

The Direct and Indirect effect of Employee Empowerment and Employee Engagement on Innovative Work Behaviour within Manufacturing Sector in Kenya

Kanake K. Mercy ^{*1}, Kemboi Ambrose¹ & Tenai Joel²

¹Department of Management Science, Moi University P.O Box 3900-30100, Eldoret

²Department of Accounting and Finance, Moi University, Kenya, Moi University, P.O Box 3900-30100, Eldoret

*** Corresponding author's Email Address:** mercykirimi2@gmail.com

Abstract

This research aimed at developing and testing a conceptual model that explores the relationship between employee empowerment, employee engagement and innovative work behaviour (IWB). The framework for this study was drawn using the Social Exchange Theory (SET) based explanatory research design. This research investigated the impact of employee engagement on the relationship between employee empowerment and employees' innovative work behaviour. The study examined the direct and indirect mechanism of employee empowerment and creative work behaviour through the mediating impact of employee engagement, which helps achieve the desired goals of the organization. The data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire from 470 respondents in the manufacturing sector located within Nairobi City, County, Kenya. Research was carried out using Hayes PROCESS Macro model 4. The findings confirmed that employee empowerment had a positive significant effect on employee engagement; employee engagement had a positive significance on IWB; employee empowerment was found to have a positive significant effect on IWB. Further, the results revealed a partial mediation effect of employee engagement on the relationship between employee empowerment and innovative work behaviour. In conclusion, the direct influence of employee empowerment on innovative behaviour among employees can be improved through their engagement. The study recommends that employee empowerment and engagement practices be considered and implemented by organizations in order to enhance employees' innovative behaviour.

Key words: Innovative Work Behavior, Employee Engagement, Employee Empowerment

INTRODUCTION

The government of Kenya has remained in the fore front of leveraging innovative behaviour by commissioning national innovation surveys. Ndakala (2017) argues that such surveys illuminate upon drivers and challenges encountered in the efforts to innovate. For instance, the government has built on indicators to monitor innovations in form of new products and processes; marketing; acquisition of patents and licences, personnel training, product design, market analysis, and obstacles to innovation (Mairesse & Mohnen, 2010).

In the recent years there has been a growing consensus that employee innovative work behaviour can be a source of competitive advantage for present-day organizations (Dutta & Sobel, 2016). Innovation work behavior (IWB) is seen as a strategy for enhancing organizational efficiency and creating a versatile organization which is able

to respond to a changing external climate. A study done by Sanz-Valle, Naranjo-Valencia, Jiménez-Jiménez, and Perez-Caballero (2011), avers that Innovation is useful for organizational performance as organizations have become more dynamic and therefore need to remain competitive in order to adapt to changing environments.

IWB is considered as a fundamental practice with the potential to address emerging social and economic challenges and is therefore well equipped to stimulate economic growth among organizations (De Spiegelaere, Van Gyes, De Witte, Niesen, & Van Hootehem, 2014). The advanced argument is that firms maintain their competitiveness through the IWB especially in today's competitive global market and business environment. In fact, scholars have shown that IWB is all about employee behavior aimed at generating, introducing and utilizing organizational procedures, processes, ideas or products; while at the same time, it encourages the implementation of new ideas generated by employees and which, if adopted, can improve processes and products (De Spiegelaere, Van Gyes, De Witte, & Van Hootehem, 2015; Yuan & Woodman, 2010).

Though IWB has been seen as enhancing the result of organisations, this cannot happen without individual inclusion. Human resources are considered to be the key determinant of organizational failure or success and overall performance (Supriyanto, 2019). Therefore, employee innovation behaviour is associated with various factors. It is argued, for example, that their innovative behaviour remains critical given the increasing importance of innovation in organizational competitiveness, the conditions that employees can obtain (Alkhodary, 2016; Bos-Nehles, Renkema, & Janssen, 2017; Jada, Mukhopadhyay, & Titiyal, 2019). The focus of this study is on the impact of employee empowerment on IWB. In doing so, the current research tested the impact of employee empowerment and employee engagement on IWB, and analyzed both direct and indirect relationships between these variables.

In the manufacturing sector empowering employees directly has become more prominent when employees are given the opportunity to demonstrate their innovation by contributing new ideas that can lead to the successful completion of assigned tasks (Berraies, Chaher, & Yahia, 2014; Bowen & Lawler III, 2006). However, it should be noted that while employee empowerment is vital; its effect on workplace productivity is parsimonious and typically unconvincing. Some studies have shown the impact of innovative work behaviour that comes with empowering employees (Damanpour & Schneider, 2009; Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2012). The argument put forward by these pro-empowerment scholars is that delegating power, working together, sharing vision and knowledge provides a meaningful atmosphere for workers to feel motivated, leverage their skills and knowledge, and be more creative and innovative.

