

## Caught in the Middle: Empowerment in Middle Managers

Noelle Doty

Kansas State University

Middle managers are the “drivers of organizational strategy,” and many articles outline the success their work and drive brings to their organizations (Mantere, 2008, p. 294). A middle manager [MM] is a “managerial subordinate” or a manager with both a superior over himself and subordinates under him (Huang, Iun, Liu, & Gong, 2010, p. 127). Many studies use Kanter’s theory of structural empowerment to research the structural organization of the health care industry, and focus on nursing middle managers as prime examples of the theory (Armstrong & Laschinger, 2006; Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, & Wilk, 2004; Patrick & Laschinger 2006). However, there is a need for a look at the greater population of middle managers, for the purpose of practical application in the workforce, which is the goal of this study.

Previous studies on the topic of middle management focus on how these specific managers drive the organizations they are a part of, how they motivate their subordinates to work effectively and efficiently, how middle managers create excitement, and how their leadership style helps their followers find purpose in their work. And yet, little is done to flesh out how these strong MMs are created, what motivates them, and how they succeed in their position (Kominis & Emmanuel, 2007). These MMs are the “basis of strategic renewal” in bettering an ever-changing organizational environment and, conversely, can even “sabotage implementation efforts” in the changing strategy of the workplace (Mantere, 2008, p. 294). This paper aims to discover what factors influence the empowerment of middle managers for the purpose of better understanding and development of MMs in organizational and workplace structures. Motivation is the influence on a person’s “direction, vigor and persistence of action” (Rajhans, 2012, p. 82). The current literature on the subjects of management, motivation, and work performance focus on the topics of role expectations, and empowerment, and are typically viewed through the

theoretical lenses of structural empowerment and psychological empowerment, which are outlined below.

## Literature Review

### Theoretical Model

The first theory, that of Kanter's structural empowerment, has six components that affect empowerment (Wagner, Cummings, Smith, Olson, Anderson, & Warren, 2010). These six components are "increased access to opportunity, information, resources, support, formal power, and informal power" (Wagner et al., 2010, p. 449). The "focus of Kanter's theory is on the employee's perception of the actual conditions in the work environment," so the perceptions of the six concepts in the theory reveal how the theory is applied (Laschinger et al., 2004, p. 528).

The first, *opportunity*, is a person's expectations and future prospects (Kanter, 1977). The positions in which there are few opportunity options will often see a low sense of motivation in their workers. Jobs with a high opportunity options and rewards tend to have excited and positive workers. This positive attitude disappears when the limit of opportunity is reached (Kanter, 1977). These opportunity options can vary from positions changes, increased responsibility, but primarily is the opportunity for change. Opportunity makes the position richer in value, and "job enrichment can be empowering or make even the vulnerable become even more powerless" (Kanter, 1977, p. 257).

The next three components, *information*, *resources*, and *support*, are bundled since an employee who perceives that he or she has access to these components is empowered (Laschinger et al., 2004). Information and resources may differ by position, but empowerment is greater when organizations "make more information more available to more people at more levels through more devices" (Kanter, 1989, as cited by Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1447). Support can

come in many forms, but the “ability of managers to get things done depends more on the number of networks in which they are centrally involved than on their height in a hierarchy” (Kanter, 1989, p. 89).

Power, both *formal* and *informal*, are the final components of Kanter’s theory. She defines power as “the ability to get things done, to mobilize resources, to get and use whatever is it that a person needs for the goals he or she is attempting to meet” (Kanter, 1977, p. 166). There is a structure to power, and this structure allows the individual to act in a capable way within the system set by the organization. The informal power refers to the alliances of the individual, while the formal power refers to the job characteristics. The informal power is that of support; having a network can create a sense of empowerment. Formal power is created by the systems set forth by the organization, even by something as simple as a job description or position expectation list (Kanter, 1977).

These six components of structural empowerment are often paired with the four cognitions of psychological empowerment, which indicate the intrinsic motivation of the individual (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Spreitzer, 1995). Psychological empowerment is a “motivational construct” shown in the four cognitions of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact, and these cognitions “reflect on active, rather than passive, orientation to a work role” (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1443). Active orientation refers to the individual feeling that he or she is able to create in the context of his or her work role (Kanter, 1989, as cited by Spreitzer, 1995). Additionally, all of these cognitions are needed together to create empowerment—inadequacy in even one cognition will “deflate” the comprehensive feeling of empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1444).

