

Leadership, Empowerment, and Attitude Outcomes

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The objective of this study was to examine the structural relationship between perceived transformational leadership, structural empowerment, psychological empowerment, and the attitude outcomes of job satisfaction and organizational commitment among teachers. Questionnaires were administered to 154 public school teachers from a central province of Thailand. Path Analysis was used to test the hypothesized research model. The results revealed that the hypothesized model did not provide an acceptable fit to the empirical data. However, after adding the direct relationship between structural empowerment and job satisfaction, the model showed a good fit. Perceived transformational leadership of the direct supervisors was positively related to teachers' psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Structural empowerment was positively correlated to psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. Psychological empowerment was positively related to both attitude outcomes of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Moreover, psychological empowerment played a mediating role in the relationship between perceived transformational leadership and both attitude outcomes. Similarly, psychological empowerment mediated the relationship between structural empowerment and both attitude outcomes. The adjusted model accounted for the 38 percent of the variance in job satisfaction and 28 percent of the variance in organizational commitment.

Keywords: transformational leadership, empowerment, attitude outcomes, teacher

The contemporary nature of jobs differs significantly from those of the past. Industrial and business organizations are more likely to face competition, creating pressure for these sectors to develop production systems, improve quality, decrease unit costs, and respond to customer needs. Moreover, they tend to initiate innovation to serve this rapid growth (Kungsanan, 2006). On the other hand, in the government organizations in Thailand such as public schools in the educational sector, most of the employees are teachers-government officers who are often perceived as ineffective workers. This problem may be due to several reasons. Teacher-working systems utilize top-down strategies to command more bureaucratic authorization, which may create perceptions of restricted control and impede teacher initiatives. Moreover, teacher salaries and other benefits, which play an important role in promoting motivation and work effort, remain quite low when compared

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with other professional jobs. Due to these reasons, they directly affect teacher attitudes toward their jobs such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Unfortunately, salary promotion is difficult due to government system and its procedures. Traditionally in educational contexts, principals and supervisors play a major role in promoting teacher attitude outcomes of job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

However, one effective way to motivate teacher, aside from increasing salary and job benefits is to provide them with greater opportunities for involvement and new work design to empower their in-role performance. Previous literature has shown that empowerment is positively correlated to job satisfaction and performance (Hechanova, Alampay, & Franco, 2006) and organizational commitment (Armstrong & Laschinger, 2006).

There are two concepts of empowerment stated in the management and organizational literature. Firstly, according to Kanter's theory of structural empowerment (Kanter, 1977), employees are empowered when they are given access to empowerment structures to accomplish their work: opportunity, information, support, resources, formal power, and informal power. Both types of power are associated with autonomy and mastery, instead of domination and control. Another concept of empowerment is from a psychological perspective. In this approach, empowerment is described as the manifestation of four cognitions regarding a worker's orientation to their role: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact or outcome (Spreitzer, Jahasz, & Quinn, 1999). More specifically, psychological empowerment is achieved by promoting workers' beliefs about the meaning of their work, their capability to succeed in their job, their sense of self-determination, and their autonomy in influencing the outcomes of their work (Hechanova, et al., 2006). Structural empowerment within a workplace is associated with an increasedin a sense of psychological empowerment. This heightened sense of psychological empowerment has further influenced in decreasing job strain and increasing job satisfaction (Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, & Wilk, 2001). Furthermore, leadership in school is a crucial factor in empowering teachers. Principals or supervisors can encourage and support teachers toward increased self-directed behavior, risk taking, initiative and management of uncertainty (Spreitzer, 1995). Transformational leadership is a style of leader which motivates their followers through identification with the leader's vision beyond simple reward and punishment. Transformational leaders create a sense of trust, admiration and respect from their followers (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

Additionally, transformational leaders influence employees to gain a greater sense of inspiration and self-identity, which promote self-improvement towards their highest personal potential (Bartram & Casimir, 2007). Several researchers have identified a direct correlation between transformational leadership and job satisfaction as well as organizational commitment in Thai organizations (Nilpan, 2000; Chongvisal, 2002; Newchantuek, 2002).

