



EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT AND ITS EFFECTS ON JOB SATISFACTION- A CASE STUDY OF KHAADI, KARACHI, PAKISTAN

Saima Zaib Durrani ¹, Mushtaque Ali Jhariko ², Tania Mushtaque ³

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63544/ijss.v4i4.194>

Affiliations:

¹ PhD Scholar,
Institute of Business Administration
University of Sindh, Jamshoro
Email: saimazaibdurrani@gmail.com

² Professor,
Institute of Business Administration
University of Sindh, Jamshoro
Email: mali.jariko@usindh.edu.pk

³ Associate Professor
Institute of Business Administration
University of Sindh, Jamshoro
Email: tania.mushtaque@usindh.edu.pk

Corresponding Author's Email:

¹ saimazaibdurrani@gmail.com

Copyright:

Author/s

License:



Article History

Received: 30.09.2025

Accepted: 04.11.2025

Published: 12.11.2025

Abstract

Employee empowerment is a critical strategy for enhancing organizational performance, yet its application within the hierarchical cultural contexts of non-Western industries, such as Pakistan's textile sector, remains understudied. This research addresses this gap by investigating the manifestation and impact of empowerment practices at KHAADI, a leading Pakistani fashion brand. A qualitative case study approach was employed, utilizing semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with a purposive sample of 30 employees and managers from various departments and hierarchical levels. Data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify perceived empowerment practices and their correlation with job satisfaction.

The analysis revealed that empowerment practices, particularly delegated decision-making, supportive leadership feedback, and recognition, significantly enhanced job satisfaction. Employees reporting high autonomy demonstrated greater intrinsic motivation, innovation, and a 40% higher self-reported satisfaction score. However, the effectiveness of empowerment was heavily moderated by managerial style, with significant inconsistencies observed across departments. A key finding was the critical role of cultural context, where traditional hierarchies both constrained full autonomy and increased the value of supportive, trust-based leadership. Empowerment is a potent driver of job satisfaction and performance at KHAADI, but its success is contingent on consistent implementation and adaptation to the local socio-cultural environment. This study provides contextualized evidence from a developing economy, challenging the direct transferability of Western-centric empowerment models and offering practical implications for human resource management in similar cultural and industrial settings.

Keywords: Employee Empowerment, Job Satisfaction, Qualitative Research, Organizational Culture, Leadership, Pakistan Textile Industry.

Introduction and Background of the Study

Employee empowerment is recognized as one of the crucial tendencies in the management of people or personnel management in modern practice, above all, if the enterprises aim at improving such Conditions for operations, such as productivity, creativity, and staff turnover (Rachmad, 2022). During the last decades, the term 'empowerment' has evolved from just being a phrase that is from time to time used literally to being one of the parameters of competitive advantage in most industries. This has shifted to what can be described as an employment relation where the organization depends more on its employees is due to the fact that the conventional approaches of authority-based management models of organizations do not offer adequate solutions to today's organizations. The employee empowerment concept arose from industrial relations and



human relations movements that cut across the turn of the twentieth century, and which were aimed at improving the welfare of employees for efficiency in organizations.

As noted by Gong et al. (2020) studied psychological empowerment and its implications were studied in organizational contexts. The competitions around the world in the 1980 and 1990 and the new demands for innovations made organizations reconsider and evaluate their management practices (Inayat & Khan, 2021). Business organizations began sensing that endowment can liberate flexibility and adaptability in business operations. The Total Quality Management (TQM) movement that emerged at this time provided a route to the hypothesis that the decision-making involvement of the employees might improve quality and productivity. As a result, the practice of empowerment spread as a preventive organizational initiative, including the sectors that need to respond promptly to the changes in the market.

Organizations are focusing on gaining a competitive advantage in the marketplace after the paradigm of the globalization era has fetched hasty deviations and modifications, for both technological and environmental industries (Asamani et al., 2025; Rai & Maheshwari, 2020). Advanced machines and equipment, new technologies, effective marketing strategies, unique customer services, and other components represent the factors that build up for this advantage. Thus, organizations are always advancing their systems, processes, and technologies to cope with the challenging existing environment. In addition, the dynamic contemporary environment is urging its organizations to synchronize their management techniques with these increasing problems. For a company to survive and achieve its concerned goals and missions in today's competitive world, one of the most important tools is the human element (Adebayo et al., 2020). It is the most crucial asset of an enterprise whose success or failure depends on the individuals' qualifications and performance.

Technologies, processes, and products are easily copied; however, individuals will remain the most strategic resource for the company. They stay the repository of knowledge which competitors can't imitate. Hence, a new management technique employed to face the arising challenges is employee empowerment or participative management that involves the individuals responsible for the work (Cao, Zhang, & Song, 2020). The empowerment role is to improve the performance of the employees in the organization by making them more competent in their workplace. Empowering human resources maximizes the resource itself and generates organizational commitment among them, which is perceived as a way of differentiating one organization from another. Moreover, empowered workers feel more confident and self-reliant to influence their work environment by being more proactive and innovative (Choi & Choi, 2021). Allowing individuals to have both independence and feedback within their company makes the empowerment process successful. However, employee empowerment doesn't mean that managers isolate themselves from their responsibilities, but rather that their responsibility comes to create and foster an environment in which the employee's input is anticipated and cultivated. However, high levels of confidence might be taken too far, ending up in crossing the line towards arrogance, which makes it difficult to deal with such employees and take directions well (Olatunji et al., 2020). Operating in this kind of work environment takes its toll on employees, and they once again become dissatisfied, resulting in a decrease in their productivity levels.

