

A Bibliometric Analysis of Employee Psychological Empowerment Studies: Trends, Gaps and Impacts Organizational

Original Article

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Received : 21 March 2026

Accepted : 31 March 2026

Published online : 21 April 2026

Abstract

Psychological empowerment has become an important concept in organizational behavior because it reflects employees' perceptions of work meaning, competence, autonomy, and influence over work outcomes. In modern organizations, psychological empowerment is essential for improving employee motivation, engagement, creativity, well-being, and performance, especially in dynamic work environments. This study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis of employee psychological empowerment studies in order to map the development of the field, identify dominant research trends, reveal research gaps, and analyze organizational impacts generated from existing studies. This research used a bibliometric approach. Data were collected from Google Scholar using Publish or Perish 8 and 35 articles published between 2020 and 2026 were selected for analysis. The data were exported in RIS and analyzed with VOSviewer through co-authorship and co-occurrence. The findings show that psychological empowerment is the central keyword connecting research dominant themes, including work engagement, structural empowerment, employee creativity, transformational leadership, job satisfaction, employee well-being, ethical leadership, self-efficacy, job performance, psychological safety, and emotional exhaustion. The trend indicates a shift from structural and attitudinal studies toward performance, creativity, engagement, retention, and psychological safety. Research gaps remain in longitudinal studies, digital work contexts, cross-cultural comparisons, gender differences, and mental health interventions. Organizationally, psychological empowerment contributes to productivity, innovation, employee well-being, and long-term sustainability.

Keywords: *Psychological Empowerment, Bibliometric Analysis; VOSviewer*

1. Introduction

Psychological empowerment has emerged as a critical concept in organizational behavior research, playing a significant role in enhancing employee effectiveness, motivation, and engagement within modern organizational settings (Khamehchi & Rangriz, 2021). This concept refers to the psychological state of individuals, encompassing perceptions of work meaningfulness, self-efficacy, autonomy in decision-making, and the ability to influence work outcomes. In the context of increasingly complex and dynamic work environments, organizations require human resource strategies that can foster higher levels of employee engagement and productivity (Rollah & Azlan, 2020). Consequently, psychological empowerment is recognized as a strategic approach to improving organizational performance and sustaining effectiveness over time (Ibrahim et al., 2023).

Research on employee psychological empowerment has expanded rapidly across various organizational sectors, including education, healthcare, service industries, and business organizations (Schermuly et al., 2025). Empirical evidence indicates that psychological



empowerment is positively associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee engagement (Menezes et al., 2025). Employees who perceive themselves as empowered tend to exhibit higher intrinsic motivation and demonstrate more innovative work behaviors compared to those receiving less organizational support (Chompukum & Vanichbuncha, 2025). Moreover, psychological empowerment has been shown to reduce turnover intention and enhance employee loyalty toward the organization (Karimi et al., 2021).

Several studies have also highlighted the critical role of leadership and organizational support in shaping employees' psychological empowerment (Ibrahim et al., 2023). Leadership styles such as empowering leadership, transformational leadership, and ethical leadership significantly influence employees' perceptions of empowerment in the workplace (Schermuly et al., 2025). Additionally, organizational support through inclusive work culture, transparent communication, and job design that provides flexibility contributes to higher levels of psychological empowerment (Rollah & Azlan, 2020). Thus, psychological empowerment is determined not only by individual characteristics but also by the work environment and the quality of leader-employee interactions (Menezes et al., 2025).

Despite the growing number of publications on employee psychological empowerment, the existing literature remains fragmented in terms of research focus and methodological approaches (Khomehchi & Rangriz, 2021). Most prior studies have examined the direct relationships between psychological empowerment and specific outcomes, such as performance, creativity, or work engagement, without providing a comprehensive mapping of the intellectual structure in this domain (Chompukum & Vanichbuncha, 2025). Furthermore, there is a lack of research integrating bibliometric analysis with systematic literature review to identify publication trends, dominant themes, research gaps, and organizational impacts of studies on employee psychological empowerment (Schermuly et al., 2025).

