



Does psychological empowerment of healthcare workers trigger innovative work behaviors? A moderated mediation study

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ABSTRACT

This study extends previous research examining the relationships between psychological empowerment, affective commitment, and innovative work behaviors of healthcare workers. Existing research has generally examined unidirectional relationships between these variables. This study, on the other hand, examines the mediating role of affective commitment and the moderating role of perceived social shirking in the effect of healthcare workers' perceptions of psychological empowerment on innovative work behaviors. The study was conducted by reaching 403 employees according to the non-probability sampling method out of 2215 employees working in a training and research hospital operating within the scope of the affiliation regulation in Erzincan. In the research analysis, the AMOS 23 program was used to verify the scale factors, and the SPSS PROCESS MACRO Model 5 was utilized to analyze the variables. According to the research findings, emotional commitment has a mediating role in the relationship between psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior and perceived social loafing has a moderating role in the indirect effect of psychological empowerment (through emotional commitment) on innovative work behaviors. Overall, the findings of this study highlight the importance of developing a comprehensive strategy to enhance employees' innovative work behaviors in the healthcare sector. This strategy should address employees' psychological empowerment, emotional engagement and the negative effects of perceived social shirking. Such a strategy could lead to both employee well-being and the healthcare sector becoming more innovative and productive overall.

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Saęlık alıřanlarının psikolojik olarak guclendirilmesi yeniliki iř davranıřlarını harekete geirir mi? Bir aracılık ve duzenleyicilik alıřması

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ÖZ

Bu alıřma, saęlık alıřanlarının psikolojik guclendirme, duygusal baęlılık ve yeniliki iř davranıřları arasındaki iliřkileri inceleyen nceki arařtırmaları geniřletmektedir. Mevcut arařtırmalar genellikle bu deęiřkenler arasındaki tek ynl iliřkileri incelemiřtir. Bu alıřma ise, saęlık alıřanlarının psikolojik guclendirme konusundaki algılarının inovatif iř davranıřları zerindeki etkisinde duygusal baęlılıęın aracı, algılanan sosyal kaytarma davranıřlarının duzenleyici roln incelemektedir. Arařtırma, Erzincan'da afiliasyon ynetmelięi kapsamında faaliyet gsteren eęitim ve arařtırma hastanesinde grev yapan 2215 alıřandan olasılıksız rnekleme yntemine gre 403 alıřana ulařılarak gerekleřtirildi. Arařtırma analizinde lek faktrlerinin doęrulanabilmesi iin AMOS 23 uygulaması, deęiřkenlerin analizinde ise SPSS PROCESS MACRO model 5 kullanılarak arařtırmanın aracılık ve duzenleyicilik rolnn deęerlendirilmesi yapıldı. Arařtırma sonularına gre psikolojik guclendirme ve inovatif iř davranıřı arasındaki iliřkide duygusal baęlılıęın aracılık rolne sahip olduęu ve psikolojik guclendirmenin (duygusal baęlılık yoluyla) inovatif iř davranıřları zerindeki dolaylı etkisinde algılanan sosyal kaytarmanın duzenleyici rolnn bulunduęu tespit edilmiřtir. Genel olarak bu alıřmanın bulguları, saęlık sektrnde alıřanların yeniliki iř davranıřlarını geliřtirmek iin kapsamlı bir strateji geliřtirmenin nemini vurgulamaktadır. Bu strateji, alıřanların psikolojik guclendirmesini, duygusal baęlılıklarını ve algılanan sosyal kaytarmanın olumsuz etkilerini ele almalıdır. Byle bir strateji hem alıřanların refahını hem de saęlık sektrnn genel olarak daha yeniliki ve retken olmasını saęlayabilir.

1. Introduction

Today, organizations contend with increasing competition, constantly varying consumer demands, and rapid technological changes. To cope with these challenging conditions, supervisors need employees who are psychologically strong, innovative, not prone to social loafing, and have high emotional commitment. In this respect, the relationship between supervisors' approaches towards psychological empowerment and employees' innovative work behaviors can be explained within the framework of social exchange theory (SET). SET, one of the oldest social behavior theories considers social relations between individuals as a kind of resource exchange (Homans, 1958; Bolat, Bolat and Seymen 2009, p. 2019). According to Homans (1958), individuals shape the relationships they develop with other individuals by looking at the rewards or costs they will obtain as a result of their behavior (Homans, 1958). According to SET, employees enter into and maintain social relations with the expectation of being rewarded (such as earning respect, being considered, or forming friendships) (Gefen and Ridings, 2002, p. 47-69). SET is predicated on the fact that if an organization gives its employees sufficient rights, these employees will reciprocate by fulfilling their responsibilities to the organization. In this context, SET argues that the parties will do some favors for each other. According to this theory, the party doing the favor does not have financial expectations from the other party. Expectations often involve the fulfillment of more abstract obligations, and the time of exchange is often uncertain. The social exchange continues as long as the parties meet each other's expectations (Molm, Takahashi, and Peterson, 2000, p. 1396; Kksal, 2012, p. 5). In addition, employees are not equally sensitive to the expectations of or gains from the organization, and so their reactions may differ. Therefore, while some employees exhibit positive behaviors for the benefit of the organization in return

for the investments made by the organization, some employees can remain indifferent, and no change is observed in their attitudes and behaviors (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa 1986, pp. 500-507).