Another potential measure of IWB is employee engagement, which reveals that when workers have an affective and cognitive interaction with their employers, they are significant supporters of the company and their clients and this leads to better organizational performance (Abraham, 2012). It is contended that a committed employee is passionate about the job and has a strong connection to the organization (Fatima & Khan, 2017). The fundamental objective of the current research study was to thoroughly inspect the degree of commitment produced by employee, employee confidence and creative work behaviour and how these concepts influence or forecast one another. The undertaking investigated what impact employee engagement has in mediating the link that ties employee empowerment to their innovativeness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on theoretical structure provided by the Theory of Social Exchange. The theory of social exchange is crucial in the current study, as it provides a useful theoretical framework for examining factors that impact on employee empowerment and innovative work behaviour, and how these factors influence the response of employees to their work experience in manufacturing companies in Kenya. Theorists in social exchange opine that social exchange includes experiences that create responsibilities between members of the social network at work over a period of time (Amo, 2006; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). More precisely, Social Exchange Theory (SET) theory is based on the premise that the receiver of the good deed will reciprocate with good deeds at some point. In the right conditions, such reciprocal exchanges creates high-quality relationships in the workplace (Xerri, 2013). If workers are happy with the outcomes of their work place interactions, they are more likely to respond with higher workplace output (Hom et al., 2009).

When a person experiences positive emotions, their thoughts and behavior appear to be more expansive, thus enhancing their ability to improve their talents and social relationships; by comparison, when an individual experiences negative emotions, their thoughts and plans for action may be narrower, leading to more defensive acts being communicated (Fredrickson (Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin, 2003).

Employee empowerment and employee engagement

Many scholars have argued that empowerment is an essential instrument that can be integrated into a company's culture or generated by individual managers (Hunjra, Ul Haq, Akbar, & Yousaf, 2011). Empowering employees can therefore be considered as a practice intended to motivate and increase in employee engagement by taking advantage of the necessary opportunities for individuals to participate and participate in decision-making. Empowerment of employees essentially relates to the realization among managers that people who work under them deserve more power, autonomy and control over their work.

The task of managers should then be to provide training, support and coaching to empower them with skills and trust to act engaged (Saif & Saleh, 2013). Fritzsche, Dhanani, and Spencer (2014) states that empowered employees develop motivational feelings that encourage them to demonstrate their ability to apply skills and knowledge and to be creative when dealing with customer needs. The point put forward here is that workers get the ability to communicate and share responsibilities with their representatives through empowerment programs, which in turn gives them authority and power.

In the recent past, many companies have tried to embrace a variety of approaches to enhanced labor force engagement. Similarly, researchers have discussed the links between inspiring workers and the effects of their engagement. Anitha (2014) for example, affirm that engaging employees comes with a positive attitude among them, and elicits an emotional connection with assigned tasks. On the other hand, Zainol, Mohd-Hussin, and Othman (2016) argue that non engagement of employees in the workplace has propensity to lead to the collapse of companies given that, employee engagement acts as the driver required for steering organizations to success.

In the same vein, Stander and Rothmann (2010) examined the relation between employee engagement, psychological control, and work insecurity among public and manufacturing employees. The study indicated existence of significant connections between employees' job security with their psychological empowerment on one side and their work engagement on the other. Moreover, the study revealed positive impacts of job insecurity on meaning, empowerment impact and competence respectively, and also on overwork engagement.

H1: employee empowerment has a significant effect on employee engagement

Employee engagement and innovative work behavior

Employee engagement has been associated with optimistic attitudes and behaviours of workers that lead to improved business productivity in a way that stimulates and reinforces each other (Abraham, 2012). It's about workers having pride and loyalty working for an organization and being an organization's great advocate for clients, users and consumers, going the extra mile to complete a piece of work. J. Stanley and Mann (2014) emphasize the state of the mind narrative by defining engagement among employees as that state of the mind that is work related, positively fulfilling, and requiring dedication, vigour and absorption. According to Stanley and Mann, vigour is reflected in mental resilience, expenditure of high energy levels, a willingness to partake tasks and showing tolerance and persistence even in challenging circumstances. Dedication is manifested through strong involvement in work, inspiration, pride, enthusiasm for work, taking on challenging tasks, and feeling significant when undertaking tasks. Absorption on the other hand reflects a strong attachment to tasks being undertaken, manifested in being fully concentrated and engrossed in them and being reluctant to stop performing the tasks.

Previous literature established that exceedingly engaged employees are more likely to demonstrate innovative behaviors than those that are rarely engaged. Previous studies have indeed confirmed that employee engagement is a precursor to innovative behaviour and creativity among employees. They argue that through engagement, collaborators are able to amass a wide network of personnel to involve in sharing ideas for enhancing innovative behaviour (T. Stanley, 2016).

Fatima and Khan (2017) contend that employee engagement should be looked at from two perspectives. First it should be seen as an outcome in itself and secondly, as an antecedent to innovative behaviour. Park et al. (2015) in concurring with Salanova, Agut, and Peiró (2005), posit that employee engagement is an independent construct which is likely to shape employees' perception of their work and by extension, their innovativeness.

Vithayaporn and Ashton (2019) analysed factors which impact on employee engagement, and how such engagement impacts organization's IWB. A quantitative approach was designed for this research with 320 samples of Thai Airways International. The findings reveal that engagement and innovation reinforce each other, especially an IWB influenced by an engaged employee, and an engaged employees were likely to behave innovatively.

