THE EMPOWERMENT EXPERIENCE: A STUDY OF TWO ORGANISATIONS

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The growth of empowerment in organisations has led to line managers changing their approach to people management. Working with team members who desire autonomy, purpose and meaning implies a change of management approach from a hierarchical 'power over' style to one of enabling and supporting, whilst still managing the performance of their team.

This thesis explores the structural and psychological empowerment experience in two organisations, with eight line managers and twenty-seven team members participating in the qualitative interview research.

The original contribution to academic knowledge is the examining of the empowerment experience from psychological and structural perspectives to offer a more in depth understanding of the empowerment experience. This has contributed to the discourse on empowerment, and finds that the structural empowerment mechanisms that line managers believe to be supporting team member empowerment are from the team member view in fact not contributing significantly to their empowerment. These formal mechanisms would seem to offer the line manager reassurance that work performance is happening, and it is the more informal line manager conversations as well as the actions taken by team members that contribute to a successful empowerment experience from the team member perspective.

The research identifies how line managers engage in managing performance of empowered team members, and highlights there are optimal levels of activity that enhance the empowerment experience. These are unique to each employee, and involve the line manager being aware of their own impact as well as the needs of each employee. The research identifies that organisational performance management approaches need to support highly empowered employees by reflecting the employee's needs for self-determination, meaning, impact and competence (Spreitzer 1996). Further study is required to research how line managers assess empowerment readiness and success.

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

This is to certify that I am responsible for the work submitted in this thesis, that the original work is my own except as specified in acknowledgements, and that neither the thesis nor the original work contained therein has been submitted to this or any other institution for a higher degree.

.................................Helen Askey .... (Signed)

January 2017

.... (Date)

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1.0.   Introduction

1.1.   Aims and objectives for this research

This research uses both the structural and psychological approaches to empowerment by looking at how line managers and team members experience empowerment, and how organisational mechanisms encourage or support empowerment. Exploring the line manager and team member experience of empowerment can assist in understanding how line managers can effectively enable empowerment. Looking at the perspectives of line manager and team member allows for a comparison of intended and experienced behaviours, reflections and critiques that can assist in understanding the experience and identify behaviours and mechanisms that contribute to making the empowerment experience more effective.

Structural empowerment as defined by Conger and Kanungo (1998) and Kanter (1977) place emphasis on structural or relational empowerment whereby line managers encourage empowerment by giving power to their teams, by involving team members in decision making and by giving employees input into their career planning and personal development. Thomas and Velthouse (1990) highlighted the impact of the organisational environment on how people experience empowerment. Definitions and factors that contribute to psychological empowerment (Thomas and Velthouse 1990, Spreitzer 1995) give a greater understanding of how the empowerment experience can be enhanced. Pearson and Chatterjee (1996) write that "overall a great deal of interest has been shown for how empowerment works rather than how to make it work" (Pearson and Chaterjee 1996: 17) and Wang and Lee (2009) write that "empowerment theorists must focus on identifying optimal combinations that represent balanced or fit situations in different work contexts, which are essential to employee well-being and other job outcomes." (Wang and Lee 2009: 290).

The researcher defines empowerment in organisations in the following way: *Empowerment in organisations is a three-fold construct that benefits the organisation, line managers and team members.*

Firstly the activities of line managers encouraging team members to have accountability, competence and confidence to be able to successfully complete all elements of their role.

Secondly team members having a desire, motivation and belief in their competence to take responsibility, to shape their job role, to make decisions and to manage their workload in such a way as to excel in their role and add real value to the organisation.

Thirdly organisational systems and processes being available and used by all organisational members. The employee is able to understand and influence the organisation's goals, objectives and strategy, to have access to mechanisms and tools that will help them to define and measure their own performance contribution, as well as employees working with their line manager to create their own career and development pathway within the organisation.

Empowerment is essentially a three-way collaboration for the benefit of employees, line managers and the organisation to be successful and sustainable. Team members have full responsibility for their role, and line manager enable this to happen and organisational systems support employees to be responsible for their own and the business performance, all within a context of defining the organisational mission, strategy and plans.

The research questions that will be answered by this research are as follows:

- *How do organisational processes and mechanisms enhance or enable the experience of empowerment?*
- *What are the line manager activities and behaviours that influence the empowerment experience of team members?*
- *How do team members experience psychological empowerment?*

It should be recognised that the desire for this research arises from a professional and personal curiosity in this area based on the researcher's experience of working with line managers and team members for over twenty-five years.

The contribution of this research is the focus on how line managers experience being involved with the empowerment of their team members, and the interplay between line manager, team member and organisation in this experience. Past research has mainly used quantitative methods to explore if empowerment is present, this research will use a qualitative approach to give a deeper exploration of the experience of the different parties, which can result in a more thorough understanding of the line manager role.

1.2. The context for this research

The term empowerment is relatively new in the management profession but the issues are not new. For decades delegation of power and authority have been key issues in organisations (e.g. Shapira, 1976; Tannenbaum, 1968). Forrester (2000) stated that the concept of empowerment in itself is not problematic but argue, similar to Argyris (1998) that control needs in managers and the difficulties of letting them go serve as inhibiting factors. Thus the leader appears to play a crucial role in being identified as one of the determinants of successful, as well as failed, empowerment interventions (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989; Argyris, 1998; Forrester, 2000; Hakimi et al., 2010). Leader empowering behaviour is concerned with leaders' delegation of

authority and responsibilities to team members (Hakimi et al. 2010), as well as information sharing, encouragement of participation in decision-making, and facilitation of skill development (Konczak et al. 2000). The leader's role in the empowerment process is thus vital (Deci et al. 1989).

This research looks at the experiences of two groups of line managers and team members in two organisations exploring their experience of empowerment from both a structural and psychological viewpoint (Thomas and Velthouse 1990). The research explores the realities of empowerment: do line managers follow the researcher's definition of empowerment when they work with their teams (Spreitzer 1996), or is empowerment in today's an extension of management practise in that line managers adopt a distant style and team members achieve an acceptable standard of performance (Somech 2002). The analysis explores if empowerment as defined by the researcher actually happens in today's workplaces and if the line managers involved in this research believe that they encourage empowerment of their team members. The analysis critically examines the reality of both parties in that do team members believe they are empowered and are line managers encouraging this to happen? Organisational processes such as performance management will be explored in terms of the impact on supporting empowerment in the workplace.

Empowerment as a term has been derided in the academic press, with Argyris writing (1998) *"managers love empowerment in theory, but the command-and-control model is what they trust and know best, with senior executives setting the organisation's vision, strategy, work processes and job descriptions… there has been no major change in the way organisations operate, empowerment is the 'emperor's new clothes', in that it is praised publically but in private people say they cannot see it."* (Argyris 1998: 99). This research takes an analytical approach to understand more about the experiences of people involved in the empowerment experience: line managers and their team members.

