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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT AND EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION: A STUDY OF ADMINISTRATORS OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

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#### Abstract

The paper attempts to investigate the diverse influence of empowering leadership, psychological empowerment, and overall empowerment on employee job satisfaction using self-determination theory. The analysis was conducted using primary data collected from cadre-based employees working as frontline administrators in different government departments in the civil administration of the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. 330 questionnaires were distributed; 319 were returned, and 302 of them were deemed suitable for analysis. For data analysis, multiple regression was used. The results revealed both empowering leadership and psychological empowerment have significant individual influences on job satisfaction, but more significant when empowering leadership and psychological empowerment is combined. Most of the previous studies were conducted in western economies and little in South Asia generally and India in particular. This research contributes to the literature by including both dimensions of empowerment where previous scholars used only one. This research suggests that contemporary organizations should implement empowering leadership style as their human resource management strategy to boost employee morale and job satisfaction.

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#### Introduction:-

Businesses and governments have widely used employee empowerment initiatives during the past three decades. Today, many private companies embrace employee empowerment to improve service quality, foster creativity, and boost customer loyalty (Bowen & Lawler, 1992, 1995; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Lawler et al., 1995; Potterfield, 1999; Spreitzer, 1995, 1996; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Empowerment has also been a prominent aspect of public-sector reforms throughout Europe, the Pacific Rim, North America, and, more recently, Asian nations (Kettl, 2005; B. G. Peters, 1996; Pollitt, 1990). The academic literature has kept pace with these developments in practice, with mounting empirical evidence pointing to the efficacy of employee empowerment in improving work outcomes and work-related attitudes in the public sector (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2010, 2013; Kim, 2002; Lee, Cayer, & Lan, 2006; Park & Rainey, 2007; Wright & Kim, 2004) and private sectors (Guthrie, 2001; Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Lawler et al., 1995; Nielsen & Pedersen, 2003). This study investigates the relationship between employee empowerment and job satisfaction. Previous research has demonstrated a positive link between employee empowerment and work satisfaction (Davies, Laschinger, & Andrusyszyn, 2006; Fulford & Enz, 1995; Kuokkanen,

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Helena, & Katajisto, 2003; Lee et al., 2006; Sarmiento, Laschinger, & Iwasiw, 2004; Savery & Luks, 2001; Seibert, Silver, & Randolph, 2004; Ugboro & Obeng, 2000; Wright & Kim, 2004; Wu & Short, 1996). Employee empowerment is, however, a comprehensive strategy including a variety of techniques aimed at sharing knowledge, resources, rewards, and authority with lower-level employees, which may have diverse consequences on job satisfaction. Few studies have studied how or why various empowerment techniques affect work satisfaction. Using Ahearne et al.'s conceptualization of employee empowerment and drawing on theoretical insights from Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1987; Gagne & Deci, 2005; Ryan, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan, Kuhl, & Deci, 1997), testable hypotheses about the effects of different empowerment dimensions on job satisfaction were developed. It is hypothesized that empowerment practices that promote self-determination will have a positive effect on job satisfaction. The empirical evidence supports these theories. The next section provides a review of how scholars have conceptualized and defined employee empowerment. The discussion then moves to the study's variables, measurements, data, and modeling strategy. The statistical analysis and hypothesis testing findings are then provided. The study concludes with a discussion of limitations and implications for theory and future research.

### **Literature Review:-**

Regarding the meaning of employee empowerment, scholars are divided (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Potterfield, 1999; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). In the literature, two major theoretical approaches have emerged: psychological and managerial. From a psychological standpoint, empowerment is a motivating concept comparable to a mental state. Conger and Kanungo (1988) defined psychological empowerment as a heightened belief in the capacity to perform, reflecting Bandura's (1986) concept of a self-efficacy expectation. Based on this paradigm, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) defined empowerment as an increased degree of intrinsic task motivation or internalized commitment to a task, as evidenced by four task assessments: impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice. In proportion to how positively an employee evaluates these four components of the task, he or she will experience increased internal task motivation and become more empowered. Spritzer (1995, 1996) defined employee empowerment as a four-dimensional motivational construct constituted of four cognitions that show an active rather than passive approach toward work: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. From the managerial perspective, employee empowerment is a relational concept that outlines how individuals with authority in organizations (i.e., managers) share power, knowledge, and resources with those lacking it (i.e., employees). This concept has its philosophical roots in fundamental contributions to the Human Relations movement in organization theory (e.g., Argyris, 1957; Follett, 1926; Likert, 1967; McGregor, 1960). Kanter (1979) developed a structural theory of organizational power that describes how power is derived from three sources: lines of supply, especially to essential resources in the external environment; lines of information, such as task-related knowledge and performance feedback; and lines of support, such as the discretion to engage in innovative behavior and the support of top management. To the degree that managers give access to these three sources of power, they are able to empower their staff.