H2: Employee engagement has a significant effect on innovative work behavior

Employee empowerment and innovative work behavior

Employee empowerment approaches can encourage employee feelings that eventually motivate employee actions to be successful in achieving expected results. Empowerment has been previously associated with employee function orientation that is reflected in the perception of a role. A work that gives the person a positive feeling, the confidence of an individual's belief the ability to perform tasks effectively referring to skill, self-determination, or sense of freedom in work practices (Kahreh, Ahmadi, & Hashemi, 2011). Other studies have captured interest in the impacts of employee empowerment on IWB, and have concluded that empowerment of employees is an avenue for attitudinal change, creativity, and collaborations designed to improve the quality of products (Bunpin III, Chapman, Blegen, & Spetz, 2016) III.

Alkhodary (2016) assessed the role empowerment of employees' plays in creativity directed to business, tasks and jobs among employees. The critical finding was that employee empowerment, measured in terms of impact, self-determination, competency, and meaning related positively with the behaviour of innovativeness towards work measured, in terms of sensitivity to problems, idea fluency, and originality, in the context of interior design firms drawn from Jordan. Similarity previous studies by (Hebenstreit, 2012) concurs with the findings of (Alkhodary, 2016; Celik, Cakici, & Celik, 2014) that, empowering employees positively and significantly predicted employees' innovative work behaviour.

H3: Employee empowerment has a significant effect on Innovative work behavior

H4: Employee engagement has mediating effect on the relationship between employee empowerment and innovative work behavior.

Conceptual model

In figure 1, employee empowerment reflects the independent variable; Innovative work behaviour represents the dependent variable and the mediator variable is represented by employee engagement. This model represents a causal process in which employee empowerment through mediator variable employee engagement indirectly influences innovative work behaviour. This indirect effect reflects the process that transmits its effect on IWB through employee engagement. According to the model, employee empowerment can also affect IWB directly; the direct effect of employee empowerment; independent of employee empowerment influence on employee engagement (Hayes & Preacher, 2014).

Independent Variable
Variable

Mediating Variable

Dependent

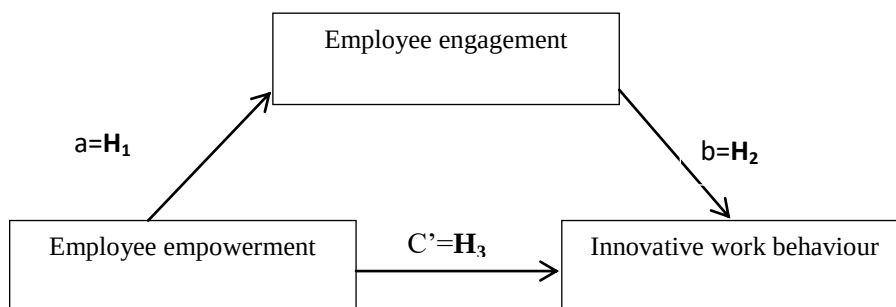


Figure 1: Conceptual diagram for simple mediation

Source: Hayes and Preacher (2014)

METHODOLOGY

This study employed explanatory research design since the review investigated the cause-effect relationship between independent, mediator and dependent variable. Stratified sampling was used to classify manufacturing firms and the systematic random approach was used to collect data from a sample size of 470 from a target population of 9915 employees. The sample size was derived by using a known population formula by Yamane (1973) with a margin error being a 0.045%.

Measurement of Variables

The principal tool used for data collection was the paper based self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to contain two sections consistent with the conceptual framework. The first section focused on collecting included main constructs of study variables. The second section focused on employee background characteristics that consisted of gender, level of education, age, and experience. The information regarding background characteristics was necessary for controlling the likely influence of these characteristics on the conceptualized relationships. The response scores were elicited on a 5-point likert type scale scored as follows: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-neutral; 4-agree, 5-strongly agree. All variables used in the study were taken from previous studies with minor adjustments to suit the current study. Innovative work behavior, was measured with the use of ten items drawn from De Jong and Den Hartog (2007), Employee empowerment was measured using 15 items adopted from Spreitzer (1995) and Employee engagement using 12 items adopted from Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker (2002).

RESULTS

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Four hundred seventy (470) questionnaires were given to respondents; but only 382 were returned and used in the study. This indicated 81% response rate. Demographic results in Table 1 show that male respondents were 60.2% while female were 39.8%. Additionally, most respondents' age fell between 21 to 25 years represented by 30.1%, 26 to 30 years (25.7%), 31 to 35 years (25.1%) and the least were those aged above 35

years (14.9%) and those less than 20 years (4.2%) respectively. Education level of respondents revealed that majority had a Bachelor's degree (47.6%), followed by diploma holders (33.2%) and the least had attained certificate (11.3%) and postgraduate (7.9%) studies respectively. Finally, 53.1% of respondents had an experience of between 1 to 5 years which were followed by those who had an experience of between 6 to 10 years (30.9%). The least were those who had an experience of 11-15(9.4%), 16-20 years (3.7%) and those above 20 years (2.9%) respectively.