1.3. Empowerment

Empowerment as a management tool has its roots in democratic supervision and participative management that has been researched since the 1930s in topics such as participative management, strategic planning, total quality management and quality circles. Lewin (1939) and Hertzberg (1964) introduced the concept of job enrichment as giving people increasing control, involvement in decision-making and job autonomy that Honold (1997) defined as the socio-technical approach. Other writing on empowerment comes from authors on leadership such as Bennis (1989) and Kanter (1979), exploring empowering team members as a way of managerial and organisational effectiveness. The Institute for Employment Studies publication on the changing roles of senior managers (1997) highlighted the influences of changing organisation structures, the changing needs of customers, the impact of information technology and the potential removal of the traditional management career ladder as all having impacts on the role of senior manager and how they operate in their specialist functions. The IES defines a senior manager as *"an individual with responsibility for both a significant part of the business (e.g. a business unit or division, head of a function or a geographical area), and a group of middle or functional managers."* (IES 1997: 5).

Empowerment has been defined in many ways, Del Val and Lloyd (2003) defined it as *"the management style where managers share with the rest of the organisational members their influence in the decision-making process – that is to say, the collaboration in the decision – making process is not limited to those positions with formal power – with certain characteristics as far as information systems, training, rewarding, power-sharing, leadership style and organisational culture are concerned."* (Del Val and Lloyd 2003: 102). Another definition is that used by Conger and Kanungo who define empowerment as *"a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organisational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organisational practices and informal*

techniques of providing efficacy information." (Conger and Kanungo 1988: 474)*.*

One distinction the researcher would like to make is that line managers can intend to empower people, however if team members do not take this power that is bestowed on them there is no empowerment. Vogt and Murrell (1990) used the term "interactive empowerment" for line managers giving power to team members, and Menon (1998) defined a "cognitive state of perceived control, perceived competence and goal internalisation" (1998: 30) for people who take the power that is bestowed on them.

The researcher identified five dimensions of empowerment:
1. The team member being able to decide what needs to be done, when it needs to be done and how to do it
2. The team member leads and self-monitors their work
3. The line manager encourages and enables the team member to have task autonomy
4. The relationship between line manager and team member is open, explores performance progress and is initiated by the team member
5. The organisational factors present that encourage empowerment which include performance management and company communications.

1.4. Research problem

Specifically this research is focused on the empowerment experience of eight line managers and their team members from two organisations. It explores how they define and experience empowerment, the reasons the line manager supports empowerment, what organisational processes are involved, and if there are any boundaries to empowerment.

1.5.   Justification for this research

This research can be justified on the grounds of contributing to the academic understanding of empowerment. The contribution of this research is the focus on how line managers experience being involved with the empowerment of their team members, and the interplay between line manager and team member in this experience. Past research has mainly used quantitative methods to explore if empowerment is present, this research will use a qualitative approach to give a deeper exploration of the experience of the different parties, which can result in a more thorough understanding of the line manager role. The research also explores the organisational mechanisms that contribute to the empowerment experience.

1.6.   The research in context – about the two organisations

Both organisations are clients of the development company the researcher manages. Company A is a scientific research company spread over two UK sites and has partner businesses in the US and Europe and employs 1600 people. Company B is an engineering company based in the East of England with over 2000 staff.

Both companies are heavily regulated, and have clear processes that people must adhere to for much of the work. Both companies have been in business for many years; over 30 years for company A and 70 years for company B. Both companies have clear intentions of promoting talent from within the organisation, and actively encourage staff to develop themselves.

Within both companies there is no active policy of promoting empowerment, both companies are financially successful and have welcomed being involved

in this research. They would both like the researcher to come back and share the findings from this research.

1.7.   About the researcher

I chose to study the topic of empowerment because I have over 16 years experience of consulting to organisations on the topics of leader and manager development, organisational change and team effectiveness. Before becoming a consultant I worked in large organisations managing people and processes in human resources and operational roles. During my career I have been curious about the reasons for some managers being more effective at bringing out the best in their teams and being able to manage large teams without becoming involved in the day-to-day work of their team members. My first job post university was working for a manager who found it hard to leave his team to do their work, on a daily basis he asked questions, told us what and how to do the work, and spent much more time at work than perhaps he needed to. As I progressed in my management career I have been promoted to managing teams and my own personal experience has been one of the dilemma of wanting things done well (and potentially the way I would do things) and wanting people to thrive, learn and enjoy themselves at work. I have been taught that some success factors for a good manager are helping team members to have confidence in their abilities, develop their skills and being able to solve their own problems.

I have sought to encourage my team to do good work without me being present; my own phrase for this is the echo of leadership as this implies the activities and work that people do when the leader has left. I have always veered away from wanting to be relied upon for answers and opinions, instead wanting team members to have a more self-reliant approach to their work. My main reason is that I wanted people to have the confidence and knowledge to

progress without having to have recourse to me, as I felt a certain level of discomfort with this power over people.

The quote from Hales (2000) summarises the experience I have of working in organisations: "*the almost farcical welter of evasions, ambiguities and contradictions which confound the empowerment literature and the gulf between rhetoric and reality*" (Hales 2000: 502). The word empowerment is often mentioned, and I have encountered line managers who say that they do empower their teams, and yet their behaviours appear more controlling and directive. I have experienced some line managers who say that they empower their teams when they seem to be very involved in the work of each team member, and other line managers who keep a distance between themselves and their team, meeting them at regular monthly intervals to review and plan work, yet all of these line managers say they empower their teams. This level of difference in understanding and approach to empowerment leads me to reflect on what actually is empowerment, and if it is part of a successful people manager's skill repertoire.

My work as a consultant, coach and trainer has been in the field of developing people's capabilities so that they can achieve their potential by increasing people's self-awareness, by developing skills and giving people more choice in how they approach their work. My personal development has lead me to explore appreciative inquiry, coaching, emotional intelligence, resilience and a variety of approaches to leadership. I have developed my business so that I now work with a group of 8 associates who work with me on a project-by-project basis, a way of working I feel more comfortable with than an employer/employee approach that some other consultancies use. I have reflected that I personally find the additional challenge of employing people a distraction from developing my business and delivering client work.

I am aware that in my work encourage people to be more self-reliant and people managers to be empowering and less involved in the day to day work of their team members. In my coaching work I find connections between line managers feeling more successful and creating the environment where their teams have the skills, knowledge and confidence to do good work without an over-reliance on the line manager. In my work I have become more curious about the reasons for some line managers being able to empower their teams successfully, and still feel comfortable about their line management role, whilst other managers find it more challenging to give this power to their team members.