According to the literature, transformational leadership and empowerment factors are directly related to employees' attitude outcomes. In this study, the researchers aimed to study the structural relationship between perceived transformational leadership, structural empowerment, psychological empowerment, and two attitude outcomes: job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The findings of this empirical study may have useful applications towards improving human resource management and improvement in school contexts.

Hypothesized Model

The researchers hypothesized the structural relationship model between perceived transformational leadership, structural empowerment, psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, to be examined as shown in figure 1.

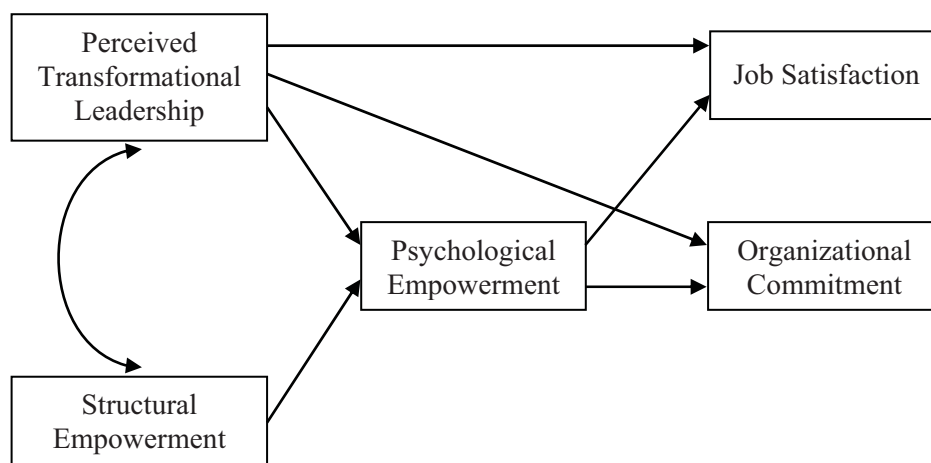


Figure 1. Hypothesized model of structural relationship between perceived transformational leadership, empowerment, and teachers' attitude outcomes.

Method

Sample

In this study, structural the equation modeling was employed to path analysis. Hair, Anderson, Tatham,& Black (1995) recommended a sample size of over 50 and that it should also be adequately large in relation to the number of parameter estimates in the model. Tabachnick & Fidel (1996) recommended 10 participants per estimated parameter as sufficient. From the hypothesized model, there were six regression coefficients, three variances, and one covariance. Accordingly, for these 10 parameters needed for the estimation, the sample size should require at least 100 teachers. The sample of the study was 154 public school teachers from one secondary school in a Central province of Thailand. This sample was randomly selected and consisted of both male (29.1%) and female (70.9%) teachers. Most of them had a bachelor degree (74.2%) and more than 11 years of professional experiences in the school (78.8%).

Measures

The questionnaires in the present study consisted of the Transformational Leadership Scale (Chongvisal, 2000), the Condition of Work Effectiveness Questionnaire-II (Laschinger, et al., 2001), the Psychological Empowerment Scale (Spreitzer, 1995), the Global Job Satisfaction (Pond & Gayer, 1991), the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire -short form (Schwepker, 2001). A transformational leadership scale was developed by a Thai researcher. However, four scales measuring structural empowerment, psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment were translated into Thai by the researchers. Some contents of these scales had been modified to heighten the face validity of the scales, representing the school teaching context in Thailand. Three experts in education and behavioral science examined the content validity of the measures by considering the theoretical content of the original questionnaires and the school context. The lists of measures used in this study are as follow:

Transformational leadership was measured using a transformational leadership scale developed by Chongvisal (2000) based on the model of full range of leadership (Bass &

Avolio, 1994). The 47-items of the scale asked respondents to indicate how they perceived their supervisor's leadership behavior. Ratings were completed on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*frequently*). A sample item: "*My supervisor emphasizes clear objectives*". The data from the present study yielded a coefficient alpha of .97.