The cognitions are further explained in Spreitzer's paper as follows: *Meaning* is the "value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual's own ideals or standards" (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1443). *Competence*, also termed self-efficacy, is "an individual's belief in his or her capability to perform activities with skill" (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1443). *Self-determination* is "an individual's sense of having choice in initiating and regulating actions" (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1443). Finally, *impact* is "the degree to which an individual can influence strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at work" (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1443-1444). Spreitzer writes that impact contrasts Kanter's locus of control, because impact is swayed by the context of the position (1995). Locus of control refers to a person's beliefs that he or she determines the course of his or her life. Therefore, a person with this internal locus of control likely feels more empowered because of this or her feeling of capability to shape his or her work (Spreitzer, 1995). Kanter and Spreitzer's theories together create a lens of many facets with which to explore the realm of middle management and how the structure impacts the success and motivation of MMs. In addition to these theories, there are four main factors reviewed in studies of management or workplace structure: role expectations, empowerment, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. These four are detailed in the sections below.

### **Factor of Role Expectations**

The position of the job itself does not determine the success of the individual in the position, because the individual needs to be examined in light of where the occupant stands in relation to opportunity and power—the "nature of the total system is important in determining the relationship of any individual worker to her or her work" (Kanter, 1977, p. 250). So if the role in the system is so important for the individual to succeed, then an understanding of the role and its expectations seem to be necessary. A role is used to "explain the behavior of individuals

by relying on constraints external to the acting object” (Mantere, 2008, p. 296) or that the outside factors affect the behavior of the person—congruent with Kanter’s studies. Mantere also states that while many may say that roles are irrelevant to the study since a person will simply grow where he or she is planted, that the role expectations placed on MMs by superior managers are important to take into account in study (2008). It is important to understand that every employee has specific roles, and MMs are understood through these roles (Dobrevá-Martínova, Villeneuve, Strickland, & Matheson, 2002; Mantere, 2008). “Every employee holds various roles at work and performs tasks within those roles, which are largely defined by the organizational culture or by the subculture of a particular work group” (Dobrevá-Martínova, 2002, p. 3). Mantere’s study used a model of four standard role expectations: “implementing, facilitating, adaptability, championing, and synthesizing information” (2008, p. 301) to better understand what was being asked of MMs. In Mantere’s study, he implements eight conditions that enable middle managers to satisfy their roles, and these follow similar lines to Kanter’s theory. These eight are narration, contextualization, resource allocation, respect, trust, responsiveness, inclusion, and refereeing (Mantere, 2008).

### **Factor of Empowerment**

“Empowered employees are generally more satisfied with their job” (Laschinger, et al., 2004, p. 527). Spreitzer states that empowerment embodies the constant changes in people’s perceptions of themselves in regard to work environment affiliations (1995). In addition to the earlier mentioned personality traits of self-esteem and locus of control, Spreitzer also notes the importance of rewards as important in the work context for creating empowerment (1995). These rewards need to distinguish individual contribution and competencies from those of the group, as well as be the incentive for participation in “decision-making processes” (Spreitzer, 1995, p.

1448). The processing of information from superior managers can also affect the empowerment of MMs (Huang et al., 2010)—saying then that how a superior manager leads affects the feeling of empowerment of the MM. Empowerment can be measured by using the Conditions of Work Effectiveness Questionnaire (CWEQ) which measures the access that employees have to the empowerment components set out by Kanter (Sarmiento, Laschinger, & Iwasiw, 2004). The element of psychological empowerment has been strongly linked with task performance for MMs (Huang et al., 2010), while structural empowerment has been linked with organizational support (Patrick & Laschinger, 2006). Many studies linked the lack of empowerment to stress or burnout (Sarmiento et al., 2004; Mantere, 2008; Gill, Flaschner, & Shachar, 2006), stressing a need for empowerment among employees in general, but especially in middle management. Another finding was that when low empowerment was felt by workers, they subsequently felt that their opinions were held in low regard (Patrick & Leschinger, 2006). Much of this research leads one to think about the factors of commitment to the organization and level of satisfaction in one's position as players in an MMs empowerment.

### **Factors of Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction**

These two factors, organizational commitment and job satisfaction, are quite often mentioned together, though perhaps not in those exact words, in both management and subordinate studies. Organizational commitment is defined as a "psychological link" between employees and their organizations that decreases the likelihood of the employee leaving the organization on a voluntary basis (Cho, Laschinger, & Wong, 2006, p. 48). Kanter writes that there is a need for a "climate of success" where emotional and value commitment help those in the organization feel a sense of belonging or membership to the organization (1983, p. 149). Organizational commitment, as realized by perceived support, has been found to be linked to job

satisfaction (Patrick & Laschinger, 2006; Cho, Laschinger, & Wong, 2006). Job satisfaction is defined as how an individual perceives whether or not his or her job-related needs are being met (Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, & Medlock, 2004). Kanter notes that commitment and satisfaction are not the same, and that often organizational commitment can outweigh satisfaction (1977). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment are linked to opportunity as well (Kanter, 1977), but a link to both these, the additional four components of empowerment, and role conflict has not been researched—therefore, investigating the possible relationship between all of these factors is the goal of this study.

