

## **Empowerment of Hospitality Employees in Pondicherry: An Empirical Exploration**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Employee Empowerment refers to the allocation of certain amount of powers and autonomy to the employees in the organization. The purpose of this study is to examine about the employee empowerment among healthcare professionals. The data for this purpose has been collected from 149 hospitality employees working in various private and public hospitals in Puducherry region of Puducherry Union Territory. Organization culture, workplace relationships, employees' perceptions over job, work performance and employee empowerment are the factors considered for the study. The collected data is subjected to frequency distribution, simple percentage analysis, and descriptive statistics like mean and standard deviation and Pearson Inter correlations. The results of the study revealed that organization culture and work performance are significantly associated with the employee empowerment, whereas workplace relationships and employees' perceptions over job are not statistically significant with the employee empowerment. Suggestions such as employees grievance redresser programme to improve proper workplace relationships and additional financial and non financial benefits to rise the employees' perceptions over work are provided.*

**Keywords:** Employee Empowerment, Organization Culture, Work Performance, Workplace Relationships, Employees' Perceptions over Job.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The term Employee Empowerment is laying power to the employees by the organization for the purpose of making certain decisions by themselves. It allocates the employees certain amount of powers and autonomy in the organization. Since, the healthcare professionals are the one among the highest responsible and novel profession. Healthcare professionals in this study include all the workers employed in a hospital such as office staff, nurses, doctors and other workers. There should be some amount of autonomy and powers to execute their work without any interruption. Hence, it becomes quintessential to empower the hospitality employees. Therefore, this study plays a significant role in better understanding the role of employee empowerment among healthcare professionals.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

Isaiah O. Ugboro and Kofi Obeng (2000) have studied about the relationship between Leadership style, employee empowerment, work contentment, and customer satisfaction among the 250 employees working in different organizations. The study adopted the simple random sampling technique. The collected data is subjected to the correlation analysis. The study identified that there is a positive association between the top management leadership, employee's empowerment, work contentment and customer satisfaction.

Roy C. Herrenkohl, G. Thomas Judson and Judith A. Heffner (1999) has conducted an research investigation about the employee empowerment among certain 698 employees working in certain companies in the Midwest USA. Recognition fairness, aim clarity, risk taking, quality, teams, company success, work processes and company problems are the factors considered for the study. The collected data was subjected to inter correlations and factor analysis. The study found that the factors recognition fairness and decisions about work process are the major causes responsible for the discrimination among the workers. Isaiah O. Ugboro (2006) examined the association amid work redesign, employee empowerment and turnover intentions among managerial and mid level employees in United States. Work redesign, employee empowerment, affective organizational commitment is the factors considered for the study. Collected data is subjected to correlation analysis. The study found the positive and significant relationship between all the above mentioned factors. Onne Janssen (2004) studied about the association between the employee empowerment and organizational commitment among 91 secondary school teachers in The Netherlands. Gender, Age, organizational tenure, nature of employment, empowerment, organizational commitment and interpersonal conflict are the factors considered for the study. Pearson correlation analysis, univariate analysis and hierarchical regression analysis are the statistical tools used for the study. The study found that there is an significant association between the work empowerment and employees' experiences with employees' commitment with the organization. Elbeyi Pelit, Yukzel Ozturk and Yalcin Arslanturk (2011) found that superior relationships, environmental conditions are optimistically associated with the work contentment. The study also identified that there is a significant rapport between the work contentment and employees' psychological empowerment.

### **Research Gap:**

Since, there are more number of descriptive studies on employee empowerment such as those conducted by Sachin T. Menon (2001) and the empirical investigations done by Jean-Sebastien Boudaris, Patrick Gaudreau, Andre Savoie and Alexandre J.S.Morin (2009); Amarjit Gill, Alan B. Flaschner, Charul Shah, Ishaan Bhutani (2010); John Petter, Patricia Byrnes, Do-Lim Choi, Frank Fegan, Randy Miller (2002); Antonis Klidas, Peter T. Van den Berg, Celeste P.M. Wilderom (2006); Kevin Baird and Haiyin Wang (2009) and many more. All these studies failed to study about the employee empowerment of hospital workers. In addition to this, they does not studied the employee empowerment with the predicting factors such as organization culture, workplace relationships, employees' perceptions over job, and their work performance. Henceforth, in order to fulfill this research gap, this present study has been undertaken.