Various studies in the literature have determined that psychological empowerment perception significantly affects innovative work behaviors (Aydın, 2016, p. 74-84; Cindilioğlu Demirel, 2020, pp. 165-184). In addition, different studies have revealed that psychological empowerment positively impacts organizational commitment and has some mediating roles (Çekmecelioğlu and Eren, 2007, pp. 13-25; Tolay, Sürgevil, and Topoyan, 2012, pp. 449-465; Ordu and Balçık, 2018, pp. 63-91). Finally, some research has detected psychological empowerment plays a significant role in reducing social loafing behaviors (Kesen, 2015, p. 6531).

This study extends previous research examining the relationships between psychological empowerment, affective commitment, and innovative work behaviors of healthcare workers. Existing research has generally examined unidirectional relationships between these variables (Knol and Linge, 2009; Afsar and Badir, 2016). This is the most important point that distinguishes this study from other studies. In addition, a comprehensive literature review was conducted related to this study. In the literature review, studies examining the relationships between healthcare workers' perceptions of psychological empowerment, innovative work behaviors and affective commitment were examined. Moreover, the moderating effect of perceived social shirking on these relationships was also investigated.

In this context, this study aims to determine the effect of health professionals' psychological empowerment perceptions on innovative work behaviors and investigate the mediating role of emotional commitment and the moderating role of perceived social loafing behavior in this effect. For this purpose, the concepts of psychological empowerment, innovative work behavior, emotional commitment, and perceived social loafing were first examined in the study, and then hypotheses were generated using these variables. In order to fulfill these aims, healthcare professionals working in a training and research hospital were reached by using the survey method. Finally, the relationship between psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior and the mediating and moderating roles in this relationship were empirically analyzed.

2. Theoretical (conceptual) framework

Social exchange theory is one of the oldest theories of social behavior that views social relations between individuals as a kind of resource exchange (Doğan and Sökmen, 2021). This theory argues that mutual exchanges and expectations between parties shape social relations (Acaray, 2019). Specifically, it argues that when one party provides something to another, they expect the other party to reciprocate (Bahar, 2019). It can provide important insights into how we can use social exchange theory to improve employees' innovative work behaviors in the healthcare sector. The findings related to psychological empowerment, affective commitment and perceived social shirking can help us develop effective interventions to encourage healthcare workers to be innovative and open to new ideas.

2.1. Psychological empowerment

Employee empowerment is the process of enhancing employees' decision-making capabilities and fostering their improvements through sharing, cooperation, training, development, or teamwork (Vogt and Murel; 1990, p. 8). Another definition of empowerment is the transferring of power, knowledge, and experience from top employees to lower-level employees in order to boost employee motivation in organizations (Hales and Klidas, 1998, pp. 88-95). In the literature, the concept of empowerment is founded on two basic approaches: structural and motivational/psychological (Carless, 2004, pp. 405-425).

Kanter (1993) described structural empowerment as the ability of an individual to utilize available resources and make independent decisions to achieve goals. Kanter (1993) also stated that in order for organizations to be successful as a whole, they must create an organizational climate in which their employees can have the opportunity to succeed. In this respect, structural empowerment can be defined as the ability of an organization to create channels through which its employees can easily access

information and resources and to provide support and opportunities to them for the organization to be successful (O'Brien, 2010, p. 14)

On the other hand, psychological empowerment is employees' perceptions about whether they feel empowered within the organization (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990, pp. 666-681). In other words, it is about how employees interpret structural empowerment methods psychologically and how they make sense of this situation (Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian and Wilk 2004, p. 528-529). In addition, in order for structural empowerment to occur, employees must first have the perception of being psychologically empowered (Spreitzer, 1995, pp. 1442-1465). Conger and Kanungo (1988, pp. 471-482) evaluated psychological empowerment as a motivation process and defined it as an increase in the effort and performance of employees. Thomas and Velthouse (1990, pp. 666-681), on the other hand, discussed psychological empowerment more holistically and explained the concept in four dimensions: meaning, competence, autonomy (autonomy/choice), and impact.

Meaning: It expresses the similarity between the roles assumed by the employees due to their job and their own beliefs, values, thoughts and behaviors. In other words, it means that employees internally adopt and care about the assigned tasks (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990, p. 672). According to Spreitzer (1990, pp. 1442-1465), the meaning dimension is employees' evaluation of their goals and objectives in terms of their own ideals and standards.

Competence: It includes employees' belief that they can do their job skillfully and in the best way in the organization (Lee and Koh, 2001, p. 686). In other words, competence is individuals' belief that they can do their jobs properly when they want (Çalışkan, 2011, pp. 77-92).

Autonomy: It encompasses the freedom of employees to initiate, advance, and correct activities in the workplace. Furthermore, it is the level of independence they feel about their working methods, work pace, and initiatives (Spreitzer, 1995, pp. 1442-1465).

Impact: It includes whether employees have any impact on organizational results or whether they can leave a mark in the field in which they work. It is also related to how seriously the organization takes employees' opinions (Spreitzer, Kizilos and Nason, 1997, p. 681; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990, pp. 672-673).