Table 1: Demographic Background of the study

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	230	60.2
	Female	152	39.8
	Total	382	100
Education	Certificate	43	11.3
	Diploma	127	33.2
	Bachelor's Degree	182	47.6
	Post-graduate	30	7.9
	Total	382	100
Age	<20	16	4.2
	21-25	115	30.1
	26-30	98	25.7
	31-35	96	25.1
	>35	57	14.9
	Total	382	100
Experience	1-5	203	53.1
	6-10	118	30.9
	11-15	36	9.4
	16-20	14	3.7
	>20	11	2.9
	Total	382	100

Source: Research Data, (2019)

Testing for Construct Validity

This study employed factor analysis to test for construct validity before testing the Hypotheses. Thirty seventy (37) items were factor analyzed with the use of principal component analysis with Varimax rotation. Innovative work behavior had ten (10) items, Employee empowerment fifteen (15) items and Employee engagement had twelve (12). Table 2(a) indicates the results of the three components that explained 44.9 % of the variance, with Employee empowerment items loading as factor one (1) with only 8 items loading under it as 7 items were omitted for reason that they never meet the criteria as shown in Table 2 (b). These items explained 31.26% of the total variance. Employee engagement items loaded as factor two explaining 7.99% of the variance (Table 2a) with 5 items loading and seven (7) items excluded as they failed to load Table 2(b). Finally, Innovative work behavior items loaded as factor three and explained a total of 5.70 % variance as shown in Table 2 (a), with nine (9) items loading and one (1) item excluded (Table 1b) as it failed to meet the required criteria. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) results show a score value of .913 with Bartlett's Test of Sphericity expressing a Chi-Square of 6702.976

with $df = 666$ being significant at .000. Since KMO value is greater than .5 and Bartlett's test has a significant Chi-square, the findings confirmed suitability of factor analysis.

Table 2 (a): Factor Analysis

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling			
Adequacy	.913		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square		
6702.976			
	df		
666			
	Sig		
.000			
Constructs	Initial Eigen values	% variance	Cumulative %
1.Employee Empowerment	11.565	31.256	31.256
2.Employee Engagement	2.959	7.998	39.254
3.Innovative work behavior	2.110	5.702	44.956

Table 2b: Factor Loadings

Variables and measurement items	EE	EM	IWB
The firm encourages participative decision making	.771		
The firm gives employees control over resources they need to accomplish their work	.741		
The firm allows authority to be delegated equally to all levels of responsibility	.561		
The firm encourages employees to take self-initiative	**		
The firm allows employees to use their own discretion in carrying out work assignments	**		
Employees get information they need for their work at the shortest time possible	.605		
The firm gives employees feedback about their performance	**		
The firm frequently communicate relevant job information to employees	.501		
The firm regularly supplies information to employees about the perf of our competitors	**		
The firm encourages two-way communication	**		
In this firm supervisor share knowledge with support staff	.741		
The firm encourages empl. to utilize knowledge acquired to solve work related problems	.679		
The firm encourage employees to gain and share knowledge through learning and practice	.578		
Management recognizes and makes use of my abilities and skills	**		
Employees are provided with an opportunity to learn on their jobs	**		
I exert maximum effort while undertaking my tasks		**	
I always look forward to coming to work		**	
I try my hardest to perform well on my job		**	
At work, my mind is focused on my job		**	
I feel strong and vigorous at the place of work.		.647	
I exert a lot of energy on my work.		.597	

I feel happy when I am working intensely.	.714
I always look for dev. opportunity that enhance the value of the org	**
It is difficult to detach myself from my job	.794
When I am working, I forget everything else around me.	.779
I find the work that I do meaningful and purposeful	**
I am proud of the work that I do	**
I look for an opport. to improve on existing products, process, techn and work r/ships	.517
I recognize opport. to make a positive difference in my work, org, dept & customers	.580
I pay attention to non-routine issues in my work, department and organization	**
I search out for new work methods, techniques or instruments	.669
I feel that I am good at finding new approaches of executing my tasks	.695
I encourage key organization members to be enthusiastic about innovative ideas	.689
I attempt to convince people to support innovative ideas	.666
I systematically introduce innovative ideas into work	.638
I contribute to implementation of new ideas	.713
I put effort into development of new things	.642

*Note: EE= Employee engagement, EM= Employee empowerment, IWB= Innovative work behavior, ** Removed*

Results of descriptive statistics, reliability and correlation

Results in Table 3 indicate the findings of descriptive statistics, reliability and correlation analysis. The table shows that Innovative work behavior leads highest mean of 4.08, (SD =.569). This is followed by Employee commitment which had a mean of 3.73, (SD =.755) while Employee engagement had the least mean results of 3.72, (SD = .788). The table further reveals that all the variables had scale reliability above 0.8, with Employee empowerment having the highest Cronbach' Alpha of .894, which was followed by Employee engagement with .868 while Innovative work behavior had the least score of .863. Finally, results of Correlation analysis show that both Employee empowerment and engagement had a significant liner relationship with Innovative work behavior. Employee engagement indicates the highest relationship with $r = .457$, $p < .01$, whereas Employee empowerment has the feeblest but significant relationship with $r = .413$, $p < .05$. In addition, the findings show that Finally, Employee engagement was also found to have a significant association with Employee empowerment as shown by $r = .409$, $p < .01$.