### **Defining Employee Empowerment:**

Employee empowerment has been already defined by many authors and researchers. Some of the notable common definitions are as follows. Roy C. Herrenkohl, G. Thomas Judson and Judith A. Heffner (1999) described workers empowerment as being more down to business and self-driven towards assisting the business to achieve its ultimate goal. Sanjay T. Menon (2001) defined staff empowering as a cognitive condition described by an act of observed control, capability and objective internalization. Amir Abou Elanga and Amen Imran (2014) explained the employee empowerment as the permission provided by the management to expand the denotation and structure through enrichment in order to lay more powers to the employees. Employee empowerment is sometimes identified through the leadership style that includes the behaviors such as moving forward by heading the team, encouraging participative decision making and information (Josh A. Arnold, Sharon Arad, Jonathan A. Rhoades and Fritz Dragsow, 2000). Thus, employee empowerment could be better stated as the allocation of powers to the workers in an organization in order to make them much empowered over their job.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

The preliminary objective of the study is to find out the relationships among the study variables namely organizational culture, workplace relationships, employees perceptions over job, work performance and employee empowerment. The study also offered certain suggestions to improve the employee empowerment among the healthcare professionals.

### **LIMITATIONS:**

The study is limited to the hospitality employees working in various private and public hospitals in Puducherry region of Puducherry Union Territory. The sample size of the study is limited to 149 samples. The study has

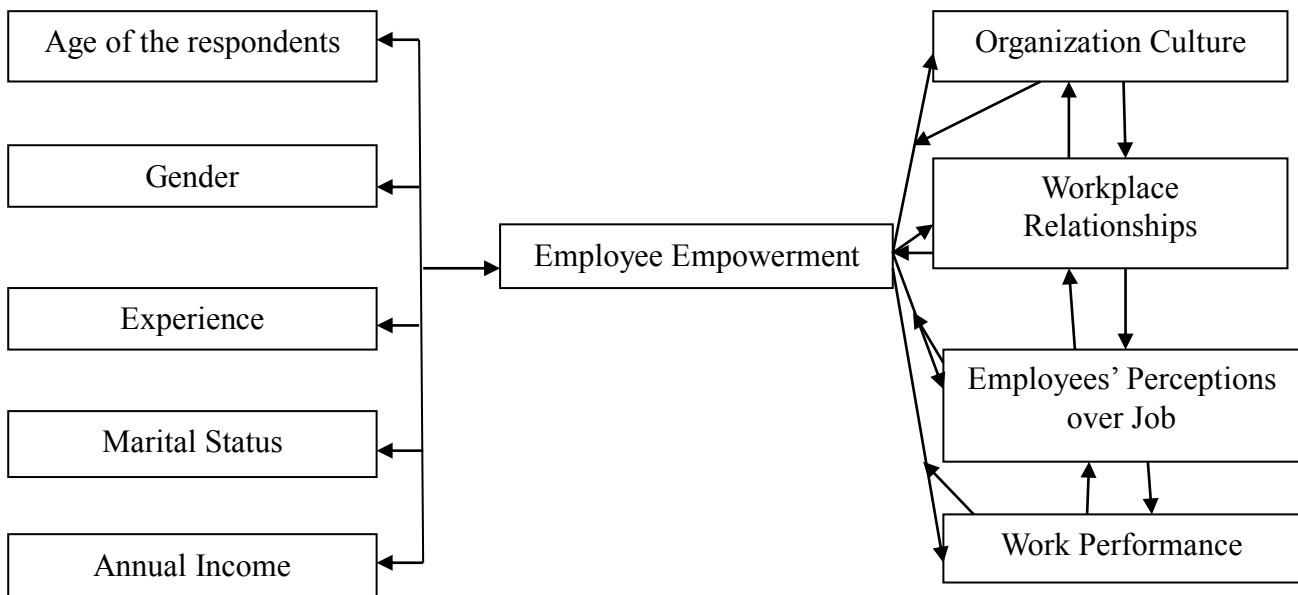
very limited variables of four namely workplace relationships, organizational culture, employees perceptions over job and work performance. If the study has extended its sample size, sample setting and more variables are further added, then there might be probabilities of obtaining different results.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The data for the study has been gathered from 149 healthcare professionals such as doctors, nurses, technicians and other non-medical office staffs. The data has been gathered from various public and private hospitals in the Puducherry region of Puducherry U.T through convenience sampling technique. Data for the study has been gathered through Self-administered questionnaire.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY:**

The variables taken for the study has been presented below in the diagrammatic representation.



**Figure 1: Projected Relationship among the Study factors**

The above figure clearly projects the anticipated relationship among the study factors. That is, the demographic profile of the respondents such as age, gender, experience, marital status and annual income. Considering the organizational factors, the constructs namely organization culture, workplace relationships, employees’ perceptions over job and work performance describes their relationships among themselves and with that of the employee empowerment.