2.2. Innovative work behavior

Organizations gain a competitive advantage over their competitors with the innovations they have made. Considering the changing business environments, customer demands, differentiating markets, and various dynamics, innovation is now a necessity rather than a choice. In this respect, innovation can be defined as a reaction of an organization to the changes in its internal and external environment (Aydoğan, 2018, p. 210). The concept of innovation is derived from the Latin word "innovare" and means "to do something new" (Ahmad, 2009, p. 8). According to Rogers, innovation is related to ideas, practices, or objects perceived by people as new. Schumpeter introduced the term innovation to the literature with the book "Economic Development Theory" published in 1934. Schumpeter saw innovation as the center of economic development and stated that innovation provides continuity and vitality to the economy. At the same time, he used the term "creative destruction" to explain innovation and defined it as the development of a new product in a commercial or industrial sense, the design of novel business processes, the exploration of new markets, the discovery of new supply channels, or the innovation of business organizations (Croitoru, 2012, pp. 137-138).

Conceptually, innovation is defined as a means of change. It can also be described as business ideas that emerge with a simple business idea in its origin, improve with experience and creativity, and add value to organizations. Innovative work ideas or behaviors may occur depending on organizational habits or, on the contrary, by breaking all organizational taboos (Kırım, 2008 cited in Fettahlioğlu, Alkış, and Özay, 2018, p. 142). Innovative work behavior is the development of new ideas or solutions by giving up the routine to facilitate employee duties and generate new products or services. It includes many methods such as abandoning the routine, developing business simplification strategies, improving service, and making new offers to customers (Devloo, Anseel, De Beuckelaer and Salanova 2015, pp. 491-504).

Innovative work behavior was conceptualized by Janssen as the creation, promotion, and implementation of new work ideas that is consciously designed to benefit the group or organization. According to this definition, innovative work behavior is a concept that can improve employees' performance and enable them to achieve new outputs. However, innovative work behavior does not only mean obtaining new outputs. It also has socio-psychological benefits such as reducing job stress, increasing job satisfaction, and improving communication between employees (Janssen, 2000, p. 288). According to Janssen, innovative work behavior has four dimensions: idea discovery, idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization. Idea discovery is the identification of an opportunity or problem. Idea generation is the development of new products, ideas, processes, markets, or solutions to problems. After the idea is created, idea promotion entails sharing and promoting it among working groups or organizations. Finally, idea realization is the testing or transformation of a developed idea into new products or processes (Janssen, 2000, pp. 289-302).

In brief, innovative work behavior means the development of new businesses or processes, and the generation, improvement, and implementation of new work ideas within a group or organization by abandoning routine practices. Innovative work behavior also refers to the behavior that employees consciously show to solve the most fundamental organizational issues, develop new business models to meet organizational needs, streamline tasks, and accelerate business processes.

2.3. Social loafing

The term "social loafing" was first used in socio-psychology and management science by the French agricultural engineer Ringelmann in 1913 with a rope-pulling experiment (Kravitz and Martin, 1986, p. 937). Through this experiment, Ringelmann determined that the force that people use to pull the rope varies both individually and within a group, with the force applied individually being higher than the force applied in a group. Additionally, he discovered that the amount of force used by each individual in the group decreased as the number of group members rose (Harkins and Petty, 1982, p. 1214). Thus, the term "social loafing" has emerged, and it has become significant to investigate how and why individuals tend to loaf. Social loafing, also known as the Ringelmann effect (Witte, 1989, p. 147), is a situation in which some individuals reduce their contribution to the group for various reasons or decrease their motivation levels. Social loafing also refers to the decline in an individual's effort while trying to complete a task with his/her colleagues (Heuze and Brunel, 2003, p. 246). In this respect, social loafing can be seen by many researchers as a social disease that can lead to negative consequences for group members, employees, and organizations (Williams and Karau, 1991, pp. 570-581; Weldon, Blair and Huebsch, 2000, p. 1568; Liden, Wayne, Jaworski and Bennett 2004, p. 285).

Social loafing occurs when individuals perform activities as a group because individuals tend to make less effort in group work and in situations where social awareness decreases, consciously or unconsciously than when working alone (Liden et al. 2004, pp. 285-286). The most significant causes of this behavior are the increase in the number of group members and the consequent sharing of responsibilities and duties among more individuals. Thus, some group members think that their contributions cannot be noticed in the group, reducing their efforts toward work. In addition, factors like individuals' efforts to hide themselves in large group projects, their beliefs that their contributions will not have an impact on organizational outcomes, and their deficiencies will be made up for by other group members all contribute to social loafing. (Kassin, Fein and Markus, 2013, pp. 306; Weiten, 2013, p. 548). Finally, individuals' belief that their efforts in the group will not be noticed by the managers, the perceived lack of organizational justice, and the low level of commitment of group members to each other increase social loafing behavior (Karadal and Saygın, 2013, pp. 206-215; Kantén, 2014, pp. 11-26).

Various studies examine the causes and consequences of social loafing. For example, Harkins and Petty determined that social loafing results in frustration, less productivity, poor performance, barriers to discovering talents, and burnout among group members (Harkins and Petty, 1982, p. 1214). While İlgin (2010) concluded that organizational citizenship behavior reduces social loafing behavior, Akgündüz, Akdağ, Güler and Sünnetçioğlu (2014) found a positive relationship between social loafing and turnover intention, and Aydemir (2018) found a positive relationship between social loafing and conflict tendency. On the other hand, according to Pandey and Aseng (2017), commitment to the

group, evaluation of the individual in the group (peer-self-assessment), group-based projects, and a sufficient number of members in a group decrease social loafing behavior. Uslu and Çavuş (2014) detected that organizational justice significantly diminishes social loafing. According to Kurnaz (2016, p. 1143), social loafing negatively affects the performance levels of employees. Moreover, if supervisors value their employees and contribute to their development, employees' social loafing behaviors gradually decrease.

