

Psychological Empowerment and Innovative Work Behavior in the Public Sector: The Moderating Role of Perceived Overqualification

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Abstract

Public sector organizations face increasing pressure to enhance efficiency and service quality, making employees' innovative work behavior (IWB) a critical outcome. This study examines the relationship between psychological empowerment (PE) and IWB, while investigating the moderating role of perceived overqualification (POQ). Drawing on evidence from 118 public servants in Greece, this study reveals that PE is positively and significantly associated with IWB, confirming its role as a key driver of proactive and innovation-related behaviors. However, this relationship is not uniform across employees. The findings show that POQ weakens the positive relationship between PE and IWB, with the relationship remaining significant but becoming progressively weaker at higher levels of POQ. These results suggest that employees' perceptions of qualification-job alignment shape the extent to which empowerment translates into innovative behavior. The study contributes to the HRM literature by positioning POQ as a boundary condition in the empowerment-innovation relationship, particularly within highly structured public sector contexts. From a practical perspective, the findings highlight the importance of aligning employees' qualifications with job roles when designing empowerment-based interventions aimed at fostering innovation.

Keywords: Psychological Empowerment, Innovative Work Behavior, Perceived Overqualification, Public Sector, Human Resource Management