Bowen and Lawler's (1992, 1995) research of the rising empowerment movement in the private sector based on Kanter's concept of empowerment noted that sharing power and decision-making authority with lower-level employees is a significant component of empowerment. However, they discovered that many empowerment initiatives fail when they just concentrate on power without redistributing information, knowledge, and rewards (Bowen & Lawler, 1992). According to them, managers share four organizational ingredients with their employees through empowerment: "(1) information about the organization's performance, (2) rewards based on the organization's performance, (3) knowledge that enables employees to understand and contribute to organizational performance, and (4) the authority to make decisions that affect organizational direction and performance" (Bowen & Lawler, 1992).

Recently, Ahearne et al. (2005) introduced the multidimensional conception of employee empowerment that views empowerment as a leadership style or strategy. The empowering leadership style advocated by Ahearne et al. includes leadership actions that enhance the meaningfulness of work, foster participation in decision-making, express confidence in high performance, and provide autonomy from bureaucratic constraints. Arnold et al. describe empowerment as a leadership style characterized by the following leadership behaviors: leading by example, including others in decision-making, coaching, informing, and demonstrating care for others. Attempting to resolve the current controversy regarding the definition of employee empowerment is beyond the scope of this study. This study employs Ahearne et al. leadership approach to employee empowerment for various reasons. First, the concept of empowering leadership is built on decades of study on the nature, use, and outcomes of power and influence strategies in organizations. Second, empowerment as a leadership concept refers to a collection of identifiable and

well-acknowledged behaviors or levers that managers may use to impact the behavior, attitudes, and performance of their employees. Finally, significant progress has been achieved in establishing and verifying measures of Ahearne et al four-dimensional concept of employee empowerment, allowing this study to expand on prior research.

### **Background and Definitions for Empowering Leadership**

To explicate the historical foundation for empowering leadership, this leadership style can be affiliated with different theories and leadership styles. Initially, empowering leadership is comparable to transformational leadership in that this leadership style may be identified when managers share authority and responsibility with their staff; employees become self-directed and self-managed (Boudrias et al., 2009). Transformational leadership involves leaders attempting to engage and encourage their staff and transform them into leaders (Sun et al., 2012). This leadership style is similar to transformational leadership (Arnold et al., 2000; Ahearne et al., 2005; Liden et al., 2008; Zhang and Bartol, 2010; Sun et al., 2012). Even though this kind of leadership is comparable to transformational leadership, experts have distinguished between the two. "Charisma" is one of the traits of transformational leaders; it has been explored and stated that this trait makes people dependent on their leaders, meaning they do not plan to be proactive or responsible in the workplace (Kark et al. 2003; Hoch, 2013). In addition, many transformational leadership traits have little effect on the empowerment process, such as sacrificing personal interest for the group's needs (Hassan et al, 2013). Moreover, "expressing confidence has been demonstrated to be one of the components of the empowerment process and is frequently associated with positive employee behaviour. Scholars and researchers have maintained, however, that showing confidence in people is not conceptually connected to transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Avolio et al., 2004; Liden et al., 2008; Hoch, 2013 the employee's ability to meet this standard. Similarly, empowering leadership resembles leader-member exchange theory in that LMX suggests that the relationship between managers and employees is based on respect and trust and that such relationships influence the employee's performance and decision-making process (Ilies et al., 2007), and one of the dimensions of empowering leadership is to express confidence in an employee's performance. Moreover, empowering leadership is analogous to democratic leadership or participatory leadership, in which workers and group members engage more completely in the decision-making process, with everyone having the opportunity to share ideas, analyze the current issue, and provide solutions. Similarly, empowering leadership encourages involvement and provides workers with autonomy and flexibility to do their jobs in their own manner. Similarly, empowering leadership is strongly associated with social learning theory (1977) and social cognitive theory (1986); both theories can be defined by their recommendations of reciprocal interaction between the cognitive, behavioral, and environmental elements that characterize the organizational climate and environment. Thus, the attitude and techniques of managers in the workplace impact the conduct and perception of individuals. From the above discussion, we can conclude that empowering leadership has emerged from motivational, psychological, cognitive, and leadership theories, and cannot be referred to as one single theory. Empowering leadership can be seen as an approach of leadership that provides managers with a recipe or formula for distributing power and responsibilities among their employees. Hence, scholars and researchers have found that empowering leadership is a genuine and distinct style of leadership (Ahearne et al., 2005; Yukl and Becker, 2006). Supporting this idea, Hassan et al. (2013) state that empowering leadership is a prevalent modern paradigm and a unique leadership typology. Zhang and Bartol (2010) have further provided a suitable concept of empowering leadership. They believe that empowering leaders are those who develop "conditions that encourage sharing authority with an employee by outlining more decision-making autonomy, expressing trust in the individual's skills, and eliminating obstacles to success." Similarly, Vecchio et al. (2010) defined empowering leadership as "behaviors" that share power with subordinates. The sharing of power in such a way that self-directedness is strengthened and is likely to result in a better level of subordinate performance. Additionally, the attitude reaction between superiors and subordinates should be correlated with increased self-direction coming from empowerment. Similarly, empowering leadership emphasizes enabling and delegating authority and responsibility to subordinates, and it is closely tied to the empowerment phenomenon (Ahearne et al., 2005). Based on the above discussion and definitions, empowering leadership can be seen as a unique leadership style that seeks to increase the capacities of people in the workplace and empowers them to do tasks independently.