Based on this context, the present study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis of research on employee psychological empowerment. The study seeks to map the development of the field, identify key research trends, uncover existing gaps, and analyze the organizational impacts arising from these studies. It is expected to contribute theoretically by strengthening the conceptual understanding of psychological empowerment and to provide a foundation for organizations to design more effective employee empowerment strategies that enhance productivity and ensure long-term organizational sustainability.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment (PE) is a key motivational construct in organizational behavior, consisting of four dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. These dimensions reflect employees' perceptions of the significance of their work, confidence in their abilities, autonomy in decision-making, and influence over organizational outcomes (Wardani & Amaliah, 2020). PE enhances employee engagement and well-being, mediating the effects of personal resources such as psychological capital, including hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy, into positive work outcomes. In educational settings, PE plays a vital role in reducing teacher burnout. Teachers with higher resilience and empowerment experience lower emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, contributing to improved job performance and psychological health. Gender differences have been observed, with female teachers showing stronger links between empowerment and well-being, while male teachers benefit more from skill-based coping strategies (Xue et al., 2024).

Organizational practices, particularly corporate social responsibility (CSR), strengthen psychological empowerment by providing employees with meaningful work experiences and a sense of purpose. Empowered employees perceive CSR initiatives as aligned with their values, enhancing both job performance and organizational resilience. Psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between perceived CSR and performance outcomes, highlighting the importance of internalizing organizational values to motivate employees (Dekoulou et al., 2023). Leadership and trust are also critical for fostering PE. Perceived leader trust enhances employees' sense of competence, autonomy, and work significance, which in turn improves both task and relationship performance. Psychological empowerment serves as a partial mediator in the relationship between leader trust and employee performance, demonstrating its central role in translating interpersonal trust into productive behaviors (Liu & Ren, 2022).

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a bibliometric research design to systematically analyze scientific publications on employee psychological empowerment. Bibliometric analysis enables the identification of publication trends, influential authors and journals, research themes, and knowledge structures within the field (Passas, 2024). By applying this approach, the study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the intellectual development of psychological empowerment research and highlight potential avenues for future investigation.

3.2. Data Source

The data for this study were collected from Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/>), a widely recognized database for peer-reviewed scholarly literature. Publications were retrieved using the software Publish or Perish 8, which facilitates systematic extraction and organization of bibliometric data. The search was conducted using the keyword: "*psychological empowerment*" in the title, abstract, and keywords. At this stage 100 data were successfully found.

| Citation metrics | | Help |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Publication years: | 2020-2026 | |
| Citation years: | 6 (2020-2026) | |
| Papers: | 100 | |
| Citations: | 9061 | |
| Cites/year: | 1510.17 | |
| Cites/paper: | 90.61 | |
| Cites/author: | 3038.93 | |
| Papers/author: | 37.87 | |
| Authors/paper: | 3.17 | |
| h-index: | 52 | |
| g-index: | 95 | |
| hI,norm: | 32 | |
| hI,annual: | 5.33 | |
| hA-index: | 27 | |
| Papers with ACC >= 1,2,5,10,20: | 100,99,91,68,38 | |

Figure 1. Publish or Perish Data Report

3.3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The study applied the following criteria for selecting publications:

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

| Criteria | Inclusion | Exclusion |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Topic | Publications explicitly addressing psychological empowerment in the organization | Publications explicitly addressing psychological empowerment in the organization |
| Document Type | Journal articles | Conference papers, editorials, book chapters, and notes |
| Language | English | Other languages |
| Publication Years | 2020–2026 | Outside the specified range |
| Database | Google Scholar | Sources with incomplete metadata |

Source: *Data Processed, 2026*

3.4. Data Extraction and Screening

After conducting the initial search, all retrieved publications were exported in RIS format from Publish or Perish 8. The exported data included bibliographic metadata such as author names, article titles, publication year, journal name, keywords, abstracts, and citation counts. The dataset was then screened to ensure data accuracy and relevance to the topic of employee psychological empowerment.

The RIS file was subsequently imported into Mendeley Reference Manager to verify and organize the metadata. This step was conducted to check the completeness and consistency of important bibliographic information, including author names, article titles, source titles, publication years, and keywords. The screening process was carried out by reviewing the title, abstract, and keywords of each publication. At this stage, the data, which originally amounted to 100, has been filtered into 35 articles that will be analyzed.