### **Summary**

Even with the large amount of research done on managers, empowerment, role expectations, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction in the workplace, there is little research that focuses on middle management, beyond that of how crucial the position is to the structure of the organization. Kanter's theory of structural empowerment provides an excellent framework for examining the factors that influence the organizational commitment and job satisfaction of middle managers, which is the goal of this study. To find the ways in which the prior research on these factors interact with one another, the following research questions are presented:

**RQ1:** How do different dimensions of empowerment influence job satisfaction?

**RQ2:** How do dimensions of empowerment influence organizational commitment?

Additionally, a hypothesis is given in the form of a hypothesized structural model predicting the strength of the relationship between these five factors. The model was a way to determine what types of relationships these factors had to one another, or if they were related at all. The hypothesized model (shown below in Figure 1) predicted that role ambiguity and role



conflict would each have a direct relationship with both empowerment and job satisfaction. Empowerment was predicted to have a direct relationship with both organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Finally, job satisfaction was predicted to have a direct relationship with organizational commitment.

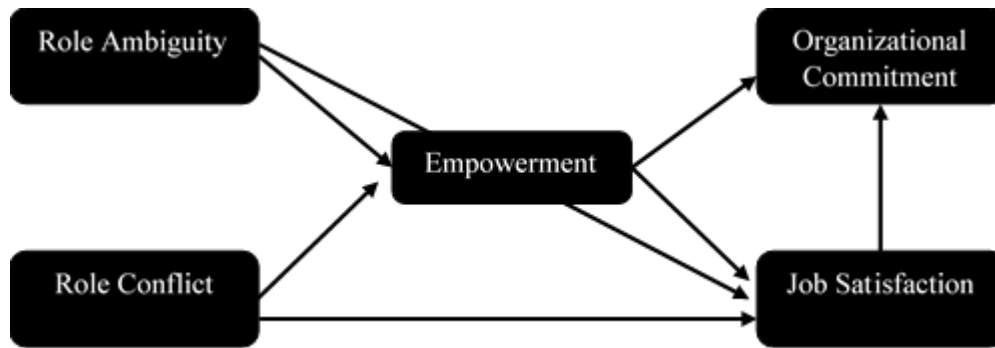


Figure 1: Hypothesized structural model

## Methods

### Sampling and Participants

To reach beyond the typical undergraduate college student sample, participants were gathered via a volunteer convenience sampling strategy using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). This approach enabled a nationwide survey of middle managers rather than surveying only those close to the researcher geographically. Participants were asked through the informed consent form and an initial selection question to verify that they fit the definition of a middle manager, were over eighteen years of age, and were English-speaking. Participants were compensated \$1.25 for completing the survey.

A total of 289 responses were collected, with 202 respondents completing the survey and answering the three attention check questions correctly. Roughly 7% ( $n = 14$ ) self-identified as lower-level managers, 89% ( $n = 180$ ) as middle-level managers, and 4% ( $n = 8$ ) as upper level managers. In terms of sex, roughly 62% ( $n = 126$ ) were male, 36% ( $n = 72$ ) female, and

combined 1% (n = 2) identified as “other” or “prefer not to disclose.” In terms of race, roughly 64% (n = 130) were Caucasian, 10% (n = 20) were African-American, 10% (n = 20) were of Hispanic or Latino-a decent, 18% (n = 37) were Asian, 1% (n = 2) were Native American, and 5% (n = 10) were “other” or multiracial. It is also interesting to note that each of the fifty states were represented by at least one respondent, with the highest representation falling to California at 11% (n = 23). Respondents had an average age of 34, with a range of 21 to 71 years. In terms of level of education, roughly 47% (n = 94) were college graduates, with 21% (n = 42) having completed a post-graduate degree. Roughly 6% (n = 12) had completed some post-graduate work, 13% (n = 26) had completed some college, and 6% (n = 12) had technical or vocational school training. The remaining respondents were high school graduates/GED recipients (6%; n = 13) or had completed some high school (.5%; n = 1). With regard to employment status, 90% (n = 182) were employed full time, with the remaining respondents holding part-time employment (2% [n = 4] with 20 hours or less; 7% [n = 14] with 21-39 hours). Most respondents (25%, n = 51) worked at organizations employing 51-200 people. Finally, respondents had worked in the organizations for an average of six years and been in their positions an average of four years.