2.4. Emotional commitment

Organizational commitment has been one of the significant concepts in organizational behavior since the 1970s. In fact, this concept has been seen as one of the most fundamental keys to organizational success. Organizational commitment has positive effects on employees' performance, productivity, motivation, loyalty, job satisfaction, and creativity levels, and so it has always attracted attention. If individuals have certain attitudes towards their jobs, they also have them towards the organization, unit, group, or workplace. This developed attitude is defined as organizational commitment (Özkalp and Kirel, 2018, pp. 664-665; Ersoy and Bayraktarođlu, 2010, pp. 1-18). Organizational commitment refers to employees' accepting the goals and values of the organization they work for, striving to achieve these goals, and showing a desire to continue their membership in the organization (Swales, 2002, p. 159). Also, organizational commitment is the unity and harmony of the goals of the organization and the employee, or the desire of employees to transfer their energy and loyalty to their organizations, which are social systems (Mowday, Porter, and Steers, 1982, p. 20). According to another definition, organizational commitment is the desire of employees to stay in the organization without financial concerns and identifying the goals and values of the organization and themselves (Gaertner and Nollen, 1989, p. 975).

Many behavioral scientists working on organizational commitment put forward different views on the types of organizational commitment. Among these views, Meyer and Allen (1984) are the most widely accepted in the literature. Meyer and Allen first introduced the concept of emotional (affective) commitment in 1984, then the concept of continuance commitment, and finally they improved normative commitment, which reflects the employees' feeling of obligation to remain with the organization, in 1990 (Meyer and Allen, 1991, p. 61). Emotional commitment, the moderator variable of the study, is a concept that emerges from the compromise between individual and organizational values, emotionally binds employees to the organization, and includes being satisfied with being a member of the organization (Wiener, 1982, pp. 423-424). Employees that are emotionally committed to their organizations identify with the organization, take an interest in it, and enjoy being members of it (Güney, 2007, p. 253). These employees tend to remain there because they so desire it and tend to align the organization's values, aims, and objectives with their own (Özkalp and Krel, 2018, pp. 666-667). Before continuance and normative commitment, emotional commitment is the kind of commitment that organizations most want.

As a result, emotional commitment was examined as a mediating variable in this study since it is among the types (dimensions) of organizational commitment and is related to the variables of psychological empowerment, social loafing, and innovative work behavior.

3. Research hypotheses

In the model developed for the research, the hypotheses established among innovative work behavior as a dependent variable, psychological empowerment as an independent variable, emotional commitment as a mediating variable, and perceived social loafing as a moderating variable are as follows:

3.1. The relationship between psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior

Porter (1990) defines innovation as new technologies or new business ideas that provide a competitive advantage. The concept is based on making creative ideas, discoveries, opinions, or inventions suitable for economic fields and putting them into practice (Atabey, İrmış, and Akyürek, 2022, pp. 566-588). Innovative behavior, on the other hand, is the behavior patterns that employees can contribute to the innovation process (De Jong and Hartog, 2007, p. 43). In order for these behavior

patterns to emerge and develop, the management should provide the employees with appropriate conditions and an environment where innovation can be realized. Empowerment encompasses the process by which employees can make work-related decisions and be trained for this. As a result of empowerment, innovative work ideas occur (Atabey et al., 2022, pp. 566-588). These explanations are supported by many studies in the literature. Knol and VanLinge (2009, pp. 359-370) found in their research on nurses that psychological empowerment increases innovative work behaviors. Furthermore, Singh and Sarkar (2012, pp. 127-137) determined positive relationships between psychological empowerment and individuals' innovative work behaviors. Based on these explanations, social exchange theory in general suggests that organizations create a positive exchange relationship by empowering healthcare professionals. Employees feel valued and invested in, which leads them to be more innovative in their work, ultimately benefiting patient care and the healthcare system (Kaluzny, 1974; Gould-Williams and Davies, 2005). There are also similar results in the domestic literature (Avcı and Ulu, 2014, p. 327; Atabey et al., 2022, pp. 566-588; Canbek and İpek, 2021, p. 3417; Aydın, 2016, pp. 74-84; Cindiliođlu Demirer, 2020, pp. 165- 184). Based on these conceptual explanations and research findings, the first hypothesis is:

H₁: Psychological empowerment affects innovative work behavior significantly and positively.

3.2. The mediating role of emotional commitment

Emotional commitment refers to the desire of employees to stay in the company voluntarily (Meyer and Allen, 1997, pp. 1-2). According to Balay (2000), it is the high satisfaction of employees arising from their colleagues, work, and profession, as well as giving themselves more to their work. In order for employees to get high satisfaction from their jobs, supervisors should attach importance to empowerment activities. Sing and Sarkar (2012, p. 130) stated that psychological empowerment increases employees' commitment to their jobs, which in turn positively impacts their innovative work behaviors. Bhatnagar (2012, p. 928) detected that psychological empowerment is strongly related to commitment and innovative work behaviors. Additionally, similar results were found in a study in the literature (Tekin, 2019). Based on these conceptual explanations and research findings, the second hypothesis is:

H₂: Emotional commitment has a mediating role in the relationship between psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior.