Problem Statement

Sparing no effort to enhance employee performance, commitment, and job satisfaction, as employee empowerment argues, is a corollary of human resource management strategies and, therefore, a salient component of organizational performance and productivity enhancement. Given the recognition of empowerment as critical to promoting innovation and fostering a favorable organizational culture (Ghasempour Ganji et al., 2021), its use in developing contexts remains limited. Weak empowerment practices, coupled with concerns about satisfaction, as noted by Wang et al. (2025), are common in the Pakistani textile industry (including KHAADI), which is dominated by cultural statusism, rigid lines of authority, and an autocratic management style. Most of the existing literature is, as has often been noted, centered around the West. In the counterintuitive, non-Western realms where organizational constellations and cultural paradigms are likely to vary, empowerment practices are sorely tested. The Pakistani textile industry, which has limited employee autonomy and job satisfaction (Asamani et al., 2025; Reissova & Papay, 2021), calls for further, contextualized, investigatory research on these subjects. This study is part of the gap



within the literature that seeks to establish the nexus between empowerment practices and job satisfaction within KHAADI. Thus, it adds to the theoretical and practical dimensions. The HR strategies offered to enhance morale, minimize turnover, and boost productivity within similar cultural and industrial contexts are a significant contribution.

This study explores the impact of employee empowerment on job satisfaction in KHAADI, a textile firm in Karachi, Pakistan. Thus, the primary research problem of the study is defined as the impact of employee empowerment on job satisfaction in KHAADI Karachi. In order to answer this question, the study works on a twofold objective. The first objective is to analyse the impact of empowerment practices on the job satisfaction of employees in KHAADI. The second objective is to shed light on how empowerment practices can be best applied within the sociocultural and organizational settings of the textile industry in Pakistan.

Significance of the Study

This research addresses one of the most pressing aspects of human resource management and organizational behaviour within the context of the Pakistani textile industry, especially the potential of employee empowerment in the context of overly centralized and bureaucratic systems. The textile industry is one of the biggest pillars of the economy in Pakistan, and is described as having stiflingly rigid structures and minimal employee autonomy (Ngwenya & Pelser, 2020). The study's focal point, KHAADI, provides contextual case studies of empowerment in developing economies that are off the Western radar, providing implications for human resource practitioners and policymakers interested in improving employee engagement, retention, and productivity as endorers of participative management. It also furthers the literature on empowerment and adds to the cross-cultural research, which seeks to discuss and challenge the Western perspectives on empowerment (Khuong & Linh, 2020). In addition, the study fills a gap in the impact of empowerment on organizational health, illustrating the overall well-being and retention, along with job satisfaction that KHAADI gains from enhanced competitiveness (Alsafadi & Altahtat, 2021).

Scope of the Study

The exploration of an empowered job attitude in the case of KHAADI, a textile firm located in Karachi, Pakistan. It focuses on the dimensions of empowerment with respect to decision making, information control, participation, and trust, while also assessing the job satisfaction indicators with respect to work attitudes, organizational climate, and professional advancement. These variables are placed in the larger context of Pakistan's culture and organizational context, as well as within the Pakistan textile industry, with the study employing a case study approach and a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The study is a cross-sectional one and thus captures the entire KHAADI business in Karachi. Although the findings of this study can be said to reflect the circumstances of the Japanese textile industry as a whole, it is important to note that the conclusions are not fully applicable beyond the textile industry and the geographic boundaries of this particular country.

Research Limitations

The study has several limitations. First is the sole case study of KHAADI, resulting in the inability to generalize the findings to other fields or organizations. Second, the findings come from the particular management culture in Pakistan, which is highly stratified. Third, the use of self-reported data is always prone to bias, where respondents might exaggerate or underreport critical aspects. Fourth, the cross-sectional nature of the study means that only one moment in time is examined, so fluctuations in the organizational structures or employee attitudes may affect the results over time. Lastly, the lack of comparable research to other companies stifles the possibility of benchmarking results and discovering cross-industry macro structures.

Research Gap

The employee empowerment (EE) and job satisfaction (JS) phenomena have received considerable attention within Western scholarly and professional circles. However, research in developing non-Western countries is still limited. Contextual research, particularly within the textile industry, is particularly glaring given the sector's importance within the country's economy. The role of culture within empowerment practices is also understudied, particularly in non-Western countries, where culture is considered as hierarchical as in Pakistan, as empowerment practices are likely to diverge from those prevalent in more egalitarian societies. Furthermore, the literature is dominated by theoretical constructs, primarily Western,



highlighting the urgent need for developing economies to either support or contest the existing literature. Last, of the literature regarding the textile industry within Pakistan, the dynamics of the sector regarding empowerment and job satisfaction have yet to be adequately researched. In addressing these gaps, this research will provide curated case study evidence from KHAADI, localized perspectives on the global discourse on empowerment, and foster cross-cultural and industrial discussions.

Literature Review

Workplace advancement or the management and delegation of powers to the employees has been a significant topic that has been debated and researched in human resource management and organizational behaviour (Vu, 2020). It is a management strategy that endeavours to provide employees with freedom, responsibility, and involve them in decision-making processes; the idea has been associated with higher levels of job satisfaction, better performance, and commitment among employees. Tampi, Nabella, and Sari (2022) analyse the influence of dealing particularly with retail businesses where need to communicate and interface directly with the customers, then the concept of empowerment may be extremely powerful. This paper aims to review the literature on employee empowerment and job satisfaction, as a foundation for a deeper analysis of these phenomena at KHAADI, a premier retail brand in Karachi, Pakistan. A specific issue that has attracted the attention of scholars is the connection between employee empowerment and job satisfaction, and since the retail industry deals with customer interface, this type of study has been relatively popular in this industry. Studies show that when central control is delegated to the retail employees, the result is increased job satisfaction because the employees have ownership of the retail stores (Aurangzeb et al., 2021; Papageorgiou et al., 2025). For example, investigations reveal that if employees are involved in decision-making mechanisms that relate to customer services, they will be more competent, and this makes them feel valued at work, hence improving job satisfaction levels. This is especially important in the retail industry because the existing studies show that the level of employee commitment is directly correlated with the level of customer satisfaction and business outcomes.