### **Variables & Measures**

**Organizational Commitment Questionnaire.** To measure organizational commitment, the same-titled questionnaire (OCQ) was used (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). The OCQ has 15 items on a 7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree). The measure was reliable ( $\alpha = .806$ ).

**Conditions for Work Effectiveness Questionnaire—II.** To measure opportunity, information, resources, support, and power (factors of structural empowerment), the Conditions for Work Effectiveness Questionnaire-II (CWEQ-II) was used. This measure uses 18 items

from the CWEQ-II, with three items for each factor (opportunity, information, resources, support, informal power, and formal power). Each measure was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (none – a lot), and then summed to create a total empowerment score (Patrick & Laschinger, 2006). Because the questionnaire was designed for use in the nursing industry, some terminology relevant to that field was changed to reflect a more general language (i.e. “current state of hospital” changed to “current state of organization”). All subscales were reliable, ( $\alpha_{\text{opportunity}} = .806$ ),  $\alpha_{\text{information}} = .845$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{support}} = .838$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{resources}} = .755$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{formal\_power}} = .755$ , ( $\alpha_{\text{informal\_power}} = .767$ ).

**Role Conflict and Ambiguity Scale.** To measure role expectations, the Role Conflict and Ambiguity Questionnaire (RCA) was used, which employs thirty items on a 7-point Likert scale (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). This study used six items for the measure of role conflict ( $\alpha = .863$ ) and six items for role ambiguity ( $\alpha = .904$ ).

**Job Satisfaction.** To measure job satisfaction, a five-item, five-point semantic differential scale was used. Participants rated their job satisfaction with the following pairs: Satisfied/Unsatisfied, Pleased/ Not Pleased, Happy/Sad, Gratified/Ungratified, Fulfilled/Unfulfilled (Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, & Medlock, 2004). The measure was reliable,  $\alpha = .904$

## Results

### Testing the Hypothesized Structural Model

First, the hypothesized structural model in Figure 1 was tested using Amos software and evaluated for goodness of fit to the data using the following statistics: chi-square, relative chi-square, Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Confirmatory Fit Index (CFI), and Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA). Good fit to the data is reflected by a non-significant chi-square value, a relative chi-square value of 3.0 or less, IFI and CFI values of .95 or higher, and RMSEA values of .06 or lower.

Testing of the initial model revealed a poor fit to data,  $\chi^2 (2) = 60.68, p < .001, \chi^2 / df = 30.34, IFI = .90, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .33$ . Based on these findings, the model was revised to trim paths that were not significant, and to include paths believed to be significant that were not included in the original model. Follow-up analysis of the revised structural model showed good fit to the data,  $\chi^2 (2) = 2.59, p = .273, \chi^2 / df = 1.30, IFI = .99, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .03$ . Figure 2 shows the final structural model. According to the figure, role ambiguity negatively influenced empowerment and organizational commitment. Role conflict, however, had no influence on empowerment, but did negatively influence organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Empowerment had a positive relationship to organizational commitment and job satisfaction, while job satisfaction was shown to positively influence organizational commitment alone.

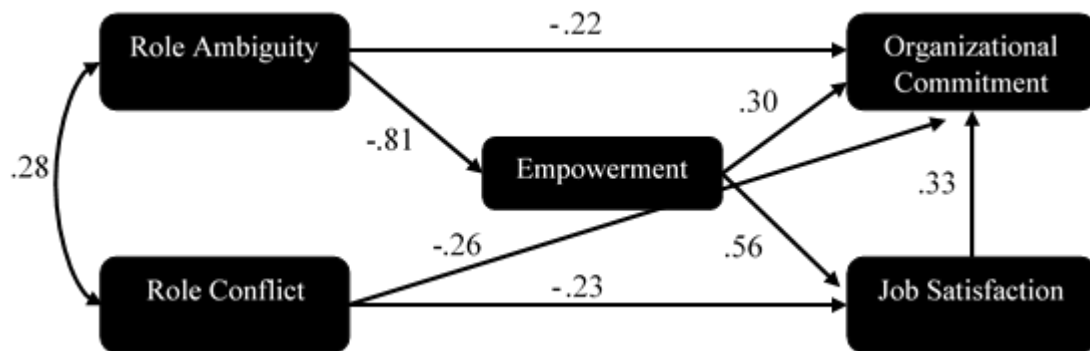


Figure 2. Final structural model.