3.3. The moderating role of perceived social loafing

Perceived social loafing is the situation in which employees think that their co-workers are putting in sufficient effort, and so they put in less effort than is necessary in a group work. Individuals tend to exert more effort when working alone than when working collectively. Individuals who engage in social loafing believe their contribution cannot be noticed in the group outputs (Williams, Karau, and Bourgeois, 1993, p. 131). In the literature, Kesen (2015, p. 6478) determined that psychological empowerment has a significant role in reducing social loafing behaviors. Moreover, Ersöz (2019, p. vii) found a significant and inverse relationship between social loafing behaviors and emotional commitment. According to Ersöz, social loafing tendencies decrease as emotional commitment increases. Based on these explanations and research findings, the third hypothesis is:

H₃: Perceived social loafing has a moderating role in the relationship between psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior.

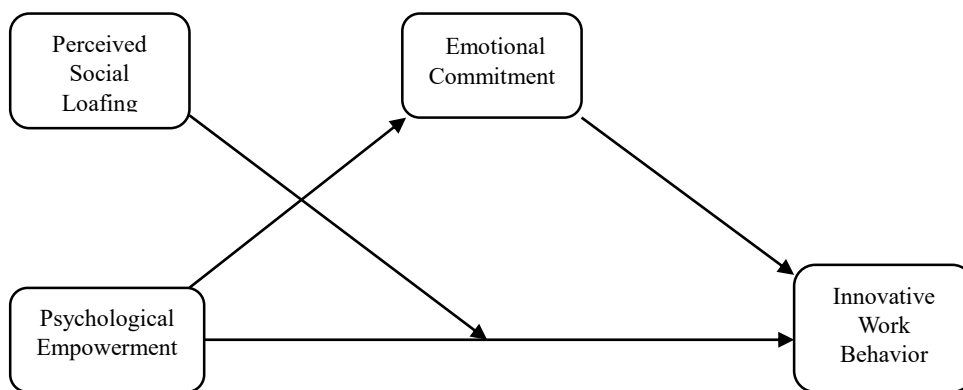


Figure 1. Research model

Finally, this research model was designed based on Hayes' (2004) modeling. It also provides a robust, simple and versatile theoretical framework to examine the relationships between variables. This model can be used to better understand how employees behave in the workplace and to promote innovation in the workplace. The model shows the relationships between these factors. For example, employees with high perceived affective commitment are less likely to engage in social shirking and more likely to engage in innovative work behaviors. Employees who feel psychologically empowered are also more likely to engage in innovative work behaviors.

4. Research method

4.1. The universe, sample, ethical permissions and process of the research

The research universe includes 2215 employees working in the training and research hospital in Erzincan, which operates under the affiliation regulation. Before proceeding to the data collection phase, the necessary ethical approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University (Meeting Protocol Date/No: 23.06.2022/176918). Using the improbable sample selection, 750 questionnaires were distributed to all hospital staff between September 2022 and October 2022 via Google Forms (e-mail and WhatsApp application) and face-to-face methods. Considering the 95% confidence interval and 5% error rate for the sample size, it was deemed sufficient to collect data from at least 328 healthcare professionals. Finally, 403 questionnaires were analyzed after removing incorrect or incomplete ones. The reasons for the choice of hospital identified in the research are: The hospital in question was chosen for the main reasons of ease and efficiency of data collection and analysis, to better understand facility-specific dynamics and contexts, and finally, to design a single-centre study.

4.2. Research variables and data collection tools

The research consists of dependent, independent, mediating, and moderating variables. Accordingly, the independent variable is psychological empowerment, the dependent variable is innovative work behavior, the mediating variable is emotional commitment, and the moderating variable is perceived social loafing.

Psychological Empowerment Scale: Psychological empowerment was developed by Spreitzer in 1995 and measured via the Psychological Empowerment Scale (Spreitzer, 1995, pp. 1464- 1465). This scale consists of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact dimensions and includes a total of 12 items, with three items measuring each dimension. The scale, which has been used in many studies (Spreitzer, 1995; Spreitzer, 1996), is designed as a 5-point Likert format (1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neither agree nor disagree, 4: agree, and 5: strongly agree).

Social Loafing Scale: The scale was developed by Mulvey and Klein in 1998 and adapted into Turkish by Şeşen and Kahraman (2014). The four-item scale is arranged in a five-point Likert format (1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neither agree nor disagree, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree).

Emotional Commitment Scale: The scale was developed by Rego, Ribeiro, Cunha, and Jesuino (2011). It consists of three items and is arranged in a 5-point Likert format. The average of three items

is taken to measure the level of commitment on the scale. Accordingly, the higher the average, the higher the level of commitment.

Innovative Work Behavior Scale: The scale was developed by Scott and Bruce (1994) and adapted into Turkish by Akkoç (2012). It is a one-dimensional scale. Also, it has six items and is arranged in a five-point Likert format (1: I strongly disagree, 2: I do not agree, 3: I neither agree nor disagree, 4: I agree, and 5: I strongly agree).

4.3. Data analysis

The research data were analyzed with SPSS 22, AMOS 23, and SPSS PROCESS MACRO analysis programs. In this regard, firstly, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was determined to calculate the reliability coefficient of each research scale. Then, the AMOS program was used for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the scales. Correlation analyses were then performed to determine the relationships between the variables. Finally, the mediating and moderating roles were analyzed using SPSS MACRO model 5. After the mediation analysis, a Moderated mediation impact graph was drawn to test the moderating effect of the model.