Table 3: Results of Means, standard deviations, reliability and correlation of the study

Variable (n = 382)	M	SD	Reliability	Correlation		
Innovative Work Behavior	4.08	.569	.863	1		
Employee Empowerment	3.73	.755	.894	.413**	1	
Employee Engagement	3.72	.788	.868	.457**	.409**	1

*Note: Correlation is significant at ** $p < .01$, (2-tailed), M= Mean, SD = Standard deviation*

Hypotheses Testing

Data was analyzed using SPSS vs23 and hypotheses tested using Hayes (2018) Process Macro (Model 4). The study adopted MacKinnon (2012) four- steps to analyze the three direct effect and mediation hypotheses. According to MacKinnon;

- a) There must be a significant relationship between the independent variable (Employee empowerment) and the mediator variable (Employee engagement) (path a of Fig1- H1)
- b) There must be a significant relationship between the mediator variable (Employee engagement) and the dependent variable (Innovative work behavior) (path b of Fig 1- H2)
- c) Test of the relationship between the independent variable (Employee empowerment) and the dependent variable (Innovative work behavior) while holding constant the mediator (path C' of Fig 1- H3). This does not need to be significant for mediation to take place.
- d) A significant coefficient for the indirect path between Employee empowerment and Innovative work behavior through employee engagement (product of $a1 \times b1$). The bias-corrected percentile bootstrap method determines if this last condition is met (H4). The study included all the control variables in the analysis.

The study findings are all displayed in Table 4. In the first step, as guided by MacKinnon, results show that Employee empowerment significantly affects Employee engagement (path of fig 1) with, $\beta = .447$, $p = .000$ (Table 4, column 1). Results further shows that all control variables were insignificant with all having $p > .05$. This model explains 17.4% of the variance in employee engagement as indicated by $R^2.174$, with a significant $F = 19.883$, $p = .000$. Based on these findings, Hypotheses H1 is supported by the study.

To test the second step, findings in Table 4 column 2 reveal that Employee engagement positively and significantly affects Innovative work behavior (path b of fig 1) as shown by $\beta = .250$, $p = .000$. All control variables in this model were also found to be insignificant as indicated by $p > .05$. Results show that this model accounted for 27.2% of the variance in Innovative work behavior as shown by $R^2.272$, with a significant $F = 5.888$, $p < .000$. Since results of employee engagement on Innovative work behavior shows a significant effect as indicated by $p < .05$, Hypothesis H2 is also supported.

To establish the findings of the third step, testing the effect of independent on dependent variable (employee empowerment on Innovative work behavior - path C' of Fig 1) while holding constant the mediating variable (Employee engagement), Hypothesis H3 was tested in the same column 2 of Table 4. Results of the study demonstrate that Employee empowerment was established to have a positive and significant effect on Innovative work behavior as shown by $\beta = .216$, $p = .000$. Based on these results Hypothesis H3 is also supported by the study.

To achieve the finally step, the mediation effect was tested with the use of a percentile bootstrap estimation approach with five thousand samples. The findings for the bias-corrected percentile bootstrap method show that the mediation effect of Employee empowerment on Innovative work behavior through Employee engagement was significant with the product of $a \times b$ showing a positive effect = .112, $SE = .022$, 95% CI = [.069, .158]. Since the both confidence intervals indicate non zero, Hypothesis H4 is also supported.

Table 4: Study Findings For all Hypotheses

Study Variables	Model 1 (EE) <i>a</i>		Model 2 (IWB) <i>b</i> ₁		Mediation (Model 3 (<i>a</i> × <i>b</i>))
	B	<i>p</i> - <i>v</i>	B	<i>p</i> - <i>v</i>	
Age	-.046	.249	.001	.967	
Education	.037	.437	.018	.575	
Experience	.068	.127	-.019	.529	
Employee empowerment	<i>a</i> = .447***	.000	<i>C'</i> = .216***	.000	.447×.250 = .112
Employee Engagement	-	-	<i>b</i> = .250***	.000	CI= .069, 158
R ²	.174		.272		
F	19.883***		28.027***		

Note: ****p* <.001, *Dependent variable*: IWB = Innovative work behavior, EE = Employee engagement

DISCUSSION

The study reveals that employee empowerment is indeed a positive and significant predictor of employee engagement as indicated by $\beta = .447$, $p < .05$. Indeed this evidence confirms that empowerment has different ways of having a positive impact on employee engagement. It has been shown, for example, that encouraging employees develops a positive attitude which in effect creates an emotional link with tasks assigned (Anitha, 2014). The finding showing that employee empowerment in manufacturing firms in Nairobi positively and significantly predicts employee engagement augers well for the firms in question, which stand to benefit in terms of longevity. Zainol et al. (2016) have previously noted that non engagement of employees may lead to collapse of companies. Consequently, by engaging employees through empowerment, manufacturing firms in Nairobi are bound to avoid such a collapse. Moreover, Stander and Rothmann (2010) have demonstrated that employee empowerment makes employees feel secure at work and therefore become fully engaged and more committed to the tasks. It would seem that employees of manufacturing firms under study have job security arising from the psychological empowerment and are apt to perform at higher levels.