**THEORETICAL BACKGROUND:**

**Demographic Profile of the respondents:**

Demography refers to the personal individual characteristics of the respondents. In this study, the age group of the respondents is categorized into five age groups ranging from 23-28 years, 29-33 years, and 34-48 years, 39-43 years and above 43 years. Considering the gender, it is commonly categorized into male and female. 1-5 years, above 5 to 10 years, above 10 to 15 years and above 15 years are the different categories of the experience ranges, marital statuses of the employees are also considered for the study. In such a way, the annual income of the respondents is also divided into income upto Rs. 2, 00,000, those earning from above Rs. 2, 00,001-Rs.5, 00,000 and those earning income above Rs. 5, 00,000.

**Organizational Factors:**

Considering the organizational factors that are taken for the study, it includes the constructs namely organizational culture, workplace relationships, employees’ perceptions over job and work performance. They are explained below as follows.

**Organizational Culture (OC):**

The organizational culture, in this context describes about all the activities of the organization such as its support, problem grievances for the employees and smooth functioning of the workers. This organizational culture plays a significant and quite important role among the workers in their employee empowerment. This factor is the main reason responsible for the empowering the employees in an organization.

**Workplace Relationships (WPR):**

Employees are being empowered based on their relationships with the peers, co-workers, team members, superiors, subordinates and with other co-workers of the organization. Workplace relationships have been playing a dominant role on the empowerment of the employees. Smoother associations with the employees cause proper employee empowerment whereas inappropriate relationships cause absence of such employee empowerment.

**Employees perceptions over work (EPOW):**

The workers views towards the job play a dominant part on the determination of the level of empowerment of the employees working in an organization. The perceptions vary from individual to individuals and from employees to employees. Strong aspirations and passion towards the work has a strong positive impact on the level of employee empowerment and vice versa.

**Work Performance (WP):**

The Work Performance of the employees is being the most important factor that determines the employee empowerment. Better performance of the employees, if satisfies the employer and the organization then there are more chances of obtaining suitable empowerment of the employees in their respective domains. Absence of such empowerment would be better considered to be one of the outcomes of the poor work performance of the employees.

**Hypothesis:**

Based upon the above objectives, the following hypothesis for the study has been framed.

H1: There is no significant association between the organization culture and Employee Empowerment.

H2: There is a significant relationship amid workplace relationships and employee empowerment.

H3: Employees perceptions over job are positively affiliated with the employee empowerment.

H4: Work Performance and employee empowerment are optimistically associated with one another.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:**

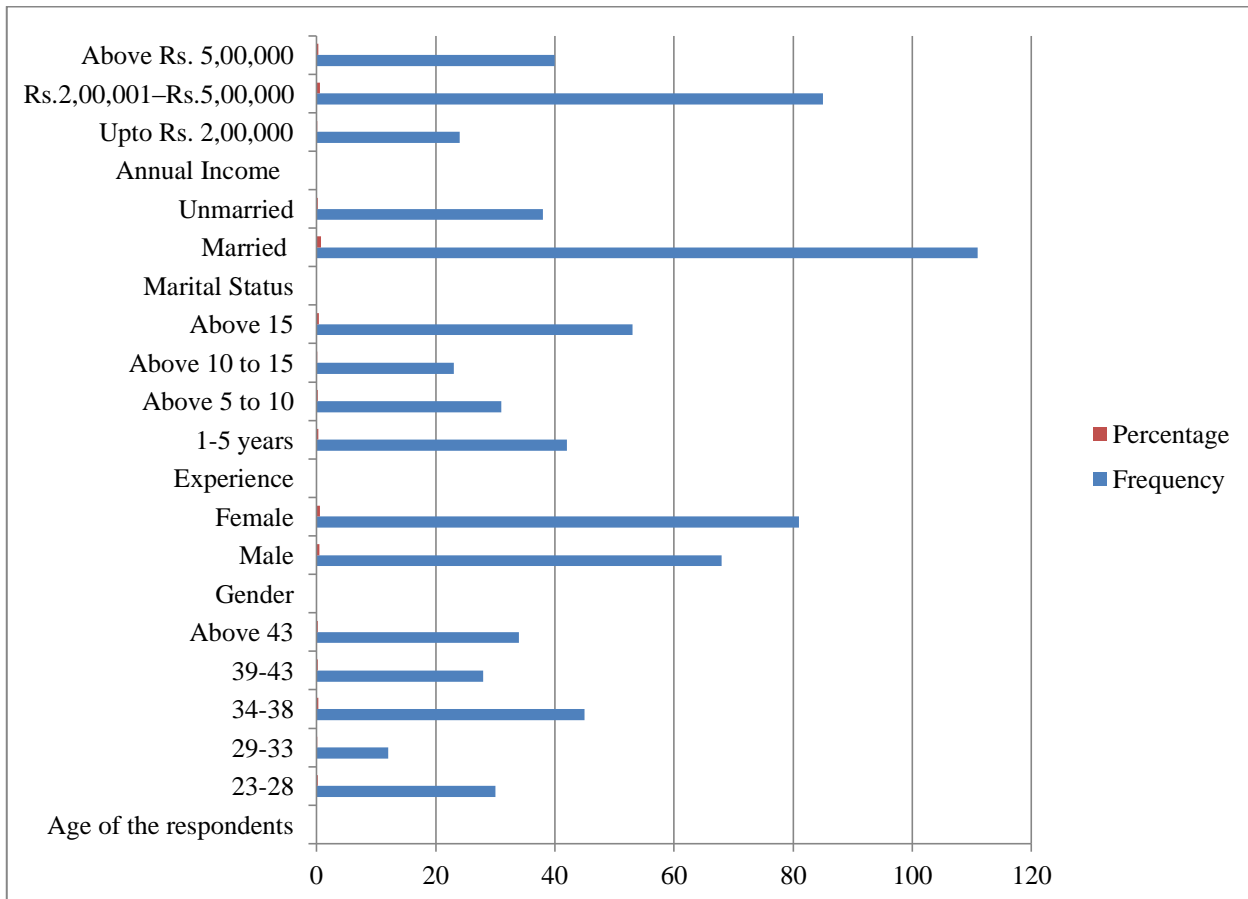
**Table 1: Frequency distribution of demographic profile of the respondents**