5. Research findings

5.1. Measurement models

In this study, common method bias was checked with Harman's single factor test. If a single factor explains more than 50% of the covariance between measures, it is concluded that there is a significant amount of common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Harman's single factor test results explained 33.121% of the variance in this study, indicating that there was no common method bias in the data. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used in the study to verify the validity of the scales' structure. Table 1 shows the goodness-of-fit values of the research scales and the measurement model.

Table 1

Goodness-of-fit values of measurement model and scales

Models	X²	Df	χ²/df	RMSEA<.08	CFI>.90	TLI>.90	SRMR <.08	
Measurement Model	599	217	2.76	0.06	0.94	0.94	0.04	
Psychological Empowerment	21	11	1.87	0.04	1.00	0.98	0.02	
Emotional Commitment	17	8	2.13	0.04	1.00	0.99	0.02	
Innovative Work Behavior	14	5	2.77	0.06	0.99	0.98	0.03	
Social Loafing Behavior	1.27	1	1.27	0.03	1.00	0.99	0.01	
Validity Analysis	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	PE	EC	IWB	SLB
Psychological Empowerment	0.887	0.402	0.359	0.904	0.634			
Emotional Commitment	0.912	0.776	0.349	0.938	0.591 ***	0.881		
Innovative Work Behavior	0.820	0.535	0.313	0.835	0.468 ***	0.559 ***	0.732	
Social Loafing Behavior	0.893	0.585	0.359	0.914	0.599 ***	0.42 ***	0.312***	0.765

HTMT Analysis	PE	EC	IWB	SLB
Psychological Empowerment	-			
Emotional Commitment	0.616	-		
Innovative Work Behavior	0.421	0.553	-	
Social Loafing Behavior	0.632	0.459	0.301	-

Note: (n=403); ** = p<0.01

According to Table 1, the measurement model of the study ($\chi^2/df = 2.76$ RMSEA=0.06; CFI=0.94; TLI= 0.94; SRMR=0.04) and all research scales have good goodness-of-fit values (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Mishra and Datta, 2011; Çakırođlu and Öztürk, 2020; Gürbüz, 2021).

Convergent validity in a CFA model means that the items in each factor are related to each other and to the factor to which they belong. In order for the factors in a CFA model to have convergent validity, AVE>.5, CR>.7 and CR>AVE conditions must be met (Gürbüz, 2021). When these conditions were evaluated, it was determined that the AVE, CR and CR>AVE conditions in Table 1 were met and only one AVE value was less than .5. The AVE score for self-efficacy is slightly higher than 0.50. However, this result (0.402) is still acceptable. Because AVE is a more conservative measure and convergent validity can be achieved by using only CR as long as CR is higher than 0.6 even if AVE is less than 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Malhotra & Dash, 2011). Finally, discriminant validity is achieved when the AVE for each construct is greater than the maximum shared variance (MSV). Accordingly, reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity were confirmed for all constructs. Table 1 shows the descriptive and correlation scores between the constructs.

5.2. Hypotheses testing

Table 2 demonstrates the research scales' means, standard deviations, correlation values, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Accordingly, the Cronbach Alpha coefficients of psychological empowerment (0.890), emotional commitment (0.908), and innovative work behavior (0.893) have high reliability (İslamođlu and Alnıçık, 2014; Kayıř, 2009). According to Table 2, psychological empowerment is significantly and positively related to emotional commitment ($r = 0.551$; $p<0.01$) and innovative work behavior ($r = 0.484$; $p<0.01$). In addition, there is a significant and negative relationship between psychological empowerment and perceived social loafing ($r = -0.199$; $p<0.01$). Emotional commitment, on the other hand, is significantly and positively correlated with innovative work behavior ($r = 0.410$; $p<0.01$) and significantly and negatively related to perceived social loafing ($r = -0.198$; $p<0.01$). Finally, there is a significant and negative relationship between innovative work behavior and perceived social loafing ($r = -0.138$; $p<0.01$).

Table 2

Mean, cronbach's alpha, standard deviation and correlation coefficients of the scales

	\bar{x}	S.D.	1	2	3	4
1. Psychological Empowerment	4.03	0.656	(0.890)			
2. Emotional Commitment	4.04	0.916	0.551**	(0.908)		
3. Innovative Work Behavior	3.97	0.741	0.560**	0.410**	(0.893)	
4. Perceived Social Loafing	3.07	0.505	-0.199	-0.198**	-0.138**	(0.705)

Note: (n=403); ** = p<0.01

After validation of the research model and scales, hypotheses were analyzed. For this, the Process Macro Analysis program developed by Preacher and Hayes (2004) was used. The bootstrap method was preferred to test the indirect effect of psychological empowerment on innovative work

behavior (through emotional commitment) and the moderated mediation role of perceived social loafing behavior (Preacher and Hayes, 2004; Preacher, Rucker and Hayes, 2007).