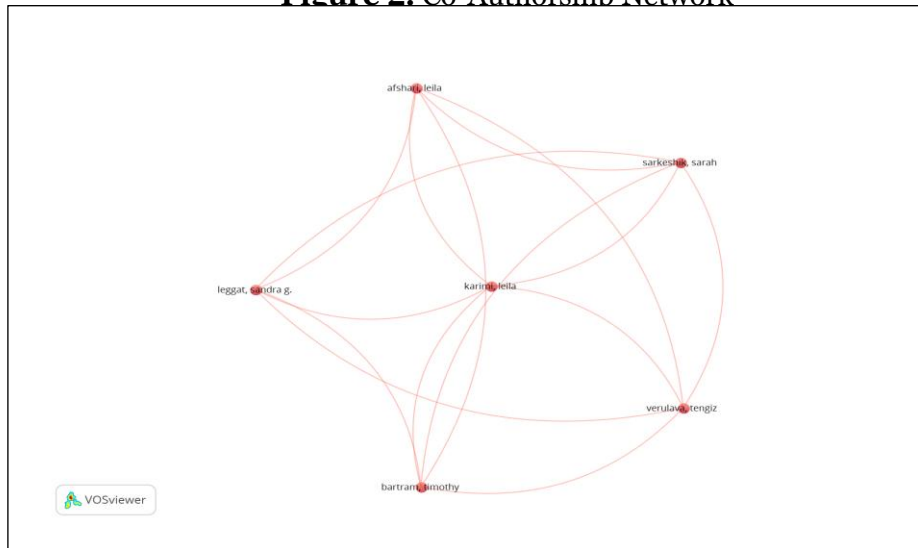
3.5. Data Analysis

The final dataset was prepared for bibliometric analysis using specialized software, such as VOSviewer, to map keyword co-occurrence, publication trends, citation patterns, and the overall intellectual structure of research on employee psychological empowerment. The bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer Version 1.6 employed to visualize bibliometric networks, including; (1) Keyword co-occurrence analysis, which identifies the most prominent research themes and topics within the field; (2) Co-authorship networks, which reveal collaboration patterns among authors, institutions, and countries, providing insight into research partnerships and knowledge dissemination.

4. Results and Discussion

Co-authorship

Figure 2. Co-Authorship Network

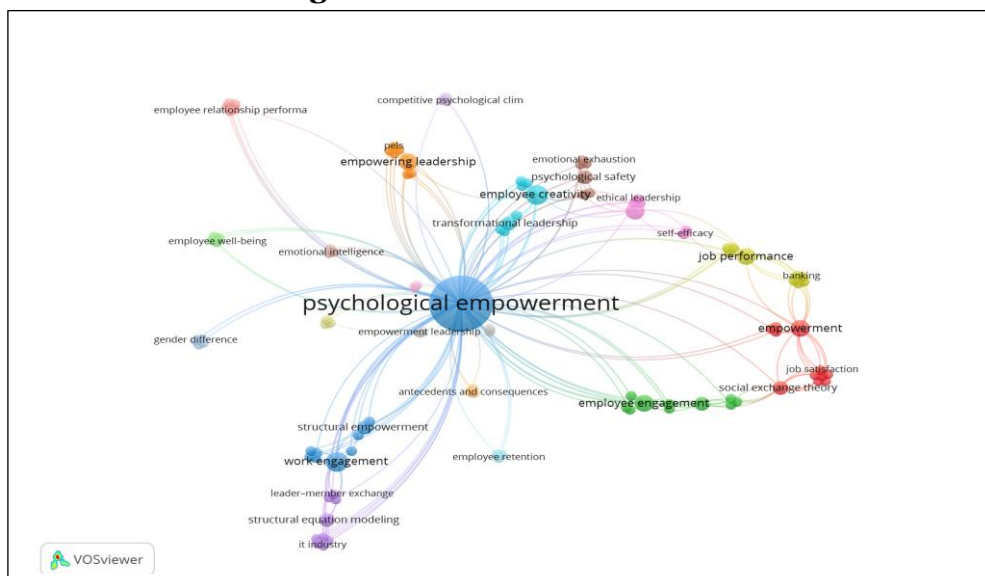


Source: Processed by the author (2026)

The image represents a visualization of the co-authorship network generated by VOSviewer, where each node corresponds to an author, and the edges represent collaborative relationships based on joint publications. The network consists of six authors: Karimi, Leila; Afshari, Leila; Sarkeshik, Sarah; Verulava, Tengiz; Bartram, Timothy; and Leggat, Sandra G. All nodes are interconnected, indicating direct collaboration among nearly all pairs of authors in this network. This suggests that the research group is highly cohesive and closely connected, working on the same research topic, most likely related to psychological empowerment or the fields of management and organizational studies.

Co-occurrence

Figure 2. Co-Occurrence Network



Source: Processed by the author (2026)

Following table below (Table. 2) presents the keyword co-occurrence analysis derived from the bibliometric dataset on psychological empowerment. Each cluster identifies a group of closely related research themes, highlighting dominant topics, conceptual linkages, and emerging trends within the field.