### **Dimensions of Empowering Leadership**

Similar to other leadership styles (e.g., transformational, transactional, leader-member exchange, etc.), empowering leadership has several aspects. Ahearne et al. (2005) provide four elements of empowered leadership as an illustration:

1. Increasing the meaningfulness of work
2. Fostering participation in decision-making
3. Expressing confidence in high performance.
4. Providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints

These characteristics of empowering

leadership, according to Ahearne et al. (2005), include the actions and behaviors of leaders who adopt this approach. Regarding the facets of empowering leadership, the majority of research has reached an agreement. Therefore, it is worthwhile to discuss these characteristics.

#### **A. Enhancing the meaningfulness of work**

This element of empowering leadership is crucial in defining empowering leadership (Ahearne et al., 2005). To demonstrate, leaders who practice this behavior will assist their subordinates in understanding the connection between their work objectives and the organization's objectives (Yukl et al., 2013). In addition, this component helps workers understand the contribution of their job to the organization's overall performance. According to Zhang and Bartol (2010), leaders who increase the significance of their workers' work indirectly assist their subordinates to realize how their work fits into the greater picture. Indeed, the response of workers to this conduct will correlate favorably with their increased job satisfaction (Kuo et al., 2011).

#### **B. Fostering participation in decision-making**

Similarly, to the preceding element, encouraging participation is a crucial element of empowering leadership. According to Wallace et al. (2011), empowering leaders take decisions together with their subordinates. In addition, Zhang and Bartol (2010) state that empowering leaders consider the opinions of their people when making choices that have a substantial impact on them. They also include their staff in strategic organization choices (Tung and Chang, 2011). This aids leaders in fostering intrinsic motivation among workers and enhancing their job satisfaction.

#### **C. Expressing confidence in high performance**

According to Ahearne et al. (2005), one of the primary pillars of empowering leadership is expressing confidence. Martin and Liao (2013) proposed that leaders who express confidence through a variety of behaviors' (such as believing that their employees can handle demanding tasks and expressing confidence in employees' ability to improve their performance and perform at the highest level) can foster positive job attitudes such as job satisfaction among their employees (Zhang and Bartol, 2010; Hoch, 2013).

#### **D. Providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints**

Undoubtedly, autonomy is directly tied to the process of empowering (Vallas, 2006; Hornung and Rousseau, 2007; Sun et al., 2012; Volmer et al., 2012). Therefore, leaders that adhere to this strategy should grant autonomy. This action may impact workers by allowing them to do their jobs independently. In addition, the simplification of laws and regulations inside the organization, so that workers may do their responsibilities more effectively, is another way to promote autonomy, coupled with providing employees authority to make rapid judgements (Zhang and Bartol, 2010; Hassan et al., 2013).

From the above discussion of these four dimensions, it can be seen that empowering leadership is highly related to the empowerment process. Supporting this, Zhang and Bartol (2010) stated that empowering leadership focuses on stimulating and energizing the aspects of the empowerment process. Several authors are following these dimensions in order to exercise empowering leadership style (Zhang and Bartol, 2010; Kuo et al., 2011; Tung & Chang, 2011; Martin & Liao, 2013; Chang et al., 2013; Yukl et al., 2013).

#### **Psychological Empowerment**

Psychological empowerment has been defined by Conger and Kanungo (1998) as a motivational concept of self-efficacy. While Spreitzer (1995) described empowerment as "a motivational construct exhibited in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Collectively, these four cognitions demonstrate an active, rather than a passive, attitude toward a work responsibility. Similarly, Lee and Koh (2011) provided a comprehensive definition of psychological empowerment. They defined it as "the psychological state of a subordinate perceiving four dimensions of meaningfulness, competence, self-determination, and impact, which is influenced by the empowering behaviors of the supervisor." Psychological empowerment is primarily concerned with workers' views of their positions within the organization since empowerment is a continuous variable (Spreitzer, 1995). Four components of psychological empowerment have been identified by (Spreitzer, 1995): self-determination, competence, impact, and meaning. The "self-determination" component emphasizes autonomy (Bell & Staw, 1989), self-regulation, resilience, and greater adaptability (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Competence refers to self-efficacy and the idea that one is capable of doing job duties competently. Impact refers to the extent to which people may impact strategic, managerial, or operational outcomes at work (Spreitzer, 1996). The "meaning" component relates to the purpose of work in relation to an individual's own views and a feeling that one's work is personally

meaningful (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). According to researchers, psychological empowerment is still a separate idea. For instance, Spreitzer (1995) identified four distinct levels of psychological empowerment, but Kim and George (2005) and Al-Sabi (2011) discovered a two-dimensional model of psychological empowerment. These characteristics represent the four dimensions defined by Thomas and Velthouse (1990) and Spreitzer (1995) that is, attitude and influence.