Findings of this research confirms that Employee engagement has a positive and significant effect on Innovative work behavior as indicated by $\beta = .250$, $p < .05$. This is indeed consistent with previous studies which have characterized employee engagement as a structure that builds on emotional, behavioural and cognitive components as well as, affective attachment (Abraham, 2012; Brad Shuck, Rocco, & Albornoz, 2011; McEwen, 2011). The behavioural and emotional engagement extended to employees in the manufacturing firms has seemingly impacted positively on their attitude values and commitment towards their work as depicted by the descriptive analysis results which portrayed a happy force. This is in line with arguments made by Abraham (2012) in pointing out that engagement of employees leads to optimistic behaviours and attitudes which reinforces and stimulates their interest and productivity. It is also clear from the descriptive analysis results that employees go about their work with enthusiasm. This supports views by Harter, Schmidt, and Keyes (2003) that when employees are fully engaged in assigned tasks, they show enthusiasm and satisfaction in doing them. The descriptive results showing

that as a result of employees being engaged, they found it difficult to detach from the job is consistent with findings by J. Stanley and Mann (2014). According to J. Stanley and Mann (2014), engagement is the state of mind that is oriented towards work absorption, dedication and vigor.

Outcomes in Table 4 shows that Employee empowerment positively and significantly affects Innovative work behavior ($\beta = .216, p < .05$). This study indicates that empowering employees increases their efficiency and productivity through creation of new ideas within the organizations. This means that when employees are empowered, they feel valued, accomplish their duties effectively, and also are free to choose how to perform their tasks. These will eventually contribute to vital products in the organization which can result in a rise in production of the organization. It would seem that employees power, rewards, information and knowledge, manufacturing firms operating Kenya are keen to motivate employees by giving them confidence to perform their tasks. It has been shown that empowered employees have more power, autonomy and control over their work, requiring management to provide resources and training that can sustain empowerment among them (Saif & Saleh, 2013). Moreover, the finding reflecting the positive effect of empowerment on innovativeness is consistent with many other previous studies (Abuzaid, 2018; Alkhodary, 2016; Bos-Nehles et al., 2017; Celik et al., 2014).

The results of this study indicated an indirect effect on the relationship between Employee empowerment and Innovative work behavior. Perhaps a major contribution to theory and practice that emerges from this study is to show the mediation ability of employee engagement in the relationship between employee empowerment and innovative work behaviour. Previous studies have either looked at direct effects of employee empowerment on employee engagement (Nawaz (Nawaz, Hassan, Hassan, Shaukat, & Asadullah, 2014; Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004), or direct effects of employee engagement on firm performance (Anderson, Potočník, & Zhou, 2014; Bakker & Bal, 2010; Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Karatepe, 2013). The few studies showing indirect links involving employee engagement mainly use performance as the response variable as opposed to innovative behaviour. Moreover, none of them uses employee empowerment as the explanatory variable (Salanova et al., 2005).

The current study therefore provides an avenue through which both employee empowerment and engagement could be exploited to make manufacturing firms to be more innovative oriented in both their processes and products. Moreover, the finding showing that employee empowerment and IWB is mediated by employee engagement is best reflected in the thoughts of Lara Greaves, Zibarras, and Stride (2013), which postulated that companies which do not treat their employees well during a crisis will face lowered employee engagement and will in turn suffer employee turnover.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Besides having a direct influence on innovative work behaviour, employee empowerment also had a direct effect on employee engagement in the context of manufacturing firms in Nairobi. This provided the presumptive urge to employ employee engagement as a mediator. Employee engagement indeed partially mediated the indirect influence of employee empowerment on innovative work behaviour

showing that manufacturing firms in Nairobi could either look to empowering employees directly and waiting to see their innovativeness, or empowering them and then engaging them in order to achieve more innovative behaviour.

Moreover, in advancing use of the social exchange theory (Sharafizad, Redmond, & Morris, 2019) the researcher viewed employee empowerment from the pedestal of information, rewards, knowledge and power within the firms. The current study confirms that in the context where employee empowerment and innovative work behaviour resides, social exchanges are bound to take on systematic and complex approach.

Nonetheless, the implication of the mediating potential of employee engagement on the link between employee empowerment and innovative work behavior among employees is that, manufacturing firms' stakeholders have an alternative avenue through which to target innovativeness among their employees. In the event for instance, that their efforts to empower employees in order to directly spur innovation fails, they can choose to also to engage them and spur innovation indirectly.

The study targeted employees and as a result, it only relied on employee perceptions which could not be confirmed. Moreover, the study used only the quantitative approach which fails to account for incisive views of respondents. Future studies should consider bringing supervisors and managers on board, and using a mixed methods design that would allow for triangulation of data collection and data analysis methods thereby improving validity of study findings. Similarly, future research in this area should adopt different research designs such as a longitudinal one to provide a better assessment of the variables and how they improve over time.