Table 2. Co-Occurrence Analysis

| Cluster | Color | Main Focus | Example Keywords |
|---------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Dark Blue | Empowerment in Work Context & Structural Models | work engagement, structural empowerment |
| 2 | Light Blue | Employee Creativity & Leadership | employee creativity, transformational leadership |
| 3 | Red | Job Satisfaction & Work Outcomes | job satisfaction, social exchange theory, empowerment, performance outcomes |
| 4 | Light Green | Employee Well-being | employee well-being, emotional intelligence, psychological safety |
| 5 | Dark Green | Employee Engagement | employee engagement |
| 6 | Purple | Leadership & Psychological Climate | ethical leadership, self-efficacy, leader–member exchange |
| 7 | Yellow | Task Performance | job performance |
| 8 | Brown | Psychological Health & Burnout | psychological safety, emotional exhaustion, stress management |

Source: Processed by the author (2026)

Based on the bibliometric table 2, research on psychological empowerment demonstrates diverse but interconnected trends across eight clusters. Cluster 1 (Dark Blue) focuses on empowerment in the work context and structural models, including work engagement, structural empowerment, structural equation modeling, leader–member exchange, antecedents and consequences, and employee retention. This indicates that many studies examine psychological empowerment as part of a broader organizational mechanism using quantitative and structural approaches. Cluster 2 (Light Blue) highlights the relationship between psychological empowerment, employee creativity, and transformational leadership, showing that empowerment is increasingly studied as a driver of innovative behavior and creative performance in organizations.

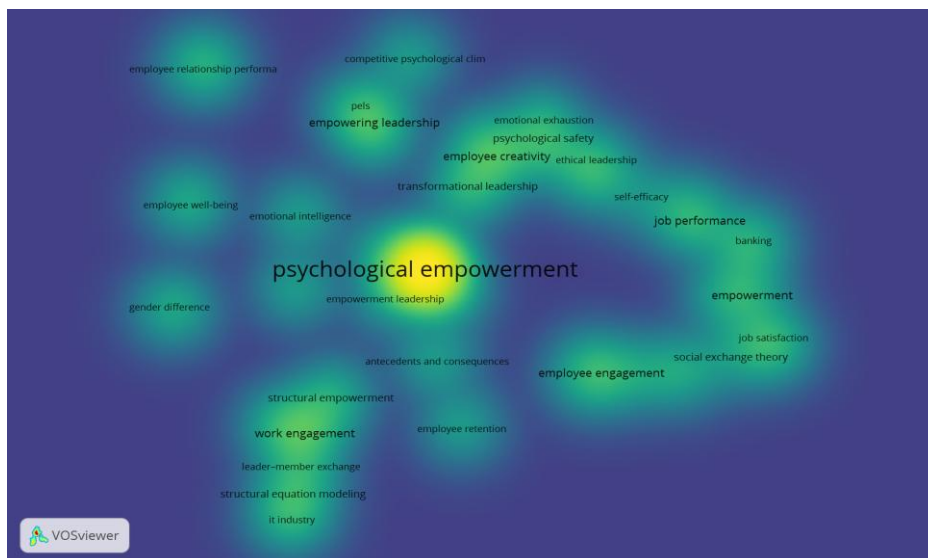
Furthermore, Cluster 3 (Red) emphasizes job satisfaction and work outcomes, with keywords such as job satisfaction, social exchange theory, and empowerment. This cluster shows that empowerment is often analyzed through the lens of employee attitudes and reciprocal relationships between employees and organizations. Cluster 4 (Light Green) focuses on employee well-being, indicating that psychological empowerment is not only connected to performance but also to employees’ psychological welfare. Cluster 5 (Dark Green) centers on employee engagement, suggesting that empowered employees tend to be more emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally involved in their work. Meanwhile, Cluster 6 (Purple) is related to leadership and psychological climate, including ethical leadership, self-efficacy, competitive psychological climate, and leader–member exchange. This cluster reflects the growing attention to leadership behavior and workplace climate as key factors that shape empowerment.

The overlay visualization shows the temporal development of keywords in research on psychological empowerment from 2020 to 2025. In this map, darker colors such as blue and purple represent earlier research themes, while green to yellow indicates more recent topics. The central keyword, psychological empowerment, appears as the largest node, showing that it is the core concept connecting various research themes. Earlier studies around 2020–2021 were mostly associated with topics such as structural equation modeling, leader–member exchange, IT industry, job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and employee well-being. This indicates that initial studies tended to examine psychological empowerment through organizational relationship models, employee attitudes, and psychological conditions at work.