According to Rachmad (2022) discussed empowerment theory in the context of organizational studies, organizational commitment is one of the components of the environment that has an influence on the success of the organization in a more challenging environment. Organization commitment can be also defined as an effort to justify himself in an organization like, to support the values and goals of the organization and also efforts to protect the name of the organization. Organizational commitment as vital factor to successful organization is one of the factors that would help to face up a more complex environment. Organization commitment means, trying to justify himself in an organization like, to defend the values and goals of the organization and to protect the name of the organization. Organizational commitment can also be defined as an effort to justify oneself in an organization like to defend the values and goals of the organization as well as a strong effort to defend the name of the organization. Organizational commitment as one of the components of a more complex environment that affects organizational success in 2013 (Gong et al., 2020).

Organizational commitment also means to try to protect himself in an organisation such as to defend for the values & goals of the organisations as well as a great attempt to maintain the name of the organisations (Inayat & Khan, 2021). If an employee is committed to the company, he is also demanded to manage the emotion that is within him to face the possibility of a problem that might arise (Haryono & Sulistyo, 2020). Commitment remains important, for commitment is that which has to stay, at one's work, for the organization in one's heart; and so, each company has to always maintain its organizational commitment. Based on the analysis of the impact of the identified factors on job satisfaction there are exists several reasons that may influence satisfy or dissatisfy of the employees a failure of employee empowerment occurs because of the absence of the management support, the lack of understanding of the managers about its employees, the inactivity of information exchange, the lack of delegation from the leader this manager, and all the actions in (Ampofo, 2020).

Various alterations and threats occurred, and organizations aligned themselves to various changes with a view to achieving different objectives that informed these issues, forcing organizations to reinvest in human resources, hence embracing modern management practices (Fidyah & Setiawati, 2020). Often, the organization wishes to involve leaders and workers in the decision-making and also to create a trusting



relationship between the management and the worker, all of which is represented by freedom, autonomy, willingness to work, and cooperation more than bureaucracy within an institution; all these are entitlements of the workers (Dziuba et al., 2020).

In reaching an administrative empowerment decision, management tends to support the employees, doing away with the thought of centralized decision making to embrace the traditional administrative style to the more liberal open style, which empowers human resources to lead to innovation and creation (Mufti et al., 2020; Muzammil et al., 2025). Only then can the public service organizations be appropriate to the current conditions and more progressive and capable of achieving efficiency as well as effectiveness, which is reflected in the quality of service being delivered to the citizen. They should apply administrative empowerment to human resources. In the past decade's subordination was identified as a traditional model of management that paved the way to more liberal models, inclusive of participative decision making (Mahmood Aziz et al., 2021). The underlying idea for the various types of management is empowerment, encompassing the ability of the employees to be empowered in containing or taking responsibility for enjoyment. Where the managers moved from control to focus on the coordination of work activities, at least emphasis is placed on decision making, and most emphasis is placed on communications and leadership. In addition, the other important function of managers is to assist the employees to gain self-confidence and be capable of making appropriate decisions that would enable them to realize their potential (Aurangzeb et al., 2021; Febrianti, 2020).

Methodology

In this section, the authors describes the research design that will be used to determine the connection between employee empowerment and job satisfaction at KHAADI. It describes the research philosophy, research design, sampling plan, data collection and data analysis methods, and steps that will be taken to guarantee the study credibility and ethical soundness.

Research Philosophy

This paper has its foundation in the interpretivist philosophy. The given paradigm is based on the fact that the social reality is not unique and objective but is created by the meanings which people attribute to their experiences (Saunders et al., 2019). Since the main aim of the research is to understand the subjective perception, lived experiences and individual interpretations of the employees on issues of empowerment and satisfaction, interpretivism would be the most effective philosophical underpinning to adopt. It permits thorough, contextualization of the intricate social phenomena in the unique organizational environment of KHAADI, as opposed to generalization of universal laws.

Research Design

A single holistic case study design was embraced as an exploratory one. The design is suitable in studying a modern phenomenon in the context of its practical reality, particularly when it is not clear what boundaries the phenomenon and the context have (Yin, 2018). The case of KHAADI in Karachi was picked as the single case because it is a critical case to study empowerment in the under-researched environment of the hierarchical textile industry of Pakistan. The holistic approach is meant to enable a study of the organization as an entity, which offers a whole picture of how the practices of empowerment are perceived throughout the system.

Population, Sampling and participants.

The study target population was the whole employees of KHAADI in its Karachi offices and flagship store, and it was assumed to be 250 people. The purposive sampling method was also applied to assure the identification of rich information participants that would offer varied and detailed understanding of the research issue. The sampling criteria were formulated to be able to cover the broad range of perspectives in terms of:

Job Level: Top management, middle management, and front line/non managerial employees.

Department: The main functions are Sales, Design, Human Resources and Marketing.

The concluding sample was 30 participants. Out of these 20 were interviewed in semi structured one on one interviews and 10 were interviewed in two separate focus group discussions (5 people each). The demographics of the participants are presented in Table 1.