Acknowledgements

This study was supported by grant from ASALI (A Sustainable Approach to Livelihood Improvement) Project.

REFERENCES

- Abraham, S. (2012). Job Satisfaction as an Antecedent to Employee Engagement. *SIES Journal of Management*, 8(2).
- Abuzaid, A. N. (2018). Employees' Empowerment and its Role in Achieving Strategic Success: A Practical Study on Jordanian Insurance Companies. *Jordan Journal of Business Administration*, 14(4).
- Alkhodary, D. (2016). The relationship between employees' empowerment and innovative work behavior. *International Journal of Managerial Studies and Research (IJMSR)*, 4(2), 1-15.
- Amo, B. W. (2006). What motivates knowledge workers to involve themselves in employee innovation behaviour? *International Journal of Knowledge Management Studies*, 1(1-2), 160-177.
- Anderson, N., Potočník, K., & Zhou, J. (2014). Innovation and creativity in organizations: A state-of-the-science review, prospective commentary, and guiding framework. *Journal of management*, 40(5), 1297-1333.
- Anitha, J. (2014). Determinants of employee engagement and their impact on employee performance. *International journal of productivity and performance management*, 63(3), 308.
- Bakker, A. B., & Bal, M. P. (2010). Weekly work engagement and performance: A study among starting teachers. *Journal of occupational and organizational psychology*, 83(1), 189-206.
- Berraies, S., Chaher, M., & Yahia, K. B. (2014). Employee empowerment and its importance for trust, innovation and organizational performance. *Business Management and Strategy*, 5(2), 82-103.
- Bos-Nehles, A., Renkema, M., & Janssen, M. (2017). HRM and innovative work behaviour: A systematic literature review. *Personnel review*, 46(7), 1228-1253.
- Bowen, D. E., & Lawler III, E. E. (2006). The empowerment of service workers: What, why, how, and when. *Managing innovation and change*, 33, 155-169.

- Brad Shuck, M., Rocco, T. S., & Albornoz, C. A. (2011). Exploring employee engagement from the employee perspective: Implications for HRD. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 35(4), 300-325.
- Bunpin III, J. J. D., Chapman, S., Blegen, M., & Spetz, J. (2016). Differences in innovative behavior among hospital-based registered nurses. *Journal of Nursing Administration*, 46(3), 122-127.
- Celik, A., Cakici, A. B., & Celik, N. (2014). The effects of employee empowerment applications on organizational creativity and innovativeness in enterprises: The case of Oiz. *European Scientific Journal*, 10(10).
- Christian, M. S., Garza, A. S., & Slaughter, J. E. (2011). Work engagement: A quantitative review and test of its relations with task and contextual performance. *Personnel psychology*, 64(1), 89-136.
- Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. *Journal of management*, 31(6), 874-900.
- Damanpour, F., & Schneider, M. (2009). Characteristics of innovation and innovation adoption in public organizations: Assessing the role of managers. *Journal of public administration research and theory*, 19(3), 495-522.
- De Jong, J. P., & Den Hartog, D. N. (2007). How leaders influence employees' innovative behaviour. *European Journal of innovation management*, 10(1), 41-64.
- De Spiegelaere, S., Van Gyes, G., De Witte, H., Niesen, W., & Van Hootegem, G. (2014). On the relation of job insecurity, job autonomy, innovative work behaviour and the mediating effect of work engagement. *Creativity and innovation management*, 23(3), 318-330.
- De Spiegelaere, S., Van Gyes, G., De Witte, H., & Van Hootegem, G. (2015). Job design, work engagement and innovative work behavior: A multi-level study on Karasek's learning hypothesis. *management revue*, 123-137.
- Dutta, N., & Sobel, R. (2016). Does corruption ever help entrepreneurship? *Small Business Economics*, 47(1), 179-199.
- Fatima, A., & Khan, M. A. (2017). Do hope foster innovative work behavior through employee engagement and knowledge sharing behavior? A conservation of resources approach using MPLUS tool. *Business & Economic Review*, 9(4), 181-212.
- Fernandez, S., & Moldogaziev, T. (2012). Using employee empowerment to encourage innovative behavior in the public sector. *Journal of public administration research and theory*, 23(1), 155-187.
- Fredrickson, B. L., Tugade, M. M., Waugh, C. E., & Larkin, G. R. (2003). What good are positive emotions in crisis? A prospective study of resilience and emotions following the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11th, 2001. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 84(2), 365.
- Fritzsche, B. A., Dhanani, L. Y., & Spencer, J. M. (2014). Empowerment through employment: Job satisfaction theories and research.
- Greaves, M., Zibarras, L. D., & Stride, C. (2013). Using the theory of planned behavior to explore environmental behavioral intentions in the workplace. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 34, 109-120.
- Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L., & Keyes, C. L. (2003). Well-being in the workplace and its relationship to business outcomes: A review of the Gallup studies. *Flourishing: Positive psychology and the life well-lived*, 2, 205-224.
- Hayes, A. F. (2018). Partial, conditional, and moderated moderated mediation: Quantification, inference, and interpretation. *Communication monographs*, 85(1), 4-40.
- Hayes, A. F., & Preacher, K. J. (2014). Statistical mediation analysis with a multicategorical independent variable. *British journal of mathematical and statistical psychology*, 67(3), 451-470.
- Hebenstreit, J. J. (2012). Nurse educator perceptions of structural empowerment and innovative behavior. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 33(5), 297-301.
- Hom, P. W., Tsui, A. S., Wu, J. B., Lee, T. W., Zhang, A. Y., Fu, P. P., & Li, L. (2009). Explaining employment relationships with social exchange and job embeddedness. *Journal of Applied psychology*, 94(2), 277.
- Hunjra, A. I., Ul Haq, N., Akbar, S. W., & Yousaf, M. (2011). Impact of employee empowerment on job satisfaction: an empirical analysis of Pakistani service industry. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 2(11), 680.
- Jada, U. R., Mukhopadhyay, S., & Titiyal, R. (2019). Empowering leadership and innovative work behavior: a moderated mediation examination. *Journal of Knowledge Management*.
- Kahre, M. S., Ahmadi, H., & Hashemi, A. (2011). Achieving competitive advantage through empowering employees: An empirical study. *Far East Journal of Psychology and Business*, 3(2), 26-37.
- Karatepe, O. M. (2013). Perceptions of organizational politics and hotel employee outcomes: the mediating role of work engagement. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 25(1), 82-104.
- MacKinnon, D. (2012). *Introduction to statistical mediation analysis*: Routledge.
- Mairesse, J., & Mohnen, P. (2010). Using innovation surveys for econometric analysis *Handbook of the Economics of Innovation* (Vol. 2, pp. 1129-1155): Elsevier.
- McEwen, D. (2011). Employee engagement: A Systemic approach to high employee engagement.