More recent studies, represented by green and yellow colors, show a shift toward themes such as job performance, employee engagement, employee retention, employee creativity, psychological safety, competitive psychological climate, gender difference, and empowering leadership. This suggests that the current trend in psychological empowerment research is moving beyond basic employee attitudes and increasingly focuses on performance, creativity, sustainability of employee retention, and supportive leadership practices. The emergence of keywords such as psychological safety and competitive psychological climate also indicates that researchers are paying more attention to the workplace environment as a factor that strengthens or weakens the impact of empowerment.

Based on this trend, the research gap lies in the need to further examine how psychological empowerment works in dynamic and modern organizational contexts, such as digital work environments, competitive workplaces, and diverse employee groups. Although many studies have connected psychological empowerment with job performance and engagement, fewer studies appear to explore its long-term effects on employee retention, psychological safety, and organizational sustainability. For organizations, these findings imply that psychological empowerment can have a significant impact on improving employee creativity, engagement, performance, and well-being. Therefore, organizations need to develop leadership practices, work designs, and supportive climates that allow employees to feel competent, autonomous, meaningful, and influential in their work.

Figure 4. Co-occurrence Density Network



Source: Processed by the author (2026)

The density visualization indicates that psychological empowerment is the most dominant and central keyword in the bibliometric network. This is shown by the bright yellow area around the term, which reflects the highest concentration of keyword occurrence and link strength. The central position of psychological empowerment suggests that it functions as the main conceptual hub connecting various research themes, including leadership, engagement, job performance, employee well-being, creativity, and organizational outcomes.

Several moderately dense areas appear around keywords such as work engagement, employee engagement, job performance, empowerment, job satisfaction, empowering leadership, transformational leadership, employee creativity, psychological safety, and self-efficacy. These themes show the main research trends in the field. The results indicate that recent studies on psychological empowerment tend to focus on how empowered employees become more engaged, creative, satisfied, and productive. Leadership related keywords also appear close to the center, suggesting that leadership style is one of the most important factors influencing psychological empowerment in organizational settings.

However, several keywords are located in less dense areas, such as gender difference, employee retention, competitive psychological climate, employee relationship performance, emotional intelligence, emotional exhaustion, and IT industry. These topics may represent potential research gaps because they appear less frequently and are positioned farther from the central theme. This indicates that future studies could further explore how psychological empowerment affects employee retention, emotional health, gender-related experiences, and digital or industry-specific work contexts. From an organizational perspective, these findings show that psychological empowerment has a strong impact on improving employee performance, engagement, creativity, and well-being. Therefore, organizations should strengthen empowering leadership, provide autonomy, build psychological safety, and create supportive work environments to enhance long-term productivity and organizational sustainability.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to conduct a bibliometric analysis of research on employee psychological empowerment by mapping the development of the field, identifying major research trends, uncovering research gaps, and analyzing its organizational impacts. The study found that psychological empowerment is a central concept in organizational behavior research. **It connects various themes**, including work engagement, structural empowerment, employee creativity, transformational leadership, job satisfaction, employee well-being, ethical leadership, self-efficacy, job performance, psychological safety, and emotional exhaustion. The overlay visualization further indicates that earlier studies were more focused on structural models, leader–member exchange, job satisfaction, and employee well-being, while more recent studies have shifted toward job performance, employee engagement, employee retention, employee creativity, psychological safety, competitive psychological climate, and empowering leadership.

The study also identified several research gaps. Although psychological empowerment has been widely linked to performance, engagement, and job satisfaction. Also fewer studies have examined its long-term effects on employee retention, burnout prevention, psychological safety, and organizational sustainability. Research on digital work environments, remote work settings, cross-cultural comparisons, gender differences, and industry-specific contexts also remains limited. These gaps provide important opportunities for future studies to explore psychological empowerment using longitudinal, comparative, and mixed-method approaches.

In terms of organizational impact, the findings suggest that psychological empowerment plays an important role in improving employee performance, creativity, engagement, job satisfaction, and well-being while reducing emotional exhaustion and potential burnout. Therefore, organizations should not view psychological empowerment merely as an individual motivational factor, but as a strategic component of leadership development, human resource management, and work design. By strengthening empowering leadership, providing autonomy, creating meaningful work, improving psychological safety, and supporting employee competence, organizations can enhance productivity, innovation, and long-term sustainability.

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