Structural empowerment was measured by using the condition of work effectiveness questionnaire-II (Laschinger, et al., 2001). This scale consists of six components of structural condition tapped by 19 items. A five-point scale was used for each item which asked respondent to indicate their ability to access the resources. Rating were complete on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (*none*) to 5 (*a lot*). A sample item: "*Acquiring temporary help when needed*". The data from the present study yielded a coefficient alpha of .93.

Psychological empowerment was measured using a 12-item scale developed by Spreitzer (1995). Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on each item on the five-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). A sample item: "*I am confident about my ability to do my job*". The data from the present study yielded a coefficient alpha of .88.

Job satisfaction was measured using a Global Job Satisfaction created by Quinn and Shapard (1974) and further modified by Pond and Gayer (1991). It consists of 6 items which respondents were asked to indicate how they felt about their job. Ratings were completed on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all or less*) to 5 (*most or completely satisfy*). A sample item: "*In general, how much do you like your job*". The data from the present study yielded a coefficient alpha of .88.

Organizational commitment was measured by using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire created by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) and further modified to be a short form by Schwepker (2001). Respondents were asked to indicate how they identify and involve with the organization. It comprised of 9 items on five-point ranging from 1 (*very disagree*) to 5 (*very agree*). A sample item: "*I'm proud to tell others that I am part of this school*". The data from the present study yielded a coefficient alpha of .90.

Analyses

Two types of statistical data analysis were used in the study: 1) Descriptive statistics used for the basic features of the data such as a mean, percentage, standard deviation and Pearson's correlation. 2) Path analysis was used to examine the structural relationships between the variables and the goodness of fit index was identified by using LISREL program. Structural equation modeling with LISREL was also used to examine the complex models which offer the indirect effect significance test of mediation analysis and provides a goodness of fit between the mediation model and empirical data.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1

Mean, Standard Deviation, Correlation Coefficient, and Reliability of Measurements

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Perceived transformational leadership	3.94	.58	(.97)				
2. Structural empowerment	3.53	.57	.52**	(.93)			
3. Psychological empowerment	4.17	.52	.43**	.40**	(.88)		
4. Job satisfaction	4.09	.64	.51**	.48**	.49**	(.88)	
5. Organizational commitment	4.17	.59	.46**	.38**	.73**	.49**	(.90)

Note. ** $p < .01$, Cronbach's alphas were shown in parentheses.

As shown in table 1, all variables in the study had a positive correlation between .37 and .73, and all the hypothesized relationships were statistically significant at .01 level. Mean scores were mostly high, especially the variable of psychological empowerment of which maximum value was 4.17. It was also found that all variables had a good reliability of measurements between .88 and .97 (see in diagonal of table 1).

Path Analysis Results

A hypothesized model based on the literature was used to analyze how leadership and empowerment variables influenced teachers' attitudes toward job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Using the recommendation from Tabachnick & Fidell

(1996) and Hu & Bentler (1999) to assess the goodness of fit of the model, our hypothesized model did not adequately fit to the empirical data (Chi-squares = 12.36₂, $df = 3$ ($p < .01$), GFI = .97, RMSEA = .14, and CFI = .97). Therefore, we adjusted the model based on Kanter's theory of empowerment (Kanter, 1977) and the previous finding from Sarmiento, Laschinger, and Iwasiw (2004) that the components of the structural empowerment in organization had a positive relation with employee's satisfaction. The result showed a good fit between the adjusted model and the empirical data given by the sample group (Chi-squares = 3.13, $df = 2$ ($p = .20$), RMSEA = .06, GFI = .99, and CFI = 1.00).

The results from the adjusted model were able to specify the path coefficient of exogenous variables, which were defined as the causal factors of teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment presented in table 2 and figure 2.