All of these experiences and reflections influenced my decision that after 14 years away from academic study that I would research empowerment in order to give me more academic insights, understanding and an appreciation of how line managers and their team members experience empowerment. My intention is to share this learning with clients, as well as wanting to contribute to the body of knowledge on the topic of empowerment.

1.8.   Methodology

The pragmatic aspect of research data lead the researcher to decide to use a case study approach in the research design, where the organisations participating will provide a rich source of data, accepting that all data is interpretive and will not speak for itself. The key objective is to explore the empowerment experience in two organisations with a view to arriving at the factors that contribute to the empowerment experience.

In order to achieve the objectives the research is exploratory and interpretive in nature and it adopts a case study approach. To support this methodology and achieve the research objectives in-depth interviews will be used. The ethics, validity and reliability of in-depth interviews were considered.

It was decided to research four senior managers and their team members from two organisations of a similar size, both of who have been in business for over 30 years and who have a clear management structure. The managers had been in their current position for over two years, and their team had four or more direct reports (team members). The target group was limited in this way because:

- The length of service in their current role gives people time to settle into their role, to understand the requirements of their role and to develop relationships with their team members
- Interviewing four senior managers in two organisations would give a range of responses and give a meaningful comparison
- Managing at least four team members would give a comparison of experiences between the four from each line manager, as well as comparisons between the team members from different managers.

Whilst the adoption of a case study approach may limit the generalisation of the research findings to the defined population, the value of the research comes from the value of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

1.9. Outline of the thesis

This section outlines the contents of the remaining chapters. A review of literature related to the research is presented in Chapter 2, which reinforces the contention that there is literature concerned with empowerment approaches and power, but little on how empowerment can be successful. The literature review explores power, current changes on workforce, the different approaches to empowerment, leadership and performance management. The methodology section in Chapter 3 describes how the methodology appropriate to the research aim was selected and developed. A guide to what to expect from the interviews was developed and given to all research participants before their interviews. Chapters 4 and 5 contain the

narrative and analysis of the interviews. Each theme is supported by representative quotations from the research participants. Chapter 6 presents the conclusions of the research and reflects on the data in relation to the reviewed literature. The limitations of the research and suggestions for further research are highlighted.

2.0.   Literature review

2.1.   Introduction

This chapter commences with a review of the changing world of work, starting with Taylor (1886) and moving to employee involvement and participation practises. The foundations of empowerment are provided in section 2.3 and the sub-sections. Power is explored in section 2.4, acknowledging that power is a backdrop of any exploration of behaviour in organisations (Clegg 2006) and where power rests is a component of empowerment. Power being a hierarchical concept and the use of control systems by line managers (Edwards 1979), and how that relates to line managers supporting autonomy is explored in section 2.5.

The two approaches to empowerment considered within this research are relational or structural (Kanter 1977) and psychological (Conger and Kanungo 1988) are contained in sections 2.6. Section 2.7 looks into structural empowerment and the underlying principles of self-efficacy (Bandura 1994) and agency (Giddens 1994) are explored in section 2.8. Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) cognitive model of psychological empowerment and Spreitzer's (1995) multidimensional view of empowerment are explained in sections 2.9 and 2.10 respectively. Further refinements to psychological empowerment (Spreitzer 1996, Logan and Ganset 2007 and Wang and Lee 2009) and the implications for line managers are considered in section 2.11. The impact of empowerment on job performance (Tuuli and Rowlinson 2009) and other approaches to measuring empowerment and its effects and outcomes are provided in section 2.12. Section 2.13 considers the how the leadership style of the line manager can impact on the empowerment experience. Section 2.14 considers performance management and its relationship to psychological empowerment. The researcher's decision to research empowerment using both structural and psychological empowerment as the frame of reference is explained in section 2.18.

The overall objective of this chapter is to investigate how the literature impacts on the understanding of the empowerment experience and informs the approach to research and the research question.

2.2. The changing world of work

The Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century emphasised work as a place for rules, procedures and control. In 1886 Frederick W. Taylor explored an approach to management that he called scientific management that lead him to develop a utilitarian view of workers, in which efficiency and productivity lead to business profit. No doubt Taylor has left a lasting legacy on organisations in terms of the measuring tasks, the drive for efficiency and seeing employees as a utilitarian resource, which would seem to be opposite of the principles of empowerment which encourages ownership, involvement and that employees are individuals with differing needs and characteristics. The researcher notes the historical context for organisational culture, and will explore with interviewees how ownership and involvement are encouraged.

Mary Parker Follett (1918) was one of the first writers to move forward the exploration of power and gave a more optimistic view of management, bringing the American ideal of democracy to the workplace and offering a counter balance to Taylor (1886). Follett (1918) accepted power in organisations she distinguished between power with and power over, arguing that the power with concept should be adopted by organisations, so that people learn to work together, to co-operate and that power came from function rather than an elite group. She believed that scientific management has produced efficiency, but at the expense of civility and that "democracy rests on the well-grounded assumption that society is neither a collection of units nor an organism but a network of human relations" (Clegg 2008: 73 quoting Follett 1918: 142). The function of leadership in organisations was to foster partnership and coordination, and to deal with conflict by negotiation so that both sides would be respected and their interests preserved. Her term for power over was coercive power, and power with was coactive power, and she believed that promoting democratic governance of organisations encouraged

empowerment. Subsequent researchers on power in organisations developed Follett's stance, in the Hawthorne experiment (1950) and the writing of Elton Mayo (1942) and the Human Relations School emphasis was placed on informal work relations, and individual human needs, personal motivations and job satisfaction. It would seem that no matter what position a writer on organisational empowerment takes, one central theme is social relations and power relations. The researcher takes heed of the distinctions between coercive and coactive power, and the concept of democratic governance. To what extent can line managers be truly collaborative? How do line managers believe they use coactive power, and do team members experience this? The sharing of power, involvement and the passing over of responsibility would seem to be at the heart of the empowerment experience.

In the 1960s and 1970s some organisations decided to involve their employees by using job enrichment programmes that offered employees some elements of control and gave feedback on their performance (Buchanan 1979). Employees jobs were enriched to offer broader job roles and more decision-making authority, both of which were deemed to increase job satisfaction and offer intrinsic motivation. Companies such as Mars, Proctor and Gamble, and General Motors identified that intrinsic motivation was an element of job satisfaction (Walton 1985).

The word empowerment became popular in management books in the 1980s, typified by In Search of Excellence by Peters and Waterman (1982). The central message of Peters and Waterman's (1982) book was that organisations should move away from bureaucracy, control and hierarchy, instead move towards trusting employees more, involving employees and giving them greater discretion to serve customers.