Table 3

Regression analysis results for mediation testing

Emotional Commitment						
Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SH</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>LCI</i>	<i>HCI</i>
Psychological Empowerment	0.770	0.058	13.216	0.000	0.655	0.884
Innovative Work Behavior						
Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SH</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>LCI</i>	<i>HCI</i>
Emotional Commitment	0.118	0.040	2.980	0.003	0.040	0.196
Psychological Empowerment (Direct Effect)	0.542	0.055	9.769	0.000	0.433	0.651
Psychological Empowerment (Total Effect)	0.633	0.047	13.540	0.000	0.541	0.724
			<i>B</i>	<i>SH</i>	<i>LCI</i>	<i>HCI</i>
Mediating Effect			0.083	0.038	0.021	0.170
Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SH</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>LCI</i>	<i>HCI</i>
Interaction of Psychological Empowerment and Social Loafing						
	-0.194	0.071	-2.739	0,006	-0.333	-0.055
Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SH</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>LCI</i>	<i>HCI</i>
-1 <i>SD</i> (-.81)	0.618	0.062	9.907	0,000	0.495	0.741
<i>M</i> (.00)	0.520	0.056	9.314	0,000	0.410	0.630
+1 <i>SD</i> (.81)	0.422	0.070	6.031	0,000	0.285	0.560

Note: (n=403) *LCI*: Lowest confidence interval, *HCI*: Highest confidence interval

According to the regression results for the mediation test in Table 3, employee empowerment significantly and positively affects innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.770$). Thus, the H1 hypothesis was accepted. Moreover, the relations between the variables are significant. This result provided the opportunity to question the mediation relationship. In the second hypothesis, it was examined whether emotional commitment has a mediating role in the relationship between psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior. Regression analysis was applied when analyzing the mediating role. Model 5, one of the models developed by Hayes (2013), and 5000 resamples of the Bootstrap technique were selected for the analysis. In order to support mediation analyses in the bootstrap technique, the confidence interval value at the 95% confidence interval should not be zero (0) (Mallinckrodt, Abraham, Wei and Russell 2006). The data in Table 3 show that employee empowerment influences innovative work behavior indirectly via emotional commitment ($\beta = 0.091$). The confidence intervals for this indirect effect also appear to be significant (95% CI [0.022, 0.174]). According to this result, the H2 hypothesis was accepted.

In the third hypothesis, it was questioned as to whether perceived social loafing has a moderating role in the relationship between employee empowerment and innovative work behavior. In the Bootstrap analysis phase, Model 5 developed by Hayes (2013) was selected, and the analysis was applied with 5000 resamples of the Bootstrap technique. According to the analysis findings, perceived social loafing has a moderating effect ($\beta = -0.194$) on the relationship between psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior. In addition, the confidence interval values (95% CI [-0.333,-0.055]) for the moderating effect are significant. Thus, the H3 hypothesis was accepted.

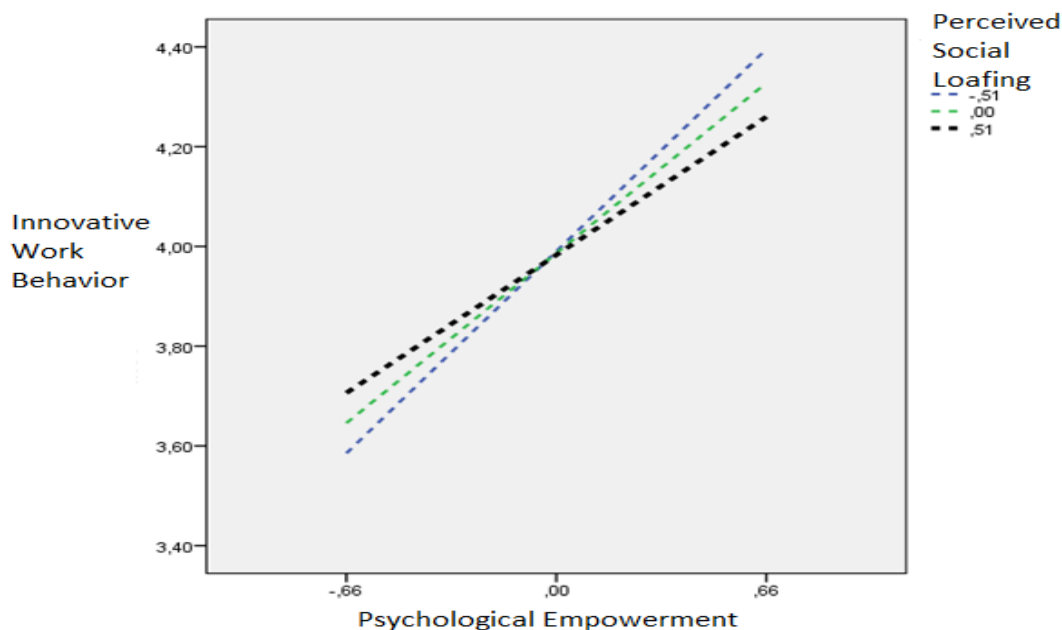


Figure 2. Moderated mediation impact graph

The moderating effect graph in Figure 2 illustrates the impacts of psychological empowerment on innovative work behavior through emotional commitment, according to cases where perceived social loafing is low, medium, or high. Accordingly, when perceived social loafing is high, the relationship between psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior is weak ($\beta = 0.422$, 95% CI [0.285 0.560]). However, this relationship is stronger when perceived social loafing is low ($\beta = 0.618$, 95% CI [0.495 0.741]).

6. Discussion and conclusion

This study investigated the mediating role of emotional commitment and the moderating role of perceived social loafing in the relationship between psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior, as well as the bilateral relations between the research variables. In this context, data were collected from 403 employees of the training and research hospital in Erzincan by questionnaire. As a result of the analysis of the obtained data, the following findings were reached.