- Nawaz, M. S., Hassan, M., Hassan, S., Shaikat, S., & Asadullah, M. A. (2014). Impact of employee training and empowerment on employee creativity through employee engagement: Empirical evidence from the manufacturing sector of Pakistan. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, 19(4), 593-601.
- Ndakala, F. (2017). Kenya National Innovation Indicators Survey 2015. *Research Gate*.
- Park, C., Song, M., Cho, B., Lim, J., Song, W., Chang, H., & Park, Y.-H. (2015). Effects of a multi-disciplinary approached, empowerment theory based self-management intervention in older adults with chronic illness. *Journal of Korean Academy of Nursing*, 45(2), 192-201.
- Saif, N. I., & Saleh, A. S. (2013). Psychological empowerment and job satisfaction in Jordanian hospitals. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(16), 250-257.
- Salanova, M., Agut, S., & Peiró, J. M. (2005). Linking organizational resources and work engagement to employee performance and customer loyalty: the mediation of service climate. *Journal of Applied psychology*, 90(6), 1217.
- Sanz-Valle, R., Naranjo-Valencia, J. C., Jiménez-Jiménez, D., & Perez-Caballero, L. (2011). Linking organizational learning with technical innovation and organizational culture. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 15(6), 997-1015.
- Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., González-Romá, V., & Bakker, A. B. (2002). The measurement of engagement and burnout: A two sample confirmatory factor analytic approach. *Journal of Happiness studies*, 3(1), 71-92.
- Shalley, C. E., Zhou, J., & Oldham, G. R. (2004). The effects of personal and contextual characteristics on creativity: Where should we go from here? *Journal of management*, 30(6), 933-958.
- Sharafizad, J., Redmond, J., & Morris, R. (2019). Leadership/management factors impact on employee engagement and discretionary effort. *International Journal of Organization Theory & Behavior*.
- Spreitzer, G. M. (1995). Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement, and validation. *Academy of management journal*, 38(5), 1442-1465.
- Stander, M. W., & Rothmann, S. (2010). Psychological empowerment, job insecurity and employee engagement. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 36(1), 1-8.
- Stanley, J., & Mann, A. (2014). A theoretical framework for employer engagement *Understanding employer engagement in education* (pp. 54-70): Routledge.
- Stanley, T. (2016). *Work environments, creative behaviours, and employee engagement*. Queensland University of Technology.
- Supriyanto, A. S. (2019). Obtaining factors affecting innovative work behavior (IWB) of a local bank employees under Islamic leadership: application of partial least squares method. *Industrial Engineering & Management Systems*, 18(3), 417-425.
- Vithayaporn, S., & Ashton, A. S. (2019). Employee Engagement and Innovative Work Behavior: A Case Study of Thai Airways International. *ABAC ODI JOURNAL VISION. ACTION. OUTCOME.*, 6(2), 45-62.
- Xerri, M. (2013). Workplace relationships and the innovative behaviour of nursing employees: a social exchange perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 51(1), 103-123.
- Yuan, F., & Woodman, R. W. (2010). Innovative behavior in the workplace: The role of performance and image outcome expectations. *Academy of management journal*, 53(2), 323-342.
- Zainol, S., Mohd-Hussin, S., & Othman, M. (2016). Determinants of employee engagement in hotel industry in Malaysia. A theoretical model. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting, Finance and Management Sciences*, 6(3), 1-9.