Table 2

Total Effect, Indirect Effect, and Direct Effect of the Causal Factors Related to Teachers' Attitude Outcomes

Causal Variables	Dependent Variables			Psychological empowerment			Job satisfaction			Organizational commitment		
	TE	IE	DE	TE	IE	DE	TE	IE	DE	TE	IE	DE
Perceived transformational leadership	.31		.31	.35	.08	.26	.38	.20	.18			
Structural empowerment	.24		.24	.30	.07	.24	.16	.16				
Psychological empowerment				.28		.28	.65		.65			
R^2			.56			.38			.23			

Note. TE = Total effect, IE = Indirect effect, DE = Direct effect; All direct effects were significant at .01 level.

The results of the total effect, direct effect, and indirect effect of the relationship between variables in the adjusted model supported all the hypotheses. Moreover, to adjust for the model fit, we added a direct path coefficient of structural empowerment to job satisfaction.

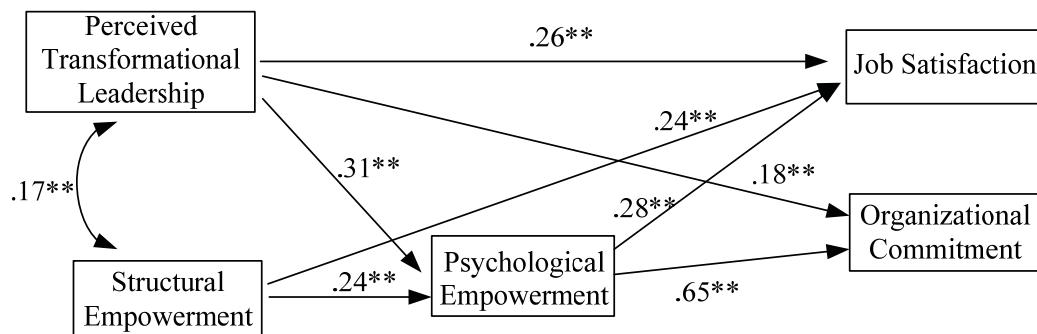
The results revealed that psychological empowerment was directly predicted by perceived transformational leadership and structural empowerment (beta = .31 and .24,

respectively). These variables could accounted for 56% of the variance in psychological empowerment.

Job satisfaction was positively related to the perception of transformational leadership, structural empowerment, and psychological empowerment with the total effect of .35, .30 and .28₂ respectively. All of these variables could explained 38% of the variance in job satisfaction. However, some variables provided both direct and indirect relationships. Transformational leadership, structural empowerment, and psychological empowerment positively and directly predicted job satisfaction (beta = .26, .24, and .28, respectively), while transformational leadership and structural empowerment had an indirect relationship to job satisfaction (beta = .08 and .07).

Organizational commitment was positively related to psychological empowerment, perceived transformational leadership and structural empowerment with total effect as .65, .38, and .16 respectively. These three variables could accounted for 23% of the variance in organizational commitment. However, some variables provided both direct and indirect relationships. Psychological empowerment and transformational leadership predicted positively and directly to organizational commitment (beta = .65 and .18), while transformational leadership and structural empowerment showed an indirect relationship to organizational commitment (beta = .20 and .16).

Adjusted model presented the structural relationship among antecedents of teachers' attitude outcomes .The adjusted model is presented in figure 2.



Note. ** p < .01.

Figure 2. The adjusted model of structural relationship between perceived transformational leadership, empowerment, and teachers' attitude outcomes.

Discussion

Results of this study support the hypothesized relationships between perceived transformational leadership, structural empowerment, psychological empowerment, and teachers' attitude outcomes. We found that perceived transformational leadership toward their supervisors was positively related to psychological empowerment. This result is consistent with Fleming (1997) and Estep (2000), who found that teacher's perception of empowerment was predicted by transformational leadership. Similarly, Ozaralli (2003) found that transformational leadership contributed to the prediction of subordinates' self-reported empowerment. Theoretically, it is possible that teachers who interact with transformational leaders can be inspired, encourage, and motivated to increase their work efforts and to fulfill their potential. Followers get greater opportunities for self-determination and for creative thinking while performing their tasks, which could lead to the perceived psychological empowerment.