As a result of the testing of the first hypothesis, it was determined that there is a significant and positive relationship between psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior, and the H₁ hypothesis was accepted. Accordingly, employees who are psychologically empowered by their supervisors can exhibit more innovative work behaviors. This result is also consistent with the findings of previous studies (Canbek and İpek, 2021, p. 3417; Aydın, 2016, pp. 74-84; Cindilioğlu Demirel, 2020, pp. 165-184).

As a result of testing the second hypothesis, it was found that psychological empowerment has a mediating role in the relationship between innovative work behavior and emotional commitment, and the H₂ hypothesis was accepted. Accordingly, the emotional commitment of employees with strong psychological perceptions is effective in driving their innovative work behaviors. That is, emotional commitment is a significant factor in the emergence of innovative work behaviors. This finding is also in line with the results of previous studies (Tekin, 2019, pp. 127-145).

As a result of testing the last hypothesis, it was detected that perceived social loafing has a moderating role in the effect of psychological empowerment on innovative work behaviors through emotional commitment, and the H₃ hypothesis was accepted. In other words, when perceived social loafing is low, the relationship between psychological empowerment and innovative work behaviors becomes stronger. In working environments where social loafing is low, psychological empowerment will be more prevalent, and employees will display more innovative approaches. On the contrary, in

work environments where social loafing is high, employees will need more psychological empowerment activities and show less innovative work behaviors.

Psychological empowerment has been found to positively impact employees' innovative work behavior by fulfilling their psychological needs and activating intrinsic motivation (Liu et al., 2019). It is also known that psychological empowerment positively affects affective and normative commitment and leads to increased organizational commitment (Jha, 2011). Emotional commitment also has a significant positive impact on employees' innovative work behaviors in organizations, including generating and implementing ideas (Sinaga et al., 2019). According to Chun and Hong (2019), affective commitment reduces social shirking in work groups, while normative and continuance commitment increases it and negatively affects innovative behavior. According to Liden et al. (2004), increased commitment and perception of fairness positively affect social shirking. Considering the variables examined in our research and the existing studies in the literature, it can be stated that our hypothesis results and the findings in the theory are in parallel.

Within the framework of the research findings, some suggestions can be made for supervisors and organizations. Supervisors should especially keep employees' perceptions of psychological empowerment. In this respect, employees' feeling effective in organizational decisions, being able to take independent decisions, and being competent in their work all contribute to seeing themselves as empowered. Today, intense competition conditions also influence the attitudes and behaviors of psychologically empowered employees. In this way, employees who are supported and given autonomy can be more innovative, and their emotional commitment to the organization can increase.

In order to empower employees psychologically, organizations and supervisors should explain the goals of the work to them and align these goals with the employees' values and ideals. They should also explain to the employees what they, the organization, and society will gain from the achievement of their duties and what they might encounter in the opposite situation without offending them. Organizations should give fair rewards so that employees can perceive their work as more meaningful. In addition, they should ensure that employees participate in organizational decisions, allowing them to feel like an essential component of the work and make more efforts to see the positive outcomes of these decisions. As a result, employees can show less social loafing behavior and more emotional commitment and innovative work behavior thanks to various psychological empowerment practices.

The authors found that psychological empowerment has a significant impact on employee motivation and engagement. This result may help healthcare organizations to promote psychological empowerment by giving employees more autonomy, authority and responsibility. This may lead to employees being more motivated, feeling more committed to their work and being more open to innovative ideas.

In addition, due to today's changing and developing technologies, a wide range of social loafing behaviors can be observed. Organizations can eliminate the areas that may cause social loafing by arranging flexible working hours or alternative working environments and schedules for employees. Additionally, they can make some arrangements in work programs that can help increase commitment and innovative behaviors.

Overall, the findings of this study highlight the importance of developing a comprehensive strategy to enhance employees' innovative work behaviors in the healthcare sector. This strategy should address employees' psychological empowerment, emotional engagement and the negative effects of perceived social shirking. Such a strategy could lead to both employee well-being and to the healthcare sector becoming more innovative and productive overall.

Finally, there are some limitations to the research. Firstly, the research was only carried out on employees of the training and research hospital in Erzincan, which operates under the affiliation regulation. This is one of the biggest obstacles to making generalizations about variables. In addition, the sample may not represent different occupational groups and seniority levels of healthcare professionals. This may question the validity of the findings for all healthcare workers. The interpretation of findings can be influenced by the researchers' biases and assumptions. Future research can expand the scope by examining hospitals in different provinces or employees from diverse sectors. Moreover, the research data was obtained by the cross-sectional method. Future research can collect

data using the longitudinal method, and thus examine the data repeatedly over various time periods to reach more objective results. The research model can be re-tested using mixed methods combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. Qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups can be used to gain a deeper understanding of health workers' experiences and perspectives. The research model could be extended to include other important factors such as workplace culture, leadership style and reward systems. The moderating roles of personal characteristics and demographic factors can also be assessed.

Author statement

Declaration of research and publication ethics

This study has been prepared in accordance with the ethical principles of scientific research and publication.

Approval of ethics board

For this research, Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University Human Research Ethics Commission numbered 23.06.2022/176918 Ethics committee approval was obtained with the decision of the ethics committee.

Author contribution

This study has two authors. All stages of the study were designed and prepared equally by the authors.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest between any organization or individual.

Declaration of support

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