### Follow-up Analysis

To answer RQ<sub>1</sub> about the influence of different dimensions of empowerment on job satisfaction, a multiple linear regression test was used. As expected from the model in Figure 2, there was a statistically significant influence of the dimensions of empowerment on job satisfaction,  $F(6, 193) = 26.15, p < .001, R^2 = .44$ . Analysis of beta weights indicated that only three of the six dimensions of empowerment were statistically significant: opportunity ( $\beta = .36$ ),

formal power ( $\beta = .22$ ), and informal power ( $\beta = .27$ ). Each of the three dimensions had a significant, positive influence on job satisfaction.

Additionally, another multiple linear regression test was used to assess the influence of empowerment on organizational commitment (RQ<sub>2</sub>). The result showed a statistically significant influence as well,  $F(6, 193) = 52.68, p < .001, R^2 = .62$ . Analysis of beta weights indicated that only opportunity was statistically significant ( $\beta = .43$ ). In other words, people were more committed to their organization the more opportunity they perceived.

### **Discussion**

Overall, this study was designed to find ways to help middle managers to be successful in their organizations by researching what factors are of greatest influence to them. Analysis of survey results indicate that middle managers' access to opportunity, and formal and informal power are the most significant factors of empowerment on their job satisfaction, while only opportunity significantly influenced their organizational commitment. Additionally, a structural model helps to visualize the negative and positive relationships between role conflict & ambiguity, empowerment, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. These relationships point to ways in which we can help managers feel satisfied and committed to their organizations.

as well as power (in terms of resourcing and alliances) are the greatest influencers of their empowerment. Additionally, the as the role conflict & ambiguity (thought of as conflict regarding their roles) of middle managers increase, their empowerment decreases

First, this study revealed that a middle manager's access to opportunity (change and job enrichment) and informal and formal power (the ability to get things done) are very significant factors for MMs feeling of empowerment as relates to their job satisfaction. That is to say that MMs who have the ability to increase their job responsibility, reach new goals, and experience a

richer position of value will have greater *opportunity*. Likewise, MMs who have the power to accomplish tasks and build alliances or support networks will have a greater sense of formal and informal power. These combined qualities are the greatest predictors of MMs empowerment, which leads to the second greater conclusion in the study.

Second, the structural model is especially beneficial in visualizing the findings—there are two in particular. The original model hypothesized that MMs role conflict & ambiguity, as well as empowerment would be directly related to their job satisfaction, which in turn influenced their organizational commitment. In final model however, we can see that when managers experience high levels of role ambiguity, their empowerment decreases. That is to say that when MMs don't have the information they need to fulfill their roles, they feel a loss of empowerment, which we can view as an increase in stress, etc. (Rizzo, House & Lirtzmann, 1970; Mantere, 2008). This loss of empowerment can also lead to MMs being unsatisfied in their jobs, and possibly leaving because they are not committed enough to stay. Additionally, MMs role conflict specifically is related to both organizational commitment and job satisfaction. When we understand that MMs need clear expectations, the right tools, a supporting network, and increasing goals to reach, we can help them to create this feeling of empowerment, which lends itself to motivation (Kanter, 1977; Mantere, 2008). In turn, empowered MMs will be more dedicated and happy in their organization, leading to a more positive work environment with experienced people who have been in the organization for a longer period of time.

### **Implications**

The findings of this study have several practical implications. First, to help managers feel fulfilled (or satisfied) in their position, the research shows, as mentioned, that increased power and opportunity increase those perceptions. This satisfaction is not to be confused with

contentment, however, as the idea behind opportunity is that change, or increased goals are prevalent. Higher management or administration can provide access to opportunity, and work to create that change for their managers. Kanter states that these changes can be as simple as providing ways to increase the responsibility of managers or offering rewards (Kanter, 1977). Essentially, these opportunities help motivate managers by giving them goals to work toward and not creating an environment of stasis, but one of positivity and movement. These opportunities also connect to the informal and formal power discussed in the findings of this study, because having the power to get things done helps to accomplish those larger goals and increase opportunity.

Second, to encourage the retention of middle managers, this study showed that increasing their opportunity in turn increased their perception of commitment to the organization. Similar to the discussion in the previous paragraph, if MMs perceive that the future is brighter, with positive changes, they feel higher motivation and empowerment—and they are more willing to retain their membership in the organization. The caveat of this is that this retention may mean changing position within the organization (part of the needed change), so organizational commitment should not necessarily be confused with position commitment. One way to view this finding is using the cliché phrase, “killing two birds with one stone.” That is to say that focusing energy on improving the opportunities for change and extending a higher level of power will positively influence middle managers in regards to their fulfillment in their work, and desire to remain with the organization.