The late 1980s and 1990s saw a move towards lean production, responsive organisations and innovation. Writers such as Drucker (1988) and Kanter (1989) explored de-bureaucratisation, de-layer, de-centralisation and a move towards project-team based working. This new approach suggested that managers promoted team working, empowerment and high trust, and that

employee's knowledge should be utilised much more (Hyman and Mason 1995, Walton 1985). The Total Quality Movement (TQM) and quality circles became popular during this period.

It is against this short historical backdrop that this researcher finds her curiosity about how people in organisations experience empowerment today. Does Taylorism still have validity in organisations? Are employees involved and trusted? What are the power and social relations in organisations today? The researcher will relate these reflections to the interview questions.

2.3.   The foundations of empowerment

Empowerment stems from approaches and concepts that were designed to democratise the workplace, and two key influencers were McGregor (1960) and Likert (1961). McGregor's X and Y theory (1960) suggested there were two approaches to managing people and how workers contribute to managing their own work situation. The theory X manager is authoritarian, and the theory X employee dislikes work, preferring to be directed and avoids responsibility. The theory Y manager has a participative style, and theory Y employees often seek responsibility, are self-directed and seek to achieve organisational objectives without management control or the threat of punishment. Coupled with the work of Likert (1961) on moving management styles beyond the traditional command and control approach these writers gave encouragement to a variety of participative management studies which explored how encouraging open communication, identifying the motivations and needs of employees and co-operation between managers and employees impacted on productivity and quality.

2.3.1. Job enrichment

Job enrichment became prominent in the 1960s and 1970s as a move away from the Taylor approach to work simplification in that people were given a whole piece of work to do and then held accountable for the successful completion of the task. Its growth spread from production line work to other

forms of work, and work was either enriched horizontally or vertically. Horizontal expansion gave people more steps in the task process, and vertical expansion gave people responsibility for control tasks such as judging quality and work scheduling. Hackman and Lawler (1971) found that unless people experienced both horizontal and vertical enrichment they would not feel psychologically responsible for their job performance, and that job enrichment will only work if employees are motivated by high-order needs such as personal growth, achievement, autonomy and competence, the same underpinnings for psychological empowerment. The researcher will ask questions about the scale and type of enrichment that team members possibly encounter. Empowerment implies both horizontal and vertical expansion, and people believing they are responsible for their own job performance. Is this possible in large complex organisations?

Empowerment has links to participative management practises, with Lawler (1986) advocating the link between empowerment and practises such as quality circles, job enrichment and participative management, where more day to day decisions are given to employees to decide, and recognised that people need to be motivated to become involved. These approaches were founded on the idea that employees could be trusted to make decisions about their work and gain more knowledge about their organisation which would then result in higher levels of productivity. Three stages of involvement were identified: suggestion involvement where people offered ideas, job involvement in which people designed the methods needed to do their job, and high involvement where employees could take decisions that impacted the organisation beyond the boundary of their job. Lawler (1986) identified four facets of high involvement: information about the performance of the organisation, reward for job performance, sharing knowledge that helps employees to contribute to organisational performance, and distributing power so that employees can influence organisational direction. These are aspects that can be explored during interviews: do team members have knowledge about the performance of the business? Can they see how they contribute to this performance? Do team members believe that they can influence business

strategy? What are the actions and behaviours line managers do that encourage and support these outcomes?

Block (1987) popularised the term empowerment and encouraged managers to move from traditional business bureaucracy to encouraging a more entrepreneurial approach to management. Choosing this entrepreneurial path is based on three choices:

1. Greatness not maintenance
2. Courage not caution
3. Autonomy not dependency.

The emphasis on creating interesting jobs, honest and open communication, taking personal responsibility and employees focusing on their responsibilities gave managers a new perspective on their role. The line manager role became a consultative one, encouraging employees to define their own work objectives, to be more self-managing and to take ownership of their goals and outcomes. One phrase from the book that has become popularised is:

"Better to proceed than to wait for direction. Better to ask forgiveness than ask permission. Better to be seen as stubborn than incompetent" (Block 1987: 16).

2.3.2. Participatory management: high commitment and high involvement

Much has been written about participatory management with many terms being used and the challenge is that there would not seem to one unitary construct for this area of management. Cotton, Vollrath et al (1988) completed a literature search of over 400 articles, and found that there were six variables of participatory management which range from participation in work decisions, consultative participation, short term participation, informal participation, employee ownership and representative participation, and concluded that participation is most effective in increasing job performance and employee satisfaction when employees are given the opportunity to have a large

influence on the decision, and when the participation is direct, and happens over the long term.

High commitment management has the outcome of "eliciting strong commitment to the organisation, so that behaviour is primarily self-regulating rather than controlled by sanctions and pressures external to the individual, and consequently relations within the organisation are based on high trust" (Wood and Albanese 1995: 217). Management create the conditions for employees to become more involved in the organisations success. Wood and de Menezes (1998) highlight a list of practises associated with high commitment management which include career ladders, commitment to employee development and removal of job descriptions, which relate to the structural approach to empowerment.

Ahanotu (1998) found that empowerment goes beyond quality circles and continuous improvement programmes, to workers actively contributing to innovation, and having access to knowledge of design and processes. High involvement goes beyond role empowerment to involve individuals beyond the boundary of their job description into engaging in organisational improvement, continuous improvement and broader systems that impact the wider organisational operation that include employee voice (Wood and de Menezes 2014). High involvement encompasses role empowerment, and goes wider in consisting of four types of involvement: role involvement (the individual has responsibility to manage their own work tasks), direct involvement in the organisation (such as team work and quality circles as explored by Lawler 1986), employee voice (giving participation in employee relations) and economic involvement (which gives employees an incentive to contribute for the good of the organisation). Wood and de Menezes (2014) found no strong evidence that all four approaches are used together, and that high involvement can have a positive effect on performance, but also may have the negative consequence of increasing employee anxiety, and recommended that organisations focus on promoting self-efficacy to minimise these effects.

There can be negative consequences of what Baloff and Doherty (1989) call high commitment organisations. They focus on the impact on employees and highlight that people may be subject to peer pressure against what can be seen as collaboration with employers in ways that potentially endanger employee interests. The second negative impact was that managers may seek to coerce employees to participate, or may retaliate if performance results are poor. The final negative impact is that employees may find it difficult to adapt back to a more rigid traditional style of management at the end of a task involving high levels of participation. The researcher considers that having all four approaches to be the "ultimate state" and that in her organisational consulting experience people may aspire to all four, but in practise not all four are present. It will be interesting to explore with line managers how they encourage involvement, and how team members experience this intention. Indeed the negative consequences as highlighted by Baloff and Doherty (1989) maybe present and hinder team members from being involved.