The studies conducted so far have overwhelmingly placed importance on the relation of psychological and managerial empowerment with job satisfaction as separate constructs. However, when psychological and managerial empowerment are treated as a whole, the relationship with job satisfaction can be handled in a more potent and concreteway, in that it is thought to be more inclusive. Taking empowerment as two separate constructs, i.e. managerial and psychological, will explain the relationship between “empowerment” and “job satisfaction” in a more wide-ranging manner. In terms of the managerial aspects, the main objective is the conditions required for empowerment. On the other hand, the perception of the conditions by employees and how employees perceive themselves make up the psychological dimension of the empowerment. Therefore, the two dimensions together will elaborate the relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction relates to employees' feeling of fulfillment and happiness at the job, and impacts their dedication and care for the organization (Hosie et al., 2013; Olcer, 2015; Top et al., 2015). (Hosie et al., 2013; Olcer, 2015; Top et al., 2015). Scholars have claimed that work satisfaction is not just attributable to material factors, such as compensation and promotion, but also arises because of autonomy experienced by employees in decision-making and implementation processes owing to empowerment. With a mix of structural and psychological empowerment, employees often feel linked to the organization, and this is predicted to enhance their perception of how effectively their employment offers the things that matter to them (Aziri, 2011; George, 2008; Hackman and Oldham, 1976; Spector, 2008). An empowering organization prioritizes information-sharing, confidentiality, and individual engagement, hence boosting workers' sense of self-assurance and well-being (Joo and Shim, 2010; Spreitzer et al., 1997). According to Fock et al. (2011), empowerment promotes work satisfaction by enabling employees to interact with their supervisors and colleagues. In addition, Reeves (2010) claimed that employee empowerment generates a strong interpersonal connection between employers and workers, resulting in a favorable effect on job satisfaction via improved communication, open-door policy, and honest criticism. In times of transition, workers are pressured to adjust fast, resulting in significant emotional upheavals that might reduce their job satisfaction and organizational loyalty (Kiefer, 2005; Maheshwari and Vohra, 2015). However, according to Miller (2002), empowering leadership can help improve the situation by engaging with employees and giving them a sense of control during these periods of uncertainty. A direct positive association between employee empowerment and job satisfaction has been demonstrated in a number of studies in developed countries (Spreitzer, 1995; Bordin et al., 2007; Laschinger et al., 2001). One in particular, by Seibert et al. (2004), examined a sample of Fortune 100 employees in the USA and found strong empirical evidence of a direct positive relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction. By contrast, this relationship is underexplored in developing countries. Given that emerging countries like India are facing massive challenges in employee retention, the effect of empowerment on job satisfaction is a timely subject of investigation in these environments. Empowerment and its impact on job satisfaction have become a crucial issue for Asian organizations, especially in the public service sector, where job activities are fragmented and changes occur rapidly in the work environment.

### **Employee Empowerment and Job Satisfaction**

The survey findings of Rana and Singh (2016) revealed a favorable and statistically significant association between employee empowerment and work satisfaction in the manufacturing industry. Male workers were happier with their employment than their female counterparts, indicating a substantial difference between male and female employee empowerment and job satisfaction. Heather (2015) drew the conclusion that empowering leaders had a crucial role in fostering empowered professional practice settings that promoted high-quality treatment and worksatisfaction.

Based on the descriptive research, Elnaga and Imran (2014) produced three primary recommendations to generate successful empowerment that led to a high level of work satisfaction. They also provided general guidelines for empowering managers, delegating, and participatory leadership. According to Saif and Saleh (2013), workers at Jordanian private hospitals saw themselves as highly empowered and were very satisfied. 56% of the variance in employee satisfaction was attributed to the adoption of psychological empowerment, according to their research. Additionally, the research acknowledged the necessity to continue implementing psychological

empowerment. Abadi and Chegini (2013) showed that empowerment and its dimensions which include access to information, reward systems, self-determination, and competence, had a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction.

The Baby Boomer nurses reported higher mean overall psychological empowerment ratings than Generation X nurses, according to the findings of Sparks (2012). This indicated that there were substantial disparities in psychological empowerment ratings across generations. But the results revealed no generational variations in overall work satisfaction rankings.

According to the findings of Choong and Lau (2011), empowerment and the four cognitions of empowerment (meaning, competence, self-determination, and effect) have a substantial positive association with work satisfaction. According to Ning et al. (2009), the majority of job discontent was attributed to workload and remuneration, promotion, the quantity of work responsibilities, work settings, and organizational policies. A statistically significant link between empowerment and work satisfaction was discovered. Work goals and age were the demographic characteristics that impacted empowerment. The variables that influenced job satisfaction were work goals and education level.

