers who are empowered by the leaders have a much higher impact power. Among the characteristics of empowerment; autonomy, authorization, and decision-making based on cooperation, lead employees to transfer their knowledge to work, become researchers, following, seeking, and implementing recent innovation. In this context, it should be taken into consideration that empowered employees who exhibit innovative behavior are critically significant for the ready-made clothing industry, where continuous change occurs and where innovation and design are vital.

In the summary of the study; it was determined that there are positive effect of empowering leadership, psychological empowerment, and affective commitment on employees' innovative behavior. One of the most important differences of these results from other studies in the literature is that it focuses on the behavioral characteristics of white-collar workers. As an example, some research in the literature focuses on public employees (Mutonyi et al., 2020), supervisor-subordinates (Afsar and Badir, 2016; Rao Jada et al., 2019), nursing employees (Xerri and Brunetto, 2013), frontline service employees (Dewettinck and van Ameijde, 2011), and managers (Nazir et al., 2019). Besides, it was empirically determined that there are the mediating role of psychological empowerment and the moderator role of affective commitment in the relationship between empowering leadership and employees' innovative behavior. These empirical results, which reflect the major difference of this study from others, are expected to contribute to further studies. In this study, it is a significant limitation of the research to use only the data obtained from the employees of a company for analysis. Other limitations of the study are the limited cost, time, and sample size. One should be paid attention at the point of generalizing the result, because of the measurement of the variables based on personal statement and perceptions. In order to generalize the research results, it is recommended to conduct studies in different sectors and with larger sample size. In future research, it is suggested that empowering leadership should be handled within the framework of holacracy, culture, and Industry 4.0.

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