The challenge of peer group pressure can be seen as people wish to conform to a set of behavioural norms for the group, and employee participation could be viewed as deviant behaviour if the group is unfamiliar with the participative approach. Baloff and Doherty (1989) highlighted a range of negative consequences ranging from members of the wider employee group explaining to participants the negative consequences of participation, to excluding participants from membership of the wider group, all of which are designed to result in "internal conflict, possible feelings of guilt, and a lower motivation to participate and to work creatively." (Baloff and Doherty 1989: 54). The impact of manager self-interest is highlighted in the paper, exploring that if there is organisational pressure on a manager to be a participative manager, or if career progression is at stake a manager will potentially resort to coercive pressure on employees to participate. These negative impacts on employees can be mitigated in a number of ways. If the duration of the participation is long, such as over six months, this can have a positive impact, as can the intensity or exclusivity of the activity. If the activity is purely part-time, with employees spending the balance of their time on normal tasks, the resulting

impact on motivation can be reduced. If the participatory approach is a one-off or transient approach when the employee experiences 're-entry' it will have a more negative effect on motivation than a sustained commitment to employee participation. The article has served to highlight areas of research including how managers approach empowerment, as well as exploring any negative impacts of empowerment.

Ramsay, Scholarios and Harley's (2000) researched the impact of high performance work systems (HPWS) on performance, following from Huselid's (1995) supposition that HPWS "can improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of a firm's current and potential employees, increase their motivation, reduce shirking, and enhance retention of quality employees while encouraging non performers to leave the firm." (Huselid 1995: 635). The researchers distinguished between high commitment management (HCM) in which managers reduce their need for control and monitoring, and high involvement management (HIM) where employees take the initiative and make productive decisions. Both approaches have in common trustworthy information flows, training to give employees the capability to contribute, progressive employee relation's procedures and performance incentives. The researchers used the WERS 1998 survey results to assess if HCM or HIM had any positive impact on workplace performance and employee outcomes such as satisfaction. Their findings highlighted that HCM and HIM had no robust impact on employee outcomes, and high performance work systems such as TQM, team autonomy, job control, upward communication and profit related pay had positive impacts on workplace performance indicators such as labour productivity, financial performance and product quality. Potentially there are four options as to the lack of evidence for the positive impact of these practises: the statistical model the researcher's used may not be complex enough to measure the subtle nuances of any potential positive effect of employee involvement and empowerment processes, managers when implementing high performance work systems are not competent at doing so, employees actively or passively resist manager processes, or simply that there are not any measurable benefits for employees. The researcher notes the potential challenge in measuring the outcomes of empowerment.

This section informs the researcher's understanding of empowerment by appreciating the different approaches to employee involvement, and wonders is empowerment just employee involvement under another name? This researcher will explore with line managers and team members the detail in how they work, engage and empower.

2.4.   Power exploration

Power concepts were explored in Power and Organisations (Clegg, Courpasson, Phillips 2006) where the authors begin by saying "power is to organisations as oxygen is to breathing" (Clegg et al 2006: 3), highlighting that power can be a positive force, although the majority of their writing explored the more negative aspects of power, citing Aldrich "the concentration of power in organisations contributes not only to the attainment of large scale goals, but also to some of the most troublesome actions affecting us...We might view the growth of organisational society as a record of people enslaved and dominated by organisations" (Aldrich 1999: 7). This would seem a strong backdrop to explore the concept of empowerment.

Talcott Parsons also explored the concept of power in the mid 1960s; he defined power as the "generalised capacity to influence the allocation of resources for attaining collective goals." (Clegg 2008: 193). He wrote that power was a legitimate mechanism for regulating commitments and obligations where individuals are socialised to achieve within a specific context, and based on organisational norms power has a positive effect. Barnes (1988) refers to Parsons' views on power as "normative determinism" (Barnes 1988: 26) in that norms are shared, and where they are not shared socialisation has failed to occur. This work highlighted the impact of norms on power, and this would seem to be a useful line of enquiry for this research. Parsons has been criticised for overlooking the hierarchical power role of senior managers in organisations, Clegg quotes Habermas (1987) as saying that a "person taking orders is structurally disadvantaged in relation to a person with the power to give them" (Habermas 1987: 271), where the person giving the order has the ultimate sanction of withdrawing employment, and

this power is not reciprocal in that the impact of a person deciding to leave employment may not have the same impact as being told to leave employment. Senior management are seen as having legitimate authority, and so have the power to set goals, whereas more junior organisation members can only participate in the process if invited to do so, so they are at a structural disadvantage. By selling my labour to the organisation legitimate power is given to those in authority, which could be seen as a fair exchange, although this can be dependent on the alternatives to this employment, and so power with may never be a reality, power over maybe the norm. Power over would seem a hierarchical concept, and where the fulfilment of the aspirations of empowerment may struggle to be realised in organisations. This work has added a layer of detail to the exploration of power in that it has highlighted that power is not absolute if you are a manager: your place in the hierarchy has an impact on the power you hold. This exploration of power would seem binary – you either have power or you do not. The researcher's experience is much more complex than this in that power comes from several sources not just hierarchical position. In the two organisations participating in this research team members have power in the form of technical expertise, professional networks and organisational understanding, sometimes much more so than the line manager.

2.5.   Power in the workplace

It would seem that power can do good as well as harm, and Gidden's (1994) idea of structuration aids understanding in that agency (such as actions) interact with the wider social structure (the context of my action), and the interplay between these two factors determines in constructiveness of the outcome. For instance an employee does not have complete free will to do whatever they want at work, and the social structure can not one hundred per cent determine people's actions; it is the interplay between and structure. There would seem to be a link to Lukes (2005) work, in that the three-dimensional view of power acknowledges the significance of the social context, and how social patterns create power relations: "the bias of the system is not sustained simply by a series of individually chosen acts, but

also, most importantly, by the socially structured and culturally patterned behaviour of groups, and practices of institutions, which may indeed be manifested by individual's inaction." (Lukes 2005: 26).

One area of interest is the increasing use of technology and the impact of up-skilling employees on the decentralisation of power and responsibility. It could be suggested that more highly skilled employees require less direct supervision and control, and they have the skills to be more self-managing. Gallie et al (1998) researched this area, and found that there was a strong relationship between skill change and task discretion (an element in empowerment), which could not be explained by factors such as age and length of service and resulted in employers relying more on the judgement of employees, giving them more responsibility and discretion as their skill levels increased. When people were asked if the responsibility involved in their job had increased, decreased or stayed the same over the past five years the majority of employees (65%) has experienced an increase, whilst only 26% had reported responsibility staying the same, and 8% a reduction. This did vary by class of employment, with the increase in responsibility the most marked among managerial and professional, and technical/supervisory employees, whilst semi- and non-skilled staff had the least increase in responsibility, but this class still had a large 50% increase in responsibility. This highlights a potential shift in the role of a line manager, in that an increase in autonomy and discretion shifts the line manager from management control. This researcher is aware that in both organisations involved in her research there is a high use of technology, and that participants can be classed as managerial and professional. This would highlight an expectation that levels of responsibility have increased. Gallie et al (1998) did not research if there are any negative consequences to this increase such as work related stress. The researcher will be alert to any indications that responsibility and empowerment negatively impact stress and pressure.