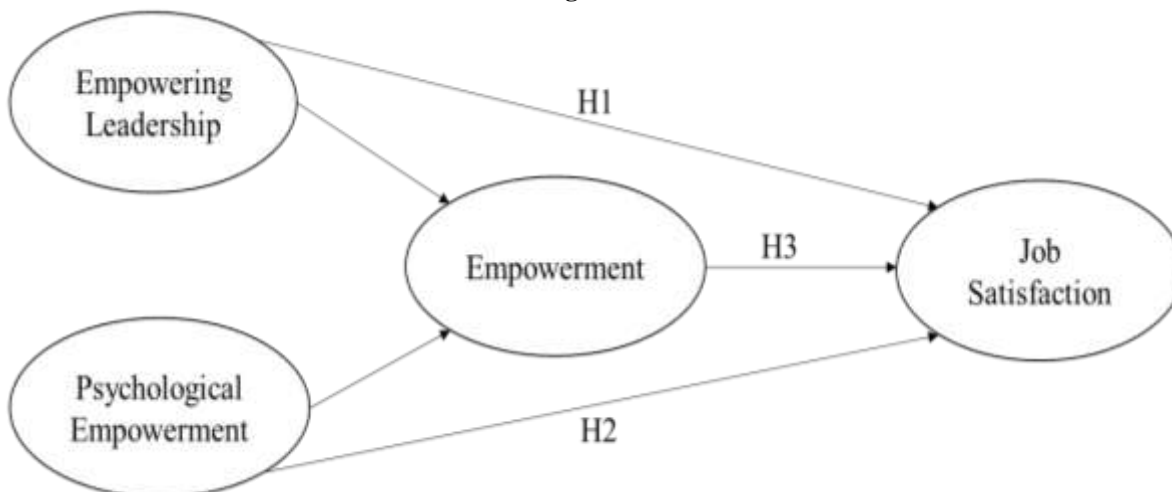
Laschinger, et al., (2007) concluded that higher quality relationships with their immediate supervisor were associated with greater structural and psychological empowerment and consequently, greater job satisfaction of managers. Holdsworth and Cartwright (2003) revealed that call center agents perceived themselves as less empowered than other workers in a traditional office environment. The empowerment dimensions of meaning, impact, and particularly self-determination, seemed to directly influence job satisfaction but not health.

Manojlovich, et al., (2002) results revealed that structural and psychological empowerment predicted 38% of the variance in job satisfaction. Ripley and Ripley (1992) and Spatz (2000) stated that empowerment enhanced the responsibilities as well as employee motivation in their daily work, improved satisfaction, service quality, the loyalty of employees, and productivity giving them self-respect and increased quality of product & productivity and decreased the employee turnover.

### Theoretical Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the study's theoretical framework. The independent variables were empowering leadership, psychological empowerment, and empowerment, while the dependent variable was job satisfaction.

Figure 1:-



### Hypotheses

Based on the literature review highlighted above, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: Empowering Leadership has a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction.

H2: Psychological empowerment has a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction.

H3: Merging Empowering Leadership and psychological empowerment has a higher level of influence on job satisfaction than empowering leadership and psychological empowerment taken individually

### Research Design

#### Sample and data collection

The current study's target audience consists of frontline administrators working in different government departments in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Self-administered questionnaires were utilized to collect primary data for testing the given hypotheses. A total of 330 employees working in different departments in the civil administration of the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir were reached, with 319 responding to the survey. Seventeen of the questionnaires were deemed unsuitable owing to insufficient information and were thus eliminated, leaving 302 valid responses. The data was gathered between January and May of 2021. The questionnaires were distributed to employees based on their convenience and willingness in responding to the questionnaire. Some replies were gathered via an online questionnaire and email. Data were analyzed by using SPSS throughout several analyses such as descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis

#### Measures:-

The constructs were quantified using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire was divided into three sections, the first of which provided a short overview of the study's aims, and participants were guaranteed the privacy of their choices. The second section included demographic statements, such as gender, age, designation, and years of experience, while the third section included remarks on empowering leadership, psychological empowerment, as well as employee job satisfaction.

#### Empowering Leadership

The present study follows Ahearne et al. (2005) 12-item empowering leadership scale to measure this construct. Each dimension of empowering leadership has 4 items to measure it: (1) "enhancing the meaningfulness of work", (2) "fostering participation in decision making", (3) "expressing confidence in high performance", and (4) "providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints". This scale has been used by several studies, and its reliability and validity have been accepted. For the present study, Cronbach's Alpha was used to establish the reliability of the scale. The value of Cronbach's Alpha reported was 0.870.

#### Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment is manifested in four dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. The current study follows Spreitzer's (1995) 12-item scale to measure this construct. There are three items for each dimension. Most of the studies have used the same scale to measure the psychological empowerment of employees and the results of the reliability test were accepted for this scale (Spreitzer, 1995; Kraemer et al., 1999; Robbins et al., 2002; Huang et al., 2006; Cho and Faerman, 2010; Zhang and Bartol, 2010; Stander and Rothmann, 2010; Barton and Barton, 2011; Chenwei et al., 2012; Huang, 2012; Sun et al., 2012). Cronbach Alpha for this scale was 0.786.

#### Job-satisfaction

The scale used to measure the job satisfaction levels of the employees is the employee job satisfaction scale developed by Brayfield and Rothie (1951), The scale consists of five items, I feel fairly satisfied with my present job, most days I am enthusiastic with my work, each day of work seems it will never end, etc. Taking a cue from the extant literature this scale has been chosen because when job satisfaction is assessed in totality, the appropriate choice in those circumstances would be a global version of job satisfaction. This scale showed a Cronbach alpha of 0.886.