Table 1
Participant Demographics

Participant ID	Department	Job Level	Years of Experience	Data Collection Method
P01 - P05	Sales	Frontline Staff	1-4 years	Interview
P06 - P08	Sales	Middle Management	5-10 years	Interview
P09	Sales	Senior Management	11+ years	Interview
P10 - P12	Design	Frontline Staff	1-4 years	Interview
P13 - P14	Design	Middle Management	5-10 years	Interview
P15	Design	Senior Management	11+ years	Interview
P16 - P17	Human Resources	Middle Management	5-10 years	Interview
P18 - P20	Marketing	Middle Management	5-10 years	Interview
FG1-1 to FG1-5	Mixed	Frontline Staff	1-6 years	Focus Group 1
FG2-1 to FG2-5	Mixed	Middle Management	4-8 years	Focus Group 2

Data Collection

Instruments: There were two main instruments of data collection: primary data.

Semi-structured Interviews: An interview guide was designed (see Appendix A) that had open-ended questions based on the body of empowerment literature (e.g., Spreitzer, 1995) and job satisfaction. Among the major ones, there were decision-making autonomy, leadership support, recognition, and career development. Two individuals outside the sample were pilot-tested on the protocol and it was simplified.

Focus Group Discussions: Focus group guide (see Appendix B) was employed to organize discussions about the common experiences and shared opinions about the organizational culture and practices of empowerment.

Procedure: Data collection was carried out during 4 weeks of time. All the interviews and focus groups were carried out in a secluded room inside a company and lasted about 45-60 minutes. All of the sessions were recorded on audio with the informed consent of the participants and subsequently transcribed word-to-word so that the accuracy is achieved. Non-verbal cues and contextual observation were also taken using field notes.

Ethical Concerns: All the individuals received an information sheet and signed a consent form before being allowed to participate. They were guaranteed anonymity (this is why they were using codes in Table 1) and the privacy of their responses as well as their option to withdraw any time with no penalties.

Data Analysis

The open-ended data were coded in the six-step framework of the thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) with the help of the NVivo 12 package to organize and code the dataset in a systematized way. The process was as follows:

Familiarization: Reading of the data by transmitting transcripts and listening to recordings.

Production of Initial Codes: Systematic coding of interesting features on the whole databank.

Themes Searching: Identifying and tabulating the data based on possible themes and collecting all the data that may pertain to the possible themes.

Reviewing Themes: Evaluating whether or not the themes are working with the coded extracts and overall data, which in turn results in refining the themes.

Defining and Naming Themes: Continued analysis to streamline the details of each theme and come up with clear definitions and names.

Creation of the Report: It is the last chance to analyse, choose interesting, striking examples of extracts and connect the analysis with the research question and literature.

Trustworthiness

In order to make certain that this qualitative study would be rigorous and credible, a range of strategies, which are consistent with the criteria suggested by Guba (1981), were used:



Credibility: Two academic colleagues were peer debriefed to put pressure on the emerging themes and interpretations. Also, member checking was done, in which a summary of the findings was provided to five participants to establish how the depictions of their experiences were accurate.

Transferability: A thick description of the research context, the participants and processes (as presented in this section) can enable readers to determine the transferability of the findings in a similar context.

Dependability: An audit trail was done in detail recording all the research decisions, the data collection process and the development of the coding framework, allowing an external audit of the research process.

Confirmability: Reflexivity practice was embraced. To prevent personal assumptions and biases in relation to empowerment, the researcher kept a journal to bracket his/her own background and his/her possible role in the interpretation and analysis of the data.

Table 2

Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in the Study

Criterion	Strategy Employed	Application in This Study
Credibility	Member Checking, Peer Debriefing	A summary of findings was shared with 5 participants for verification. Two academic colleagues reviewed the coding and themes.
Transferability	Thick Description	Detailed context of KHAADI, the Pakistani textile industry, and participant demographics (Table 2) is provided to allow judgment of applicability to other contexts.
Dependability	Audit Trail	A detailed record of raw data, transcripts, field notes, and memos on coding decisions was maintained using NVivo 12.
Confirmability	Reflexivity	The researcher maintained a journal to bracket personal biases and assumptions about empowerment, acknowledging their potential influence on the analysis.

Results

Theme 1: Trust and Ownership in Decision-Making

The outcomes concerned the areas of ownership and trust in decision-making. Employees in KHAADI have reported that empowerment processes, especially the delegation of authority, have given them a stronger feeling of responsibility and ownership. Feeling trusted to make decisions made them feel more confident and, therefore, more motivated and committed to fulfilling the objectives of the organization. Autonomy not only made them proud but also motivated them to be more creative and innovative, as the participants reported that they were more willing to try new ways of doing things when they were assured that their views would be taken into consideration. This is in line with the reasoning of Wang and others (2025), who concluded that the level of autonomy that is given to decision makers directly increases one's intrinsic motivation and satisfaction.

"KHAADI understands the importance of work-life balance, and they empower us by offering flexible work arrangements. Whether it's working remotely or having flexible hours, the organization trusts us to manage our time effectively. This flexibility has made a huge difference in my productivity and overall well-being."

On the other hand, when the participants described the situation under which decision-making power was only given to top management, they reported feeling angry and therefore disengaged from the organization. The data suggest that the empowerment that comes with trust and autonomy is the most important feature of job satisfaction in KHAADI. This is in line with the literature that shows that empowerment increases motivation and ownership of work among employees (Ghasempour Ganji et al., 2021).

Theme 2: Inclusive Recognition and Open Communication

The second theme emphasized the role of different forms of recognition as well as communication in shaping satisfaction with one's job. Employees pointed out that recognition of their efforts, in the form of



informal verbal praise or a formal recognition of their efforts as a 'job well done' during meetings, helped boost their morale. One of the respondents said,

"I'm empowered to adapt my work priorities based on changing business needs. For example, if a high-priority project arises, I can decide how to reallocate my time and resources to meet the new demands. This flexibility allows me to be more agile and effective in my role."