Finally, in regards to the structural model presented, we can see that a circular link of sorts exists between these factors. For example, if a middle manager feels unable to complete his job because of a lack of information (increased role ambiguity), his perceived empowerment will

decrease, which can lead to his decreased satisfaction and commitment to the organization. This chain could lead to outcomes of unmotivated work or at an extreme, the possible resignation from the organization. High rates of turnover are not beneficial to a business model, so working to help decrease MMs role conflict & ambiguity and increase their empowerment will in turn help increase their devotion and fulfilment—and could lead to longer retention rates.

There may not be a specific checklist that is applicable for every field, but work towards implementing these tools will help managers to feel more empowered and satisfied in their positions, as well as committed to their organizations. This commitment could translate to remaining in the organization for a longer period of time as well.

### **Limitations and Further Directions**

There are two limitations to note regarding the research. First, although the study relied on participants to answer honestly whether they were middle-managers, there was no way to verify their status as a middle manager independently. It would be worthwhile to validate the findings in organizations where such verification could occur. Second, the findings branch out across industries and types of organizations. It may not be possible to deduce that the findings presented here are at work in a particular industry or particular type of organization.

For follow-up research, some industry-specific surveys could be done to help determine whether or not some findings are relevant. It may be beneficial to perhaps start in the business and information industry, since a large number of the respondents of this study reported working in those fields. Additionally, since the questionnaire in this study is simplistic to administer, a reduced version (eliminating perhaps some demographic questions, etc.) could be given by the administration of an organization to its managers to determine the prime factors specific to that organization. Finally, and arguably most important, future research needs to find a way to



formally validate middle managers, perhaps by using a more specific definition or type, so that the research is effectively targeted.

### **Conclusion**

Middle managers are crucial to their organizations' success, and so making MMs successful is subsequently crucial. We can help managers succeed by providing opportunities for change, and giving them power in areas of responsibility and support. In addition to these two concepts, it should be understood that a circular web exists in the needs of MMs, and to successfully empower them, we need to endeavor to decrease their perceptions of role conflict and ambiguity. This endeavor increases their empowerment, which will, in turn, increase their commitment to the organization, and satisfaction within it. However, this circle can only be completed when the upper levels of organizational management and administration are willing to put in the effort to provide these concepts to their middle managers. It is clear, however, that the effort is worth it. Successful application of this research, and that done by others can help middle managers feel less "caught in the middle," and more empowered to thrive.

## References

- Acker, G. M. (2004). The effect of organizational conditions (role conflict, role ambiguity, opportunities for professional development, and social support) on job satisfaction and intention to leave among social workers in mental health care. *Community Mental Health Journal, 40*, 65-73. doi: 10.1023/b:comh.0000015218.12111.26
- Armstrong, K. J., & Laschinger, H. (2006). Structural empowerment, magnet hospital characteristics, and patient safety culture: Making the link. *Journal of Nursing Care Quality, 21*, 124-132. doi: 10.1097/00001786-200604000-00007
- Cho, J., Laschinger, H. S., & Wong, C. (2006). Workplace empowerment, work engagement and organizational commitment of new graduate nurses. *Nursing Leadership-Academy of Canadian Executive Nurses, 19*, 43-60. doi: 10.12927/cjnl.2006.18368
- Dobрева-Martinova, T., Villeneuve, M., Strickland, L., & Matheson, K. (2002). Occupational role stress in the Canadian forces: Its association with individual and organizational well-being. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science/Revue canadienne des sciences du comportement, 34*, 111-121. doi: 10.1037/h0087161
- Gill, A. S., Flaschner, A. B., & Shachar, M. (2006). Mitigating stress and burnout by implementing transformational-leadership. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 18*, 469-481. doi: 10.1108/09596110610681511
- Huang, X., Iun, J., Liu, A., & Gong, Y. (2010). Does participative leadership enhance work performance by inducing empowerment or trust? The differential effects on managerial and non-managerial subordinates. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 31*, 122-143. doi: 10.1002/job.636
- Kanter, R. M. (1977). *Men and women of the corporation*. New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc.