### Results:-

#### Descriptive Statistics

Having established the validity and reliability of the scales, descriptive analysis is another statistical test that was performed for the extracted dimensions and overall scales.

**Table 1:-** Output of the Descriptive Analysis (N=302).

Scale	Mean	Std. Deviation
Empowerment	3.56	.802

<b>Empowering Leadership</b>	3.48	.615
<b>Psychological Empowerment</b>	3.62	.784
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>	3.69	.812

From Table 1, it is necessary to note that all the scales of this research were computed by the means scores of its sub-dimensions. Therefore, the leadership empowerment scale as a four-dimensional scale was computed by summing up its 12 items. The mean score is 3.48 with a standard deviation (S.D) at 0.615. This means the employees believe highly that they were given the autonomy and the authority to act independently, which illustrates in other words that the employees were moderately structurally empowered. With regard to psychological empowerment, an overall empowerment score was computed by summing up the four dimensions. The mean score is 3.62 with S.D at 0.784. This shows that the employees hold all the cognitions of psychological empowerment effectively. On one hand, meaning and competence (attitude), and on the other hand, self-determination and impact (influence). In other words, most of the employees have acceptable levels of confidence in their values, beliefs, and on how well they will perform their goals and tasks and also have high levels of trust in their abilities and choices in influencing, initiating, and regulating their own work. Regarding job satisfaction, an overall job satisfaction score was computed. The mean score is 3.69 with S.D at 0.812. This indicates that the employees in civil administration in UT of Jammu and Kashmir were slightly satisfied with their jobs.

### Correlation Analysis

For further analysis of the relationships among the variables of the study, correlation analysis is performed. All the variables and their dimensions were subjected to this analysis. Correlation at this stage of the research gives an initial indicator of the relationships among the variables of the study. Table 2, shows the correlation output among the variables of the study.

**Table 2:-**

Variables	Correlation- coefficient	Job-Satisfaction	Coefficient of Determination
Empowering Leadership	0.528	0.539	
Psychological empowerment	0.668	0.629	
Empowerment	0.738	0.679	

Note:  $p < 0.001$

Table 2 reports the results of the correlation analysis between employee empowerment and employee job satisfaction. In this analysis, job satisfaction was taken as the dependent variable, and empowerment and its sub-dimensions (Empowering leadership and Psychological empowerment) as independent variables. According to the findings in Table 2, a significant correlation at 0.001 significance level was found between empowerment and its sub-dimensions and job satisfaction levels. In other words, the Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) between job satisfaction and empowerment and its sub-dimensions is statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). Also, it can be observed from Table 2 that there is a positive, moderate level ( $r = 0.528$ ) of correlation between employee job satisfaction and empowering leadership, whereas there is a positive high level of correlation ( $r = 0.738$ ) between employee job satisfaction and empowerment in general and psychological empowerment ( $r = 0.688$ ). When the determination coefficients ( $R^2$ ) in Table 2 are analyzed, it can be seen that 62 percent of the total variance in job satisfaction results from psychological empowerment and 53 percent results from empowering leadership. The determination coefficient estimated for empowerment, in general, was found to be 0.679. It can be said, in other words, 67% of the total variance in job satisfaction stems from empowerment in general.

These coefficients also affected the correlation coefficients between the dependent variable (i.e. job satisfaction) and the independent variables (i.e. empowerment and its sub-dimensions). In Table, 2, the highest level of correlation between employee job satisfaction and empowerment, along with its sub-dimensions was found to be between job satisfaction and empowerment in general ( $r = 0.738$  and  $p = 0.000 < 0.001$ ) and it is followed by the correlation between job satisfaction and psychological empowerment ( $r = 0.688$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.001$ ). The correlation between job satisfaction and empowering leadership ( $r = 0.528$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.001$ ), on the other hand, is lower when compared to the above-mentioned variables (empowerment in general and behavioral empowerment), as can also be seen in

Table 2. According to the results, we can conclude that the most significant factor in employee empowerment and job satisfaction is empowerment in general, consisting of both empowering leadership and psychological dimensions of empowerment. The results can be interpreted as follows: both behavioral and psychological empowerment implementations in an establishment enhance employee job satisfaction, and when the empowerment activities are performed in such a way as to cover both dimensions of empowerment (structural and psychological), the increase in employee job satisfaction becomes more remarkable. However, it should be noted that the correlation analysis employed in the study does not allow us to conduct a cause-effect analysis. It can only provide some insights into how the variables change, and in what direction they change. The results of the regression analysis are reported in Tables 3, 4, and 5.

### Testing Hypotheses

To test the hypotheses of this study, multiple regression analysis is performed to analyze and measure the relationship between a single dependent variable and several independent variables (Hair, et al., 2010). In other words, this measure provides an idea about how well the independent variable will contribute to the overall prediction. In this study, all the variables are metric and therefore divided into dependent and independent. Empowerment, psychological empowerment, and structural empowerment worked as the independent variables and job satisfaction worked as the dependent variable. Testing hypotheses are presented as follows:

H1: Empowering-Leadership has a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction. In this research, structural empowerment is proposed to have a positive influence on job satisfaction. Table 3 shows the statistical results of the regression analysis.