Demographic factors	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age of the respondents</b>		
23-28	30	20.13%
29-33	12	8.05%
34-38	45	30.20%
39-43	28	18.79%
Above 43	34	22.83%
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	68	45.64%
Female	81	54.36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Experience</b>		
1-5	42	28.19%
Above 5 to 10	31	20.81%
Above 10 to 15	23	15.44%
Above 15	53	35.56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100%</b>

Demographic factors	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	111	74.50%
Unmarried	38	25.50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Annual Income</b>		
Upto Rs. 2,00,000	24	16.11%
Rs.2,00,001–Rs.5,00,000	85	57.05%
Above Rs. 5,00,000	40	26.84%
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Primary Data

The above table 1 clearly projects the demographic profile of the interviewees. Considering the age group of the hospitality employees, 30 employees’ (20.13%) lies between the age group 23-28 years, 12 interviewees (8.05%) are on the age group 29-33 years, followed by it, 45 respondents (30.20%) are aged from 34-38 years, 28 workers (18.79%) are on the age group 39-43 years and the remaining 34 respondents (22.83%) are aged above 42 years. Taking into account, the gender of the employees, 68 (45.64%) are male and 81 employees (54.36%) are females. As far as the experience of the workers are concerned, 42 workers (28.19%) are experienced from above 1 to 5 years, 31 interviewees (20.81%) are having from above 5 to 10 years, 23 employees (15.44%) are experienced from above 10 to 15 years and 53 respondents (35.56%) are experienced above 15 years. Considering the marital status of the workers, 111 employees (74.50%) are married and 38 respondents (25.50%) are unmarried. Taking into account the annual income of the workers, 24 workers (16.11%) are earning income upto Rs. 2,00,000, 85 employees (57.05%) are earning income from Rs. 2,00,001 to Rs. 5,00,000 and the remaining 40 interviewees (26.84%) are earning income of above Rs. 5,00,000. The diagrammatic representation of the demographic profile of the respondents has been provided below for a better understanding of the results.



**Figure 2: Diagrammatic Illustration of the demographic Profile of the Respondents**

**Table 2: Mean and Standard deviation among the study factors**

Factors	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Organization Culture	149	21.34	2.073
Workplace Relationships	149	16.99	.815
Employees perceptions over work	149	16.42	4.476
Work Performance	149	16.00	.824
Employee Empowerment	149	17.00	.824

**Source:** Primary Data

This above table 2 clearly projects the mean and the standard deviation among the study factors. Considering the mean score, the organization culture ranks highest with 21.34 mean, and this clearly describes that the hospitality employees are very much satisfied with their work culture that prevails in their organization. Followed by it, employee empowerment has a highest mean of 17.00 and workplace relationships have a better mean of 16.99 and this shows that the employees are moderately happier with their associations with their peers, co-workers, superiors and subordinates. Fourthly, employees’ perception over the job has a better mean of 16.42 and lastly, work performance has the better mean value of 16.00.