Moreover, the results support the hypothesis that perceived transformational leadership was positively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The findings are consistent with previous literatures studied in Thai context (Nilpan, 2000; Chongvisal, 2002; Newchantuek, 2002), which transformational leadership has a positive association with job satisfaction and organization commitment. The results reinforce that supervisors who show transformational leadership can encourage organizational commitment of their subordinates by supporting goal attainment, linking their efforts with their performance, creating teachers' personal commitment to the organizational vision, mission, and goals, and motivating them to get involved and challenge their potential for school performance. Furthermore, transformational leaders place emphasis on subordinate's job satisfaction. Teachers tend to be more satisfied with their job or tasks due to the feeling of self-accomplishment through that the leader empowering them to take responsibility and be initiative in regards to their own tasks. Also, transformational leaders can stimulate their followers' efforts to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways. New ideas and creative problem solutions are solicited from followers (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

In addition, we found that the relationships between perceived transformational leadership and satisfaction and organizational commitment were mediated by psychological empowerment. This study supports the results of the previous studies by Avolio et al. (2004) and Chaoping, Bao, and Kan (2006) that psychological empowerment mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and employee attitude outcomes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. It is possible that teachers who are led by transformational leaders are expected to identify with their leaders and therefore, are expected to have greater feelings that they can have an impact on their organization, through enhancements to their psychological empowerment. Their supervisors get teachers involved in envisioning an attractive future and inspire them to be committed to achieving that future. They build team spirit through their enthusiasm, high moral standards, integrity, and optimism and provide meaning and challenge their followers' work, enhancing followers' level of self-efficacy, confidence, meaning, and self-determination. This psychological state would result in teachers' satisfaction with their tasks.

Structural empowerment was positively related to psychological empowerment. It supports previous findings (Laschinger et al., 2003; Laschinger et al., 2004) that structural empowerment has an impact on psychological empowerment. This result confirms the theoretical integration of Spreitzer's work on psychological empowerment with Kanter's view of structural empowerment as suggested by Laschinger et al. (2003), in that conditions for structural empowerment may enhance an individual's perceived psychological empowerment. Teachers who perceived that they can access the structural resources from the school would interpret their psychological state as being empowered. The finding highlights the importance of creating environments that provide structures that empower teachers to accomplish their work. Such environments result in teachers' feeling of accountability, pride, self-confidence, and accomplishment in their works. Moreover, according to our adjusted model, we added another path of relationship from structural empowerment and satisfaction. This finding supports the previous work of Sarmiento et al. (2004) that structural empowerment, such as support, information, resources, and opportunities, were positively related to job satisfaction. According to Kanter (1977), workplace behavior and attitudes are determined by social structures in the workplace. Teachers are empowered when they perceive that their work environments provide the opportunity for growth and access to power needed to carry

out job demands. When these conditions are met, teacher would become increasingly satisfied with their job.

There are several practical implications to be derived from our findings. By creating a greater sense of work-related attitude outcomes, management person in a school such as principal and supervisors, can improve teachers' sense of psychological empowerment. To promote positive feelings of psychological empowerment, school management person should clearly behave in the way of transformational leadership. These leaders can articulate a vision that inspires teacher to take accountability with their tasks. A clear specification of tasks, goal setting, roles, and intrinsic rewards may also facilitate feelings of psychological empowerment among teacher. Also, transformational leaders who seek to understand needs, create positive climates, and promote the feeling of confidence among teachers would also be likely to contribute to a greater empowerment. Moreover, management person should consider creating work conditions and structures that are in place to enable teachers to accomplish their work meaningfully. This requires management to design a less hierarchical organization by providing supports and power to access resources and information for teachers, especially in allowing teachers' supervisor to have more discretion in empowering their direct followers. This in turn should translate into healthier attitudinal outcomes of teachers in school.

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