**Table 3:-** Regression Model Statistics Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction.

Independent		Dependent			
Job-Satisfaction					
Empowering-Leadership	$\beta$	t-value	p-value	R <sup>2</sup>	f-value
	0.476	5.484	0.000	0.539	51.387

As shown in Table 3, the result of the regression analysis reveals that empowering leadership is a significant predictor of employee job satisfaction. Finally, the overall model statistic in Table 3 (R<sup>2</sup>= 0.539, P = 0.000) supported the view that empowering leadership has a positive influence on job satisfaction. Hence, hypothesis one is accepted.

H2: Psychological empowerment has a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction. Psychological empowerment is proposed to have a positive influence on job satisfaction. Table 4 shows the statistical results of the regression analysis.

**Table 4:-** Regression Model Statistics Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction.

Independent		Dependent			
Job Satisfaction					
Psychological-Empowerment	$\beta$	t-value	p-value	R <sup>2</sup>	f-value
	0.566	7.924	0.000	0.629	61.387

As shown in Table 4, the result of the regression analysis reveals that psychological empowerment is a significant predictor of job satisfaction. Finally, the overall model statistic in Table 4 (R<sup>2</sup>= 0.629, P = 0.000) supports the view that psychological empowerment has a positive influence on job satisfaction. Hence, hypothesis two is accepted.

H3: Merging empowering leadership and psychological empowerment has a higher level of influence on job satisfaction than empowering leadership and psychological empowerment taken individually. Empowerment is proposed to have a positive influence on job satisfaction. Table 5 shows the statistical results as the regression analysis.

**Table 5:-** Regression Model Statistics Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction.

Independent		Dependent			
Job Satisfaction					
Empowerment	$\beta$	t-value	p-value	R <sup>2</sup>	f-value
	0.686	9.484	0.000	0.679	87.387

As shown in Table 5, the result of the regression analysis reveals that empowerment which includes structural empowerment (empowering leadership) and psychological empowerment is more significant predictor of job satisfaction than structural empowerment and psychological empowerment taken individually. Finally, the overall model statistic in Table 5 ( $R^2= 0.679$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ) supports the view that empowerment has a positive influence on job satisfaction. Hence, hypothesis three is accepted.

**Table 6:-** Results of Hypothesis Testing.

Path	Coefficient	P value	Result
Empowering Leadership→Job Satisfaction	0.476	0.000	Supported
Psychological Empowerment→Job Satisfaction	0.566	0.000	Supported
Empowerment→Job Satisfaction	0.686	0.000	Supported

### Discussion:-

This study aimed to examine the influence of empowerment on job satisfaction among employees working as frontline administrators in the union territory of J&K. The results of the regression analysis in this study provide support for the significant effect of empowering leadership on employee job satisfaction ( $R^2= 0.539$ ,  $p<0.000$ ). The probable explanation of this result is that creating an empowering environment (leadership empowerment), where employees feel that they have the autonomy and authority to act independently and take control of their work, will lead them to be more satisfied in their job. These findings were consistent with previous empirical studies that showed a significant relationship between leadership empowerment and job satisfaction (e.g. Fulford and Enz, 1995; Dickson and Lorenz, 2009; Gazzoli et al., 2010; Pelit et al., 2011). This study also provides support for the significant effect of psychological empowerment on employee job satisfaction ( $R^2= 0.629$ ,  $p<0.000$ ). The explanation of this result is that when the employees have confidence in their values and beliefs on how well they will perform their goals and tasks (attitude) and have trust in their abilities and choices in influencing, initiating, and regulating their own work (influence), they will be more positive and satisfied towards their work. The study's findings were supported by previous studies, which confirmed a significant relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction (e.g. Spreitzer, 1996; Hancer and George, 2003; Hechanova et al., 2006; Patahet al., 2009; Pelit et al., 2011). It is worth noting here that psychological empowerment was a more significant predictor of employee job satisfaction than empowering leadership. On one hand, this implies that implementing leadership empowerment effectively will in turn lead automatically to the other elements of empowerment (psychological empowerment) and consequently lead to the achievement of employee job satisfaction, in addition, psychological empowerment is more related in the workplace to psychological issues (i.e. motivation) than practical issues on the other (i.e. decision making).