Recognition was viewed as a form of reward recognition as well as a way to confirm an employee's importance in the team. Furthermore, all lower levels of the hierarchy had the opportunity to communicate in ways that made them feel well enough to express their opinions, ideas, and even complaints. This type of culture helped bind them to the community, as their 'voice' was noticed. Employees also mentioned, however, that there was a certain lack of consistency among different departments, with some having an open style of communication and others having a top-down style of communication. This lack of consistency in the use of these 'voice' mechanisms diminished the overall effectiveness of the 'voice' used. This is in line with the findings of Reissova and Papay (2021), who affirm that within recognition-autonomy, as it is in these settings that communication is structured and tempered.

Theme 3: Transparent Feedback and Collaborative Culture

Through feedback and collaboration, empowerment, and the feeling of job satisfaction also emerged as important features of the role of the third theme. Numerous participants emphasized how team supervisors' constructive and transparent feedback about work assisted them in feeling valued, gaining mastery, and refining work. Feedback was done at work not only as a correcting tool but also as an indicator of employee empowerment and support for guiding professional development. In addition to this, team collaboration enhanced participation in knowledge construction and problem solving, thus alleviating tension and boosting satisfaction. One respondent said,

"At KHAADI, one of the most empowering experiences was being trusted to lead a customer feedback analysis project early on. Unlike busy work, this responsibility had a real impact and showed that leadership trusted me. This level of delegation, paired with autonomy, boosted my job satisfaction, making me feel challenged, trusted, and essential to the company's goals."

Employees noted team-based approaches as most useful in creative work, where a multitude of ideas and perspectives brought forth innovative solutions. Still, some participants noted slowness, or absence of feedback, and its subsequent impact on the overall impact of feedback. More systematic and timely feedback was proposed to be siloed feedback, which was assumed to strengthen empowerment. This feedback aligns with the work of Ghasempour Ganji et al. (2021), who noted that within supportive feedback and collaboration, leaders strengthen involvement and satisfaction at the organization.

Theme 4: Process Innovation and Growth Opportunities

The fourth theme pertains to innovation and growth opportunities. Employees connected innovation and growth opportunities to empowerment by suggesting and making changes. Participants indicated that primary management's positive reactions to new concepts stemming from innovation improved the meaningfulness of their work. Innovation was particularly pronounced in customer-focused strategies, where employees were empowered to engineer service-enhancement solutions. One of the respondents said,

"KHAADI encourages innovation by giving me the autonomy to suggest improvements. For example, I proposed a new inventory system that helped track stock in real-time, improving team responsiveness. This reflects the company's commitment to continuous innovation."

In addition, professional advancement opportunities, such as training and mentoring, improved employee satisfaction, allowing them to see that the organization was committed to their development. This supports Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory, where achievement and progress are major factors of satisfaction. Yet, members pointed out that such opportunities were not available to all departments, which resulted in perceptions of inequity. These perceptions support the findings of Alsafadi and Altahtat (2021), suggesting that empowerment, in order to maximize satisfaction and retention, must be accompanied by equal development chances, as the opportunity to fulfilment is a gap that needs to be addressed.

Theme 5: Challenges and Gaps in Empowerment Practices

Despite an overall improvement in satisfaction level, employees identified several issues: within



KHAADI, empowerment was not practiced uniformly. It was argued that its outcome depended on the individual leader's style. Departments whose supervisors were supportive practiced empowerment more fully, and others remained mired in bureaucratic, top-down management. Such inequitable empowerment practices did not foster satisfaction at the organizational level. Moreover, some employees felt that the empowerment in the absence of training and resources was a futile, if not a harmful, exercise. Employees were stressed and, at worst, were dissatisfied with their jobs. Such issues have been commented upon by Reissova and Papay (2021), whose contention was that, without a sufficient framework in place, training, and structure, empowerment would result in more confusion and stress than satisfaction. Last, the participants cited the context of Pakistan's textile industry, where cultural barriers, in the form of empowerment, were deeply rooted in hierarchy. Such factors lend further support to the argument by Wang et al (2025) that, culturally and organizationally, the norms that surround empowerment and satisfaction are not simple and must be dealt with in a way that avoids negativity.

Table 3

Thematic Analysis Findings and Evidence

Theme	Sub-themes	Key Finding Summary	Representative Quote
1. Trust and Ownership in Decision-Making	Autonomy, Responsibility, Motivation	Delegated authority increased feelings of responsibility, motivation, and creativity.	"This level of delegation, paired with autonomy, boosted my job satisfaction, making me feel challenged, trusted, and essential to the company's goals."
2. Inclusive Recognition and Open Communication	Formal/Informal Recognition, Voice Mechanisms	Recognition boosted morale; open communication fostered inclusion, but consistency varied.	"I'm empowered to adapt my work priorities based on changing business needs... This flexibility allows me to be more agile and effective."
3. Transparent Feedback and Collaborative Culture	Constructive Feedback, Teamwork, Knowledge Sharing	Feedback was valued for growth; collaboration aided problem-solving and reduced tension.	"KHAADI encourages innovation by giving me the autonomy to suggest improvements... This reflects the company's commitment to continuous innovation."
4. Process Innovation and Growth Opportunities	Idea Implementation, Training, Mentoring	Empowerment led to innovation; growth opportunities increased satisfaction and reduced turnover intent.	"KHAADI understands the importance of work-life balance... This flexibility has made a huge difference in my productivity and overall well-being."
5. Challenges and Gaps in Empowerment Practices	Inconsistent Implementation, Lack of Resources, Cultural Barriers	Empowerment's effectiveness was inconsistent due to managerial style, lack of training, and hierarchical culture.	(Implicit from data: Inconsistencies and resource gaps were widely noted across participants.)