Organization culture has the highest mean value because of the better organizational support provided by the management towards their employees welfare in the forms of financial and non-financial benefits. Work performance has a lowest mean score and this projects that irrespective of the better work culture, the employees suffers from reduced work performance caused mainly due to their poor work life balance. Absence of work life balance makes the employees to suffer from reduced work performance.

**Table 3: Pearson Inter Correlations among the study factors**

Factors		OC	WPR	EPOW	WP	EE
Organization Culture	Pearson Correlation	1	-.600(**)	.021	-.994(**)	-.994(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.751	.000	.000
	N	149	149	149	149	149
Workplace Relationships	Pearson Correlation	-.600(**)	1	-.813(**)	-.505(**)	.505(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	149	149	149	149	149
Employees Perceptions Over Job	Pearson Correlation	.021	-.813(**)	1	.092	.092
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.751	.000		.169	.169
	N	149	149	149	149	149
Work Performance	Pearson Correlation	-.994(**)	.505(**)	.092	1	1.000(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.169		.000
	N	149	149	149	149	149
Employee Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	-.994(**)	.505(**)	.092	1.000(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.169	.000	
	N	149	149	149	149	149

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** Primary Data

Organization culture is negatively correlated with the workplace relationships at -.600 coefficients and is significantly related with one other at 1% level of significance (p value=.000). Employees’ perception over job has a positive association with that of the organizational culture .021 coefficients and there is no such significant association with 1% level of significance (p value=.751). Work performance has a negative

correlation with the organization culture at -.994 coefficients and they are significant at 1% level of significance (p value=.000).

**H1:** There is no significant association between the organization culture and Employee Empowerment.

Organization culture and employee empowerment are negatively correlated with one another at -.994 coefficients. Since, the p value .000 is less than .000, they are significant at 1% level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected and it is inferred that there is a significant association between the organizational culture and employee empowerment.

Workplace relationships are negatively associated with the employees' perceptions over job at -.813 coefficients and they are significant at 1% level (p value=.000). Workplace relationships and work performance are inversely affiliated with one another at .505 coefficients at 1% level of significance (p value=.000).

**H2:** There is a significant relationship amid workplace relationships and employee empowerment.

Workplace relationships and employee empowerment are associated with one another at .505 coefficients and as the p value .000 is less than .000, the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Hence, it could be highlighted that there is a significant relationship amid workplace relationships and employee empowerment. Work performance and employee empowerment are positively correlated with one another at .092 coefficients. They are found to be not significant at 5% level (p value=.169).

**H3:** Employees perceptions over job are positively affiliated with the employee empowerment.

Employees' perceptions over work are positively correlated with the employee empowerment at .092 coefficients. Since, the p value .169 is greater than the .005, the hypothesis stating that employees perceptions over job are positively affiliated with the employee empowerment is rejected. Henceforth, it could be concluded that employees' perceptions over job are not positively affiliated with the employee empowerment.

**H4:** Work Performance and employee empowerment are optimistically associated with one another.

Work performance and employee empowerment are positively associated with one other at 1.000 coefficients. Since, the p value .000 is less than .000, the hypothesis is accepted. So, it is highlighted that work performance and employee empowerment are optimistically associated with one another.

## **DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS:**

The result of the study shows that the factors namely workplace relationships and employees' perceptions over job are not positively associated with the employee empowerment. Such workplace relationships could be better improved among the employees within their co-workers, peers, superiors and subordinates. It is the responsibility of the organization to improve the relationships among the workers through constant monitoring over the relations among their workers. Whenever the problem arises between the workers, the management should solve their problems through the employees' grievance redresser programme.

On the other hand, the employees' perceptions over work could be turned into positive feelings about work also lies in the responsibility of the organization. The organization has to provide some additional attractive financial and non financial benefits to the employees such as regular coupons for the employees' refreshment with family in the forms of holidays and paid vacations and improving the bonus package. When the organization provides such benefits, the workers' positive aspirations about job improve and then automatically the employees' positive perception over work rises. As a result, the employee empowerment rises.

Therefore, it could be concluded that through the better employees' grievance redresser programme and better financial and non financial benefits, the workplace relations and the employees perceptions about work rises respectively. Then as a result, the employees are empowered. Automatically, the productivity of the employees rise, then the output of the organization arises. As a result, the income of the country arises and the standard of living of the masses of the country also arises.

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