The authors went on to explore control in the workplace and how employee commitment could not flourish in the traditional framework of management

control, finding that the move away from control is a necessary antecedent to employee autonomy and empowerment. This researcher will explore the role of the line manager when a team member is highly empowered in terms of their behaviours, their expectations and their measures for role success.

Richard Edwards (1979) stated that control systems show the opposing nature of interest between employers and employees, and that control systems are developed to increase compliance and prevent conflict between employees. Edwards (1979) highlights three stages in the development of control systems, firstly the power over staff with the foreman or supervisor having tight direct control over work processes, resources and employees. The second stage is technical control, stemming from the scientific management school and Frederick Taylor where control is exercised by work processes and payment by results that are used today in environments where work is standardised and routine. The third stage is bureaucratic control, initially developed in large organisations to control administrative and technical people, using systems such as performance management, career progression and less formal codes of conduct or values statements. Throughout these stages of control development Edwards (1979) states that control over workers will never reduce, only its mechanisms may alter with the advent of technology or market demands. Control will be developed to maintain the power of employers, to counter any potential power or influence from organisations such as trade unions that oppose that power. Offering any form of task discretion is perceived as a weakness of work intensity, and more complex forms of control will be constantly developed to ensure that control delivers productivity. Edwards (1979) writing would seem to be in opposition to concepts of empowerment, coactive power and high involvement. This work does highlight how line managers define their role in an empowered relationship, and are there more complex forms of control present?

Edwards (1979) prediction of supervisors maintaining control is endorsed by Gallie (1998) who found that a minimum of 70% of respondents in all classes of employment said their supervisor influenced the tasks they should do, and the quality of their work. This would also indicate that even complex or

knowledge work can be controlled, potentially challenging other findings. Edwards (1979) stages of control proposal and the research of Gallie (1998) indicate that control systems have expanded, almost everyone is supervised, although in the managerial and profession classes of employment management supervision is reducing in favour of personal discretion and responsibility. The widespread use of mechanisms such as appraisal systems and other forms of bureaucratic control apply to four in ten employees, with this form of control being more prevalent in the managerial and professional classes of employment. It would seem that task discretion does not significantly alter the traditional management role of work supervision. This highlights the potential impact of the appraisal systems present in the participating organisations, and the researcher will explore their use, their influence and if experienced as a form of control. The researcher's own experience is varied, ranging from those that are controlling and create conformity, to others that have a more development and self-ownership focus. It will be interesting to explore with participants their views.

Nord (1978) summarised the challenge of changing the distribution of power: "We seem to forget that individuals who currently have power, whether they are in business, government or the labour movement, have an interest in not changing the distribution of power too much." (Nord 1978: 674). The challenge for management in a capitalist system is that they are there to create profit, and the view that hierarchy is the primary means for creating this profit would seem prevalent. A weakening of the hierarchy was introduced by Friedman (1977) who explored the concept of responsible autonomy, as defined as "the maintenance of managerial authority by getting workers to identify with the competitive aims of the enterprise so that they will act responsibly with a minimum amount of supervision" (Friedman 1977: 48). The interplay between line managers having power and team members wanting power would seem to highlight a boundary of employee discretion on the one hand and the hierarchical enterprise on the other. The need for managers to monitor and measure employee performance was highlighted by Ripley and Ripley (1992) who wrote that employee discretion would still be limited, unless

employees became truly self-directing, which would then lead to the manager role changing or the manager role being extinct.

The role of the line manager in an empowerment relationship seems to highlight the shift between the hierarchical power over approach to management, and the power sharing, encouraging autonomy approach of empowerment. This changing role of the line manager will explored later in this chapter.

2.6.   Two approaches to empowerment

The term empowerment originally came from writers on societal change and feminism, and in a literal sense empowerment is about giving power to somebody else: "it concerns an individual's power and control relative to others, as well as the sharing of power and control, and the transmitting of power from one individual to another with less" (Wilson, 2004: 167).

There are two approaches to empowerment in the workplace: the relational, mechanistic, top-down or structural approach to empowerment, and the psychological, individual initiated approach to empowerment. Relational or structural empowerment depends on higher levels in a hierarchy sharing their power with lower levels in the hierarchy, as opposed to psychological empowerment that stems from individuals believing that they are empowered (Conger and Kanungo 1988). Essentially structural empowerment is a means or an approach by line managers and organisations to empower their employees, and psychological empowerment is an outcome. Line managers may take action and effort to empower their teams, and yet if their team members do not have the desire or cognitive will to be empowered, these efforts will be unsuccessful (Conger and Kanungo 1988). These two approaches will now be explored, looking for commonalities, differences and implications for this research.

It seems as though the pre-requisites and contexts most supportive of empowerment had been largely overlooked until Conger and Kanungo's work

in 1988. The authors found that empowerment could be viewed as either a relational construct or a motivational construct. The literature on the relational construct power is used to describe the power one person or group has over another person or group. The source of this power comes from a variety of sources including the dependence of one person relative to another (Pfeiffer 1981), or at an organisational level the abilities or skills of a particular group of staff needed by an organisation (such as maintenance workers, Crozier 1964), or at an interpersonal level the sources of power are the structural position of one group relative to another, or a person's personal characteristics (French and Raven, 1959), or lastly a person's expertise or specialised knowledge (Bacharach and Lawler 1980). At the interpersonal level the bases of power have been identified as legitimate, expert, referent, coercive and reward (French and Raven 1959). Legitimate power is also termed positional power and is derived from the position an individual holds in the hierarchy relative to other members of the organisation. For this power to be used effectively the power holder must be deemed to have earned it legitimately by mechanisms such as promotion, job titles or job descriptions. Expert power comes from having knowledge or expertise in a specific area, and the opinions and decisions of individuals with expert power are held in high regard, and can be of great influence within organisations. People with expert power often perform tasks that are critical to organisational success, and these people can be perceived as vital to organisational success. Referent power comes from the relationship that an individual forms within the organisation, and these people are often deemed to have charisma, and foster respect and trust from colleagues. This form of power can also come from an individual's personal connections or network with people more senior in the hierarchy. Coercive power comes from a person's ability to have influence over others by using threats, sanctions or punishments. Coercive power can control the behaviour of others by ensuring compliance to policies and procedures. The final base of power is reward power that comes from a person's ability to influence the distribution of incentives within the organisation. These incentives include promotions, salary increases and other benefits, and can be motivational to employees if allocated fairly, and be demotivational if applied unfairly.

It is implied that when you have any of these sources of power to a greater level than someone else you are more likely to achieve your desired outcomes or goals than those with a lesser amount of power. Empowerment in this context is seen as the manager or leader sharing their power with their team, in this case power is the control of resources or a formal position of authority within an organisation. Within the relational construct it is implied that those who have power are more likely to gain their desired outcomes and a dependence culture can be fostered, which can be counter to empowerment which occurs when a manager shares their power, as Burke describes it "to empower implies the granting of power – delegation of authority" (Burke 1996: 51). In the relational empowerment approach line managers give their power to team members, offering them the opportunity to stretch their competency, to do more and to be more productive. This can result in a negative reaction from team members if they do not want this additional power or responsibility, as Kerfoot and Knights (1995) found in that senior managers still had ultimate responsibility for performance, and that there was no proof that passing down this responsibility to team members was successful.

Relational empowerment does not address the experience of the team member, in that by purely passing power and resources on to employees it may not mean that employees are automatically empowered. The psychological needs or cognitive state of the employee is overlooked, and empowerment programmes could fail because employees are not ready to take this empowerment and trust. It would seem to be valid to explore both relational and psychological empowerment to have a fuller picture of the experience.

This researcher will include an exploration of the power relationship between line manager and team member. Do team members perceive themselves as having any power? When they are empowering their team members do line managers perceive any power being transferred? How does the line manager experience this? How does this impact their own self-esteem?

Psychological empowerment sees power as motivational, and that people are assumed to have a need for power in terms of being able to influence and control (McClelland 1975), and this power need is met when we believe we can cope with events and have the skills to be successful, whereas our need for power is not met where we believe we are unable to cope with our situation and experience helplessness or powerlessness (Abramson, Garber and Seligman 1980). This links to the need for self-determination (Deci 1975) and a belief in personal self-efficacy (Bandura 1986) in that individual's actions can enhance this feeling of self-efficacy, and increase our sense of power (a further exploration of Deci and Bandura is in section 2.8). This view of empowerment sees empowerment as motivating and enabling a person's performance, whereas structural empowerment is giving authority and resources. This difference in view can lead to confusion about what empowerment actually means, Whetten and Cameron (1984) write that both aspects of empowerment imply a gaining of control over resources and developing personal efficacy, and Neilsen (1986) defined empowerment as both giving team members resources and increasing their feeling of self-worth. Conger and Kanungo's (1988) work majored on empowerment as a motivational construct in terms of enabling rather than delegating, and they defined empowerment as "a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organisational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organisational practises and informal techniques of providing efficacy information" (Conger and Kanungo 1988: 474). The authors highlighted five stages in the process of empowerment, as shown in table one below.

Stage one	Stage two	Stage three	Stage four	Stage five
Conditions leading to a psychological state of powerlessness	The use of managerial strategies and techniques	To provide self-efficacy information to subordinates using for sources	Results in empowering experience of subordinate	Leading to behavioural effects
Organisational factors Supervision Reward system Nature of job	Participative management Goal setting Feedback system Modelling Contingent/ competence based reward Job enrichment	Enactive attainment Vicarious experiences Verbal persuasion Emotional arousal Remove conditions listed in stage one	Strengthening of effort Performance expediency or belief in personal expediency	Initiation / persistence of behaviour to accomplish task objectives.

Table one from Conger and Kanungo (1988: 475) Five stages in the process of empowerment.

This table shows how managers can remove feelings of powerlessness in their team members, and then build up self-efficacy that leads to a team member feeling empowered and then behaving as if they are empowered at stage five. When moving to the psychological construct power and control are seen as motivators, and people are seen as motivated when they have power to cope with events and situations (McClelland, 1975 and Abramson, Garber and Seligman, 1980), so that people can satisfy their need for self-determination (Deci, 1975) or personal self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Any management intervention that strengthens self-determination or self-efficacy can increase an individual's sense of power. This links to expectancy theory (Lawler 1973) that states an individual's desire to increase effort to achieve a task will depend on two expectations, that firstly the effort will result in a desired performance level and that secondly performance will produce the

desired outcomes. The first expectancy is termed as the self-efficacy expectation by Bandura (1986), and the second as outcome expectation. When people are empowered their level of self-efficacy is increased, they have a belief that they can work hard and have a sense of optimism, irrespective of their expectation of achieving the desired outcome, which is popularly termed the "can do" attitude. Line managers have a role to play in acknowledging the effort a team member gives even if the team member does not achieve the desired outcome in that the act of acknowledging this effort will enhance the team members feeling of self-efficacy. This has implications for the skill of the line manager in giving praise, feedback and acknowledgement. The researcher will explore with participants at which stage they are experiencing empowerment and indeed if the experience is a linear one. Conger and Kanungo's (1988) research did not explore how line managers experience this building up of team member self-efficacy and removing feelings of powerlessness. Do the line managers feel that their own role is reduced? How do they feel now that power has been transferred? What are their personal motivations for empowering team members?

2.7   Structural or relational empowerment

Thomas and Velthouse (1990) suggested that the organisational environment can have a significant impact on how people perceive their own empowerment. They highlighted the potential of organisational processes to leave employees feeling powerless to realise their full potential, and that by removing or changing these conditions employees may thrive and reach their potential. In this sense structural or relational empowerment can appear mechanistic and involve a distribution of power.

Allowing workers, or indeed giving workers, more power, discretion and problem solving opportunities implies a level of trust in those employees. Trust is defined as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor" (Mayer, Schoorman and Davis 1995: 710). Trust in the competence and abilities of team members would seem critical to

empowerment success. Relational or structural empowerment could be said to be delegation, in that decision-making power is passed to an employee from the line manager. However Leana (1987) defined delegation as temporarily transferring decision-making to a team member, whereas empowerment is seen as giving continuous authority to a team member to make decisions. This would seem to answer Conger and Kanungo's (1988) concerns about empowerment being seen as purely as delegation. The researcher will explore how participants see any differences between delegation and empowerment. Is there a giving of long term authority to team members?