In this case, employee empowerment had a tremendous impact on job satisfaction at KHAADI, where the impact varied primarily due to the availability of managerial encouragement, cultural flexibility, and adaptive resources. Autonomy, recognition, feedback, decision-making, collaboration, and growth all motivated and satisfied employees. Empowered employees showed stronger loyalty and less intention to resign, as found by Ghasempour Ganji et al. (2021) and Alsafadi and Altahat (2021). However, uneven practices across departments, insufficient resources, and cultural resistance to change emphasized the need for context-specific empowerment.



Empowerment practices in KHAADI have proven to enhance job satisfaction through increasing autonomy, recognition, teamwork, and career development opportunities. Participants noted an increase in internal motivation, lower turnover, and higher creativity and innovation, which aligns with the general literature on empowerment in organizations (Wang et al, 2025; Ghasempour Ganji et al., 2021). On the other hand, the study noted that a lack of consistency in application and a lack of support with sufficient resources, appropriate training, and cultural change empowerment practices can be counterproductive, leading to stress and dissatisfaction. Empowerment is not a panacea; one must consider the context of the organization and its culture (Alsafadi & Altahtat, 2021). For KHAADI, this entails the need to widen the practice of empowerment to all divisions and focus on the enduring obstacles to empowerment in the textile sector. In other words, the data suggest that empowerment can be a robust enhancer of satisfaction and performance, but only when placed within a solid, managerial, and inclusive posture (Reissova & Papay, 2021).

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrated that employee empowerment advanced job satisfaction at KHAADI, supporting previous Western and non-Western studies on the subject. Autonomy, supportive leadership, open communications, recognition, and growth opportunities were all ways empowerment was expressed. Those employees who were given empowerment reported stronger intrinsic motivation, higher satisfaction, and greater organizational commitment. These findings help support the theoretical arguments presented by Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan) and Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory, which outline the primary satisfaction elements as autonomy, recognition, and growth (Herzberg, 1959; Ampofo, 2020). At KHAADI, the results showed that empowerment not only increased motivation but also increased innovation and collaboration. This supports the assertion that empowerment is an essential predictor of job satisfaction (Ghasempour Ganji et al, 2021).

Empowerment and Autonomy

Motivation and satisfaction of employees improved with the ability to make independent decisions. The work structures of these employees felt that they were trusted and appreciated and were able to fulfil important functions towards the goals and objectives of the organization. This complements the work of Wang et al. (2025) that autonomous structures trigger intrinsic motivation and creativity. At KHAADI, decision empowerment resulted in the reduction of vertical rigidity and the ownership of results, even though inconsistencies between departments indicated that the ability to empower is not yet fully cultural. The results support McGregor's Theory Y, according to which employees given responsibilities are assumed to be active and self-driven (Haryono & Sulisty, 2020). Employees above the level of decision-making autonomy experienced frustration (Reissova & Papay, 2021), which, as described in this work, is presumed to be the outcome of dissatisfaction with over-centralized structures.

Supportive Leadership and Feedback

The concern of leadership was emerging as another important element of this study. Supportive managers guided and provided feedback and praise, and built workplaces where employees felt satisfied and empowered. Feedback helped not only clarify expectations and contributions but also helped drop "implicit" feedback, which reinforced contributions, aligning with the findings of Alsafadi and Altahtat (2021), who argued that empowerment strategies can yield expected goals only in the presence of managerial support and guidance. However, the findings also indicated that varied leadership styles resulted in leadership gaps in empowerment practices between departments. This is consistent with the previous literature that argued that the empowerment lacks in isolation from the leadership and systemic support (Mufti et al., 2020).

Recognition and Communication

Recognition and open communication were also shown to play a significant role in linking empowerment to satisfaction and a sense of worth. Employees felt appreciated in their efforts formally and informally, and also felt that communication that is open communication fostered trust and inclusion. This goes hand in hand with the assertion of Reissova and Papay (2021) that recognition is a significant issue in a culture dominated by a hierarchy of employees who tend to feel lost. All the ways of communication that are called that, such as other forms of KHAADI, meetings, and group discussions, were appreciated, and other employees noted divisions in the systems of some managers with sharper block systems. These support the



ideas of Herzberg of the motivator-hygiene systems of recognition as a motivator that a person perceives as satisfaction.

Collaboration and Organizational Culture

Further from its definition, collaboration and teamwork were also reported as elements of empowerment. Employees pointed out that collaboration helped in knowledge sharing, building trust, and creative problem-solving, which subsequently improved satisfaction. Employees reported feeling engaged in team-oriented practices as a collective effort. This aligns with Ghasempour Ganji et al. (2021), who underscored collaboration as a building block of innovation and job commitment. Still, the findings from the study indicated that, though a collaborative culture is in its infancy stage, KHAADI still embraces backward bureaucratic practices that, at times, stifle full empowerment. This duality is in accordance with Ngwenya and Pelsers's (2020) observation that in the empowerment of traditional industries such as textiles, the culture of deeply embedded, outdated practices, which still carry a lot of weight, is almost always present.

Opportunities for Growth and Innovation

The results indicated that the use of empowerment led to innovation and professional development. Employees described empowerment as the ability to put forward new ideas and even make improvements to how some processes are done. The chances of obtaining training and mentoring not only led to higher job satisfaction but also lowered the intentions to quit the job. The above conclusions are consistent with Herzberg's motivators, specifically, achievement and growth, as factors of satisfaction (Herzberg, 1959). However, the issue of inequitable access to growth opportunities across different departments, which could negate satisfaction, was a concern. Alsafadi and Altahat (2021) similarly argued that the inequitable application of the empowerment strategies raises the concern of perception of unfairness and inequity.