- Kanter, R. M. (1983). *The change masters*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc.
- Kanter, R. M. (1989). The new managerial work. *Harvard Business Review*, *67*, 85-92.
- Kominis, G., & Emmanuel, C. R. (2007). The expectancy–valence theory revisited: Developing an extended model of managerial motivation. *Management Accounting Research*, *18*, 49-75. doi: 10.1016/j.mar.2006.10.002
- Laschinger, H. K. S., Finegan, J. E., Shamian, J., & Wilk, P. (2004). A longitudinal analysis of the impact of workplace empowerment on work satisfaction. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *25*, 527-545. doi: 10.1002/job.256
- Mantere, S. (2008). Role expectations and middle manager strategic agency. *Journal of Management Studies*, *45*, 294-316. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6486.2007.00744.x
- Mottet, T. P., Beebe, S. A., Raffeld, P. C., & Medlock, A. L. (2004). The effects of student verbal and nonverbal responsiveness on teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction. *Communication Education*, *53*, 150-163. doi: 10.1080/03634520410001682410
- Mowday, R. T., Steers, R. M., & Porter, L. W. (1979). The measurement of organizational commitment. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *14*, 224-247. doi: 10.1016/0001-8791(79)90072-1
- Patrick, A., & Laschinger, H. K. S. (2006). The effect of structural empowerment and perceived organizational support on middle level nurse managers' role satisfaction. *Journal of Nursing Management*, *14*, 13-22. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2934.2005.00600.x
- Rajhans, K. (2012). Effective organizational communication: A key to employee motivation and performance. *Interscience Management Review*, *2*, 81-85.

- Ramayah, T., Jantan, M., & Tadisina, S. K. (2001, November). Job satisfaction: Empirical evidence for alternatives to JDI. In *32nd Annual Meeting of Decision Sciences Institute Conference* (pp. 213-214).
- Rizzo, J., House, R., & Lirtzman, S. (1970). Role conflict and ambiguity in complex organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 15*, 150-163. doi:10.2307/2391486
- Sarmiento, T. P., Laschinger, H. K. S., & Iwasiw, C. (2004). Nurse educators' workplace empowerment, burnout, and job satisfaction: Testing Kanter's theory. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 46*, 134-143. doi: 10.1111/j1365-2648.2003.02973.x
- Spector, P. E. (1997). *Job satisfaction: Application, assessment, causes, and consequences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Spreitzer, G. M. (1995). Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement and validation. *Academy of Management Journal, 38*, 1442-1465. doi:10.2307/256865
- Thomas, K. W., & Velthouse, B.A. (1990). Cognitive elements of empowerment. *Academy of Management Review, 15*, 666-681. doi:10.5465/amr.1990.4310926
- Wagner, J. I., Cummings, G., Smith, D. L., Olson, J., Anderson, L., & Warren, S. (2010). The relationship between structural empowerment and psychological empowerment for nurses: A systematic review. *Journal of Nursing Management, 18*, 448-462. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2834.2010.01088.x

## Appendix

**Informed Consent Form: Empowerment of Middle Managers**

**PROJECT TITLE:** Empowerment of Middle Managers

**APPROVAL DATE OF PROJECT:** est. March 2017 **EXPIRATION DATE OF PROJECT:** est. May 2017

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Noelle Doty, [noelled@ksu.edu](mailto:noelled@ksu.edu), 720-347-8303

**IRB CHAIR CONTACT/PHONE INFORMATION:**

- Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee, on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, 785-532-3224
- Cheryl Doerr, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance and University Veterinarian, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224

**SPONSOR OF PROJECT:** None

**PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:** To determine how work factors that influence middle managers' organizational commitment and job satisfaction

**PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED:** You are being asked to complete a survey that will likely take 10-12 minutes.

**RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED:** There are no foreseeable physical or emotional risks.

**BENEFITS ANTICIPATED:** In return for participating, you will be paid \$1.25 via Amazon Turk. Additionally, your responses can help improve training for middle managers and responsiveness to middle managers' needs.

**EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:** No personally identifying information will be linked to published reports of the study. All information will be stored on the investigators' password-protected laptops and will be accessible only to them.

**TERMS OF PARTICIPATION:** I understand that this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. Also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits to which I may otherwise be entitled.

Do you agree to participate?

**Questionnaire: Empowerment of Middle Managers****Please answer the following questions about your position of employment:**

1. Do you directly manage any employees?
  - a) If YES: How many employees do you directly manage?
  - b) If NO: "Thank you for your time in taking this survey. Your response has been recorded."
2. Do you have any managers over you?
  1. If YES: How many managers are over you?
  2. If NO: "Thank you for your time in taking this survey. Your response has been recorded."
3. Where do you feel that you fall in the hierarchy of your organization?
  - a) Lower-level management
  - b) Middle-level management
  - c) Upper-level management
4. What is your job title?

**Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with the following statements about how you feel toward your work:**

- 1 = Strongly disagree**  
**2 = Moderately disagree**  
**3 = Slightly disagree**  
**4 = Neither disagree nor agree**  
**5 = Slightly agree**  
**6 = Moderately agree**  
**7 = Strongly agree**

1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.

2. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.
3. I feel very little loyalty to this organization.
4. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.
5. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.
6. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.
7. I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work were similar.
8. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.
9. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization.
10. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for, over others I was considering at the time I joined.
11. There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely.
12. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees.
13. I really care about the fate of this organization.
14. For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.
15. Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part.

**Please rate your organization on the following dimensions using the scale below.**

- 1 = None**
- 2 = Very little**
- 3 = Some**
- 4 = A fair amount**
- 5 = A lot**

How much of each kind of opportunity do you have in your present job?

1. Challenging work
2. The chance to gain new skills and knowledge on the job
3. Tasks that use all of your own skills and knowledge

How much access to information do you have in your present job?

1. The current state of the organization
2. The values of top management
3. The goals of top management

How much access to support do you have in your present job?

1. Specific information about things you do well
2. Specific comments about things you could improve
3. Helpful hints or problem solving advice

How much access to resources do you have in your present job?

1. Time available to do necessary paperwork
2. Time available to accomplish job requirements
3. Acquiring temporary help when needed

In my work setting/job:

1. The rewards for innovation on the job are
2. The amount of flexibility in my job is
3. The amount of visibility of my work-related activities within the institution is

How much opportunity do you have for these activities in your present job?

1. Collaborating on work with coworkers
2. Being sought out by peers for help with problems



3. Being sought out by managers for help with problems

How much of each kind of opportunity do you have in your present job?

1. Overall, my current work environment empowers me to accomplish my work in an effective manner
2. Overall, I consider my workplace to be an empowering environment

**Please answer the following questions about your work:**

- 1 = Strongly disagree**  
**2 = Moderately disagree**  
**3 = Slightly disagree**  
**4 = Neither disagree nor agree**  
**5 = Slightly agree**  
**6 = Moderately agree**  
**7 = Strongly agree**

1. I feel certain about how much authority I have.
2. Clear, planned goals and objectives for my job.
3. I have to do things that should be done differently.
4. I work under incompatible policies and guidelines.
5. I know that I have divided my time properly.
6. I receive an assignment without the manpower to complete it.
7. I know what my responsibilities are.
8. I have to buck a role or policy in order to carry out an assignment.
9. I know exactly what is expected of me.
10. I receive incompatible requests from two or more people.
11. I have to work under vague directives or orders.
12. I perform work that suits my values.

**Please describe how you feel about working in your organization using the adjective pairs below. The closer you select to one adjective, the more you feel that way. Selecting the option in the middle means you feel neither more strongly than the other.**

**1 & 5 = Very**

**2 & 4 = Somewhat**

**3 = Neither**

1. Satisfied to Unsatisfied
2. Pleased to Not Pleased
3. Happy to Sad
4. Gratified to Ungratified
5. Fulfilled to Unfulfilled

### **Demographics**

**Please provide the following demographic information:**

1. What is your sex?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Other
  - d. Prefer not to disclose
2. What is your age in years?
3. Which state do you live in?
4. What is your race (select all that apply)?
  - a. Black/African American
  - b. Asian
  - c. White/Caucasian/European American

- d. Native American/Alaskan Native
  - e. Middle East/Arab American
  - f. Other
5. Are you of Hispanic or Latino decent?
6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- a. Some high school
  - b. High school graduate/GED
  - c. Some college/currently enrolled
  - d. Some college/not currently enrolled
  - e. College graduate
  - f. Technical or vocational training
  - g. Some post graduate work
  - h. Post graduate degree.
7. What is your employment status?
- a. Employed part-time (1-20 hours)
  - b. Employed part-time (21-39 hours)
  - c. Employed full-time
  - d. Retired
  - e. Other
8. How many people (including yourself) are members of your organization?
- a. Self-employed
  - b. 1-10 employees
  - c. 11-50 employees

- d. 51-200 employees
- e. 201-500 employees
- f. 501-1,000 employees
- g. 1,001-5,000 employees
- h. 5,001-10,000 employees
- i. 10,001+ employees

9. Which best describes the industry your organization is in?

- a. Agriculture & Forestry/Wildlife
- b. Business & Information
- c. Construction/Utilities/Contracting
- d. Education
- e. Finance & Insurance
- f. Food & Hospitality
- g. Gaming
- h. Health Services
- i. Motor Vehicle
- j. Natural Resources/Environment
- k. Personal Services
- l. Real Estate & Housing
- m. Safety/Security & Legal
- n. Transportation
- o. Other

10. How long in years have you have worked in your organization?

11. How long have you held your current position?

“Thank you for completing this survey. The goal is to understand how middle managers experience their work and how those experiences impact their commitment & satisfaction. If you have any questions about the study, please contact Noelle Doty at [noelled@ksu.edu](mailto:noelled@ksu.edu). Thank you.”