Three macro environment or organisational factors that contribute to structural empowerment were researched by Matthews, Diaz and Cole (2002). The three factors are the dynamic structural framework, control of workplace decisions and fluidity in information sharing. The dynamic structural framework includes guidelines produced by the company the assist in employee decision making, as well as supervisory style, understanding the vision and company goals. The second factor is the control of workplace decision in that employees are allowed input in all stages of their career, clarity on personal job goals and job responsibilities and control of activities such as scheduling, recruitment, development and goal setting. Lastly fluidity in decision-making was defined as employees having access to all company information concerning their job, and that they can contribute and offer ideas and make informed decisions on their job tasks. Matthews et al (2002) found that all of these three factors affected employee empowerment as defined in Spreitzer's 1995 psychological empowerment scale. This highlights the importance of the work environment in encouraging empowerment. The researcher wonders if all three macro factors are present in organisations? There would seem to be a move to partnership in career planning and performance goals. The third factor of having access to all company information is not often witnessed by the researcher. Company finances, sales figures and company strategy are not often understood by team members, even at managerial or professional levels the existence of these three macro factors maybe utopia in organisations.

Ripley and Ripley (1992) highlight that "empowerment is the vesting of decision making or approval authority to employees where, traditionally, such authority was a managerial prerogative" (Ripley and Ripley 1992: 3) and as such can involve behavioural and organisational changes such as organisational culture and environment. They do not mention specific organisational practises such as performance management, instead their focus is on access to quality improvement processes, a clear company vision and mission, and a common organisational language. The tone of this article is very determined and highlights that senior managers need to act hierarchically: "this requires senior managers to instruct middle managers to evaluate and approve a companywide empowerment programme" (Ripley and Ripley 1992: 8), which would seem counter to one empowerment foundation of self-determination. This focus on relational or structural empowerment would seem one of imposing empowerment on to employees and sees empowerment as a process of "enculturation" (Ripley and Ripley 1992: 11) of beliefs and organisational norms. The tone is one of managers doing empowerment to others rather than the others wanting empowerment. The article highlights the need to train mangers in verbal and listening skills, coaching skills, problem solving skills and in understanding people's motivation and behaviour. Employee training is recommended for team building, quality improvement and an understanding of the company and its goals. The article detailed the requirements for self-management in structural terms in that having well defined boundaries, clear responsibilities, access to resources, decision making authority ad group procedures. This researcher found the tone of the article very hierarchical (doing empowerment to others) and the focus on structural empowerment does give useful insights into what organisations can do to create the systems and processes that encourage empowerment. This researcher increasingly realises that empowerment is a coming together of structural and psychological empowerment, and that one without the other may not be successful.

Seibert, Silver and Randolph (2004) looked at the macro perspective of structural empowerment in terms of organisational structures and policies,

and the micro perspective (psychological empowerment) of motivation. The macro element was defined as the empowerment climate: "a shared perception regarding the extent to which as organisation makes use of structures, policies and practises supporting employee empowerment. The empowerment climate is composed of information sharing, autonomy through boundaries, and team accountability" (Seibert, Silver and Randolph 2004: 334). The researchers found that the empowerment climate was an important factor in work performance and when psychological empowerment was also present job performance was positively affected. The researchers highlighted that empowerment climate is an important aspect for organisations working to foster psychological empowerment and that "the empowerment climate explained 22 percent of the variance in work-unit performance in this study" (Seibert, Silver and Randolph 2004: 343). The research also highlights the importance of organisational structures and practises in supporting psychological empowerment, again reinforcing that when both structural and psychological empowerment are present the experience of empowerment is more successful.

This researcher agrees with Seibert et al (2004) that a broader view of empowerment climate is useful, and that climate should take into account other management structures and practises and this researcher suggests that this should include organisational systems and policies and access to resources, specifically performance management, financial budgeting and spend, and access to and influence of organisational strategy.

During this researcher's interviews examples of how managers empower their team members will be explored. Structural or relational empowerment is an important element in the empowerment experience, and the researcher will explore the activities of line managers that contribute to the empowerment experience, as well as how team members experience these line manager activities.

Trust is one theme to explore: how do line managers measure or know that they trust their team member to do a good job? The presence of

organisational practises such as performance management and company communication will be explored in relation to their impact on the empowerment experience. The researcher will compare the views of line managers and team members: does their experience of trust and organisational processes align, or are there any differences?

2.8.   Self-efficacy

An individual's level of self-efficacy can impact on their readiness to be empowered, or to take empowerment. Bandura (1994) defined self-efficacy as "the belief in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (Bandura 1994: 2), which in turn impact an individual's beliefs on how they think, feel behave and motivate themselves. Having a high level of self-efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being, causing difficult tasks to be seen as challenges to be mastered and overcome, and encouraging the setting of personal goals and maintaining a high level of commitment to them. In the course of completing a challenging task if something is intimidating or highlights any deficiencies in capability, an individual can experience a lowering of self-efficacy, and as an individual continually works to develop themselves and increases their capability their self-efficacy increases. Bandura described self-percepts of efficacy as "cognitive mediators of action" (Bandura 1982: 126), with four main influences: "performance attainments; vicarious experiences of observing the performances of others; verbal persuasion and allied types of social influences that one possesses certain capabilities; and physiological states from which people partly judge their capability, strength and vulnerability" (Bandura 1982: 126). These would seem to be activities that managers can influence to support or increase self-efficacy, particularly as enactive attainments have the largest efficacy impact, and one that managers can offer people in terms of task distribution. Bandura (1982) mentions self-directed mastery experiences as offering a mutually enhancing process, in that if a person believes themselves to be capable they will achieve more, which in turn enhances their level of self-efficacy, which in turn enhances their attainment of competency, again these would seem to be

in the realm of influence in the management relationship. Research on self-efficacy in relation to empowerment is mainly focused on the employee and not the line manager. This researcher wonders about the line manager's belief in their own capability, and how the line manager defines their capability once work has been transferred to team members. Is there an influence of the line manager's own manager in encouraging and enabling self-directed mastery? Or is the line manager left with a task vacuum in an empowered team? How does the line manager find their own place or role? This offers a rich line of enquiry within the researcher's interviews.

Conger and Kanungo (1988) identified organisational factors that lead to self-efficacy reducing which include bureaucratic and authoritarian management styles that create dependency, preventing self-expression in the workplace or organisational goals that are not meaningful to employees. Kanter (1977, 1983) also highlighted the impact to employee powerlessness of organisational change, job redesign, communication processes and access to resources. In times of organisational change rules and processes may not be clearly defined, and power and accountabilities can rapidly change. This level of uncertainty can impact employees feeling of competence and control, and has implications for the organisations invited to contribute to this research.

Management style can have a positive impact on self-efficacy by showing confidence and having high performance expectations of team members (Burke 1986), encouraging team members to participate in decision-making (Block 1987), offering autonomy (Kanter 1979) and setting inspirational goals (Bennis and Nanus 1985). This research will look at the practises of line managers and see if any of these behaviours are present.

Agency has some alignment to Bandura's (1981) work on self-efficacy and is defined as the