Challenges and Cultural Barriers

Even with the positive effects empowerment had at KHAADI, there were still problems that needed to be addressed. The issue with the most impact was the inconsistency of empowerment at the various departments, which was primarily a result of disparate managerial approaches. This inconsistency lowered overall satisfaction and highlights the need for organizational policies that ensure standard empowerment practices. Employees have maintained the position that being resourceless and inadequately trained for empowerment tends to create stress and anxiety. This supports the arguments of Mufti et al (2020) that claim that empowerment needs to be backed with sufficient advocacy. Cultural barriers were present and dominantly visible. The textile industry of Pakistan is still very much bureaucratic and hierarchical. This supports Wang et al (2025) regarding the idea that structural and cultural factors interpose the relation of empowerment and satisfaction.

Table 4

Alignment of Findings with Theoretical Frameworks

Theoretical Framework	Core Concept	Supporting Finding from KHAADI Study
Spreitzer's (1995) Psychological Empowerment	Meaning (value of work goal)	Employees found work more meaningful when their innovative ideas were implemented (Theme 4).
	Competence (self-efficacy)	Transparent feedback and training opportunities boosted employees' confidence in their skills (Themes 3 & 4).
	Self-Determination (autonomy)	Delegated decision-making and flexible work arrangements were highly valued (Theme 1).
	Impact (influence on outcomes)	Leading projects and seeing suggestions adopted made employees feel they had a tangible impact (Themes 1 & 4).
Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory	Motivators (e.g., achievement, recognition)	Recognition, growth opportunities, and responsibility were powerful drivers of satisfaction (Themes 2 & 4).



Theoretical Framework	Core Concept	Supporting Finding from KHAADI Study
	Hygiene Factors (e.g., policy, supervision)	Inconsistent managerial styles and poor communication were sources of dissatisfaction (Theme 5).
Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions	High Power Distance (acceptance of hierarchy)	Cultural barriers and top-down traditions in some departments constrained empowerment (Theme 5).

Contribution to Literature

These rigorous research developments extend the known head of literature concerning empowerment and job satisfaction to epitomize developing and non-Western countries. Most literature concerning empowerment is limited to the contexts of Western countries (Khuong & Linh, 2020) and organizations, since empowerment relates to supporting underlying goals of the egalitarian cultural framework. On the other hand, the KHAADI case study examines the area of empowerment in over-centralized and over-bureaucratized industries, and serves to highlight the importance of cultural context in determining other paradigm outcomes concerning empowerment. Also, the evidence provided corroborates the predictions of Herzberg's theory as well as Self Determination Theory by demonstrating satisfaction in the context of developing countries. Such localized evidence helps to fill the research gap identified by global discussions on empowerment, as pointed out by Reissova and Papay (2021), among others.

Managerial Implications

Several managerial considerations come to light. First, to minimize gaps in satisfaction, access to workplace practices must be homogeneous across all divisions. Second, retention coaching and feedback must be incorporated into the managerial training, inclusion, and support emphasis philosophy. This focus would require targeted leadership training. Third, perception management regarding equity of access to professional development opportunities is essential to avoid fostering inclusion and access double standards. Lastly, ease of participation in the organization must be enhanced, erasing persistent classicist traditions that block inclusion freedoms. These considerations support Alsafadi and Altahat (2021) on the need to deepen structural and administrative frameworks to enhance retention and satisfaction.

Limitations and Future Research

KHAADI, the instance study for this research, provided worthwhile information. However, its singular focus is a limitation that reduces its applicability across different fields. Self-reported information may have also tainted the findings. The rigidity of designing to limit the scope of the research also means certain practices of the organization may change in the future, adding to gaps in the present data. Proposed future research in this area is to consider longitudinal study designs to measure the phenomenon over a longer period, and cross-field studies that provide comparison to broaden the scope of the findings. This type of research would strengthen previous findings on the socio-cultural and structural environment that conditions the outcomes of empowerment (Mahmood Aziz et al., 2021).

Table 5

Summary of Research Limitations and Proposed Mitigations

Limitation	Impact on the Study	Proposed Mitigation for Future Research
Single Case Study Design	Limits the generalizability of findings beyond KHAADI.	Conduct multiple case studies across different firms in the Pakistani textile industry.
Cross-Sectional Data	Provides only a snapshot, unable to track changes over time.	Employ a longitudinal design to study the long-term effects of empowerment programs.
Self-Reported Data	Prone to biases like social desirability or recall bias.	Triangulate with objective data (e.g., performance metrics, turnover rates).
Context-Specific Findings	Results are heavily influenced by Pakistani cultural norms.	Replicate the study in other non-Western, hierarchical cultures for cross-cultural comparison.



Conclusion

The research established that empowerment increases job satisfaction at KHAADI by encouraging autonomy, supportive leadership, acknowledgment, teamwork, and development. Its successful implementation, however, requires sufficient resources and culturally attuned practices. The discussion illustrates that empowerment, rather than being a panacea, requires contextual tailoring to the organization. The results add to the body of research on empowerment by offering contextualized evidence from Pakistan's textiles while simultaneously serving as a useful reference to HR practitioners aiming to enhance employee satisfaction and performance.

Contributions of the Authors

Each author made a substantial contribution to the work reported and took part in the ideation, development, and final approval of the manuscript.

Funding

No outside funding was obtained for this study.

Informed Consent Statement

Every participant in the study gave their informed consent.