Most of the previous studies focused on either correlating the managerial dimension of empowerment and job satisfaction (e.g. Fulford and Enz, 1995; Dickson and Lorenz, 2009; Gazzoli et al., 2010; and Pelit et al., 2011) or correlating the psychological dimension of empowerment and job satisfaction (e.g. Spreitzer, 1996, 1997; Hancer and George, 2003; Hechanova et al., 2006; Patah et al., 2009; Pelit et al., 2011) rather than focusing on the two dimensions of empowerment jointly. This study's results argued that when managerial empowerment (empowering leadership) and psychological empowerment are merged together as a whole, the influence of empowerment on job satisfaction achieves a higher level ( $R^2= 0.679$ ,  $p<0.000$ ), which distinguishes this study from other studies conducted. This result was supported by Pelit et al. (2011) who indicated that when both dimensions of empowerment (psychological and managerial empowerment) are taken as a whole, the influence on job satisfaction yields a higher rate. This result implies that merging empowerment in the sequence of leadership empowerment and then psychological empowerment will lead the employees working as civil administrators in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir to be more satisfied in their work. In other words, the ability that the employer has to structurally empower his/her employees would affect the employee's assessment of psychological empowerment. Thus, the ability the employer has to empower employees would affect the extent of employees' value and belief on how well they will perform their goals or tasks, as well as employees' ability and choice in influencing, initiating, and regulating their own work. Eventually, employees will be more satisfied with their work.

The results presented above reflect theoretical contributions to knowledge and reveal several important implications for theory and research on empowerment and employee job satisfaction. The main contribution of this study is that although previous studies have tended to adopt and measure one of the two dimensions of empowerment either psychological empowerment or structural empowerment on job satisfaction in a western context. This study is one of the first studies that attempts to adopt and measure the two main dimensions of empowerment (structural

empowerment which has been conceptualized or operationalized as empowering leadership and psychological empowerment) on job satisfaction in a non-western context. In addition, the results indicated that the empowering leadership scale with four dimensions and the psychological empowerment scale with four dimensions, as well as the unidimensional job satisfaction scale are valid and reliable among employees working in the civil administration of the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

It also showed that there is a significant relationship between empowering leadership and employee job satisfaction, as well as between employee psychological empowerment and employee job satisfaction in the civil administration of Jammu and Kashmir. The consistency of these results with previous empirical studies (e.g. Fulford and Enz, 1995; Spreitzer, 1996; Hancer and George, 2003; Hechanova et al., 2006; Dickson and Lorenz, 2009; Patah et al., 2009; Gazzoli et al., 2010; Pelit et al., 2011) gives more support for the validity of the used scales, which can be used in future as valid measures in a non-western context. In this study, a number of managerial implications can be highlighted. First, it is important that managers understand the need to find different ways to implement empowering leadership style that lead to higher levels of employee job satisfaction. This can be done by creating an environment where employees feel that they have the authority and autonomy to act independently, so they can feel more comfortable and satisfied in terms of their operational working system and reward system (job satisfaction) on one hand, and through management being able to rely on employees, through delegating and giving discretion regarding decision making over tasks, on the other. Second, it is also necessary for managers at all levels of the civil administration to recognize the significant benefits of employee empowerment on employee job satisfaction.

Furthermore, it is essential to design different training, reward, and development programs, which lead to improving employees' feelings of job satisfaction. Third, it is also important for managers to recognize the complementary role of structural empowerment (empowering leadership) on psychological empowerment, as both of them have provided significant results in terms of job satisfaction.

#### **Limitations and Future Directions**

Although this study has identified theoretical contributions to knowledge and revealed several important implications for research on empowerment and job satisfaction, some limitations have arisen which may require more attention when understanding the study's findings. Dealing with them can draw and provide a clear direction for future research. The public service sector in J&K, concentrating on frontline administrators, was chosen for this study, and for better generalizations of the study's findings, this study suggests that testing and validating the research model of this study in other service contexts, such as law enforcement organizations, banks, health care sector, and other public and private organizations both in J&K and elsewhere, would be an interesting research area. Investigating this research model in other service contexts from both managerial and customer perspectives, rather than concentrating on the employee perspective, may expand our knowledge with regard to the link between empowerment and job satisfaction, and possibly require some modifications to the hypothesized model. The cross-sectional design of this study allowed for the collection of all the data necessary for the study components over a single time frame. Cross-sectional research didn't give the chance to observe the relationship between constructs' causes and effects. Therefore, it is preferable to carry out longitudinal research in the future to draw valid and reliable causal conclusions. This study has adopted empowering leadership and psychological empowerment for the purpose of discovering their effect on job satisfaction. Therefore, including other perspectives of empowerment would be an interesting research area. More specifically, future research could include some of the antecedents of leadership empowerment behaviors such as delegation of authority, information sharing, self-directed, coaching, development of people, participative decision-making, and accountability for outcomes. As this study examined the influence of psychological empowerment and leadership empowerment on employee job satisfaction, future research could also identify the potential influence of these dimensions on job satisfaction through some mediating variables.

#### **Conclusion:-**

This study has provided a significant new contribution to research on employee empowerment and job satisfaction. It has explored and verified outstanding findings that are related to the relationship between employee empowerment and job satisfaction. The results of this study have supported this relationship and bridged the gaps between the empowerment and job satisfaction literature and the empirical findings. The current study was conducted only among frontline administrators working in the civil administration of J&K, and as such the results are not claimed to be totally representative. They do however provide insights that can form the direction of future research into this important topic. It is the wish of the researchers that this contribution will be built upon by other researchers and

practitioners, to shed further light on important aspects related to empowerment and job satisfaction in public administration.

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