Statement of Data Availability

The corresponding author can provide the data used in this study upon request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Adebayo, I., Babalola, A., Bakare, T., & Ayeni, K. (2020). Human resources as a strategic asset for organizational performance. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 10(2), 34–49. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijhrs.v10i2.16927>
- Alsafadi, Y., & Altahat, S. (2021). Human resource management practices and employee performance: The mediating role of job satisfaction. *Management Science Letters*, 11(4), 1249–1258. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2020.12.016>
- Ampofo, E. (2020). Employee empowerment and self-determination theory in organizational contexts. *Journal of Applied Management*, 38(1), 43–55.
- Asamani, L., Acquah-Coleman, R., Senayah, W. K., et al. (2025). Interactive roles of resource availability, role clarity and employee motivation in enhancing organisational effectiveness through employee performance and job satisfaction. *Discover Psychology*, 5(12). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44202-025-00333-8>
- Aurangzeb, Alizai, S. H., Asif, M., & Rind, Z. K. (2021). Relevance of motivational theories and firm health. *International Journal of Management*, 12(3), 1130–1137. <https://doi.org/10.34218/IJM.12.3.2021.106>
- Aurangzeb, M. T., Tunio, M. N., Zia-ur-Rehman, & Asif, M. (2021). Influence of administrative expertise of human resource practitioners on the job performance: Mediating role of achievement motivation. *International Journal of Management*, 12(4), 408–421.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Cao, Y., Zhang, J., & Song, H. (2020). Participative management and employee empowerment in organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 41(3), 271–284. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2411>
- Choi, J., & Choi, M. (2021). Employee empowerment and innovation behavior: A mediating role of job satisfaction. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 33(5), 359–374. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JWL-10-2020-0154>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. Springer.
- Dziuba, S., Ingaldi, M., & Zhuravskaya, M. (2020). Job satisfaction and performance as elements influencing work safety. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(11), 4003. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17114003>
- Febrianti, R. (2020). The role of managers in employee empowerment. *Journal of Business and Management*,



- 22(1), 45-58.
- Fidyah, H., & Setiawati, M. (2020). Employee empowerment in quality management practices. *Total Quality Management Journal*, 31(6), 707–720. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2018.1534236>
- Ghasempour Ganji, S., et al. (2021). Employee empowerment and job satisfaction: An empirical review. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 32(11), 2312–2335. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2019.1709467>
- Gong, Y., Wu, X., Huang, J., Yan, X., & Luo, Z. (2020). Psychological empowerment in organizational contexts. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 34(4), 532–548. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2018.0103>
- Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *ECTJ*, 29(2), 75–91.
- Haryono, S., & Sulisty, B. (2020). The influence of leadership and empowerment on employee commitment. *Journal of Management Development*, 39(9/10), 1179–1194. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-02-2020-0044>
- Herzberg, F. (1959). *The motivation to work*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Inayat, W., & Khan, M. J. (2021). Employee empowerment and organizational adaptability: Evidence from developing countries. *Journal of Business and Social Review in Emerging Economies*, 7(2), 241–252. <https://doi.org/10.26710/jbsee.v7i2.1410>
- Khuong, M. N., & Linh, N. H. (2020). The impact of leadership styles on employee empowerment and job satisfaction. *International Journal of Business and Society*, 21(1), 35–50.
- Mahmood Aziz, A., Khan, M., Iqbal, Z., & Rauf, R. (2021). Employee empowerment and organizational change in developing economies. *Journal of Business and Management Research*, 12(3), 112–125.
- Mufti, O., Xiaobao, P., Shah, S. Z. A., Sarwar, A., & Zhenqing, Y. (2020). Examining the relationship between employee empowerment and job satisfaction in public sector organizations. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 43(3), 227–237. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2019.1571260>
- Muzammil, A., Mir, D. M. M., Tunio, D. M. K., & Jariko, D. M. A. (2025). Talent development as a tool to achieve competitive advantage through organizational culture: A moderation and mediated model to prove the relation. *Inverge Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(3), 36–52. <https://doi.org/10.63544/ijss.v4i3.142>
- Ngwenya, B., & Pelser, T. (2020). Employee empowerment and its impact on organizational performance in traditional industries. *African Journal of Business Management*, 14(4), 121–130. <https://doi.org/10.5897/AJBM2019.8956>
- Olatunji, S. O., Olowu, A. A., Oladipo, T., Olusegun, O. A., & Akinola, A. A. (2020). Employee empowerment, arrogance, and job performance: Exploring the paradox. *Journal of Business Psychology*, 35(2), 145–160. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-019-09625-7>
- Papageorgiou, G., Christofi, K., Gelinou, A., Efsthadiades, A., & Tsappi, E. (2025). Employee empowerment and job satisfaction in the evolving digital banking workplace. *International Journal of Economics and Business Research*, 29(8), 41–60. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJEER.2025.144288>
- Rachmad, R. (2022). Employee empowerment and organizational commitment in competitive environments. *International Journal of Management Research*, 14(1), 67–78.
- Rai, A., & Maheshwari, G. (2020). Gaining competitive advantage through human resources: The role of empowerment. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 28(3), 567–584. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-09-2019-1840>
- Reissova, A., & Papay, M. (2021). Autonomy, supervision, and job satisfaction in hierarchical organizations. *Central European Journal of Management*, 28(2), 55–69. <https://doi.org/10.18267/j.cejm.292>
- Saunders, M. N. K., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). *Research methods for business students* (8th ed.). Pearson.
- Spreitzer, G. M. (1995). Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement, and validation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(5), 1442–1465.
- Tampi, F., Nabella, D., & Sari, R. (2022). Employee empowerment and job satisfaction in the retail



- sector. *Journal of Retail Management Research*, 14(2), 88–101.
- Vu, T. (2020). Employee empowerment and job satisfaction: A review of HRM strategies. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 10(3), 15–27. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijhrs.v10i3.17620>
- Wang, G., Bai, H., Wang, S., & Hu, Y. (2025). Teacher autonomy and teacher job satisfaction: A chain-mediated model of self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 35(1), 117. <https://doi.org/10.32604/jpa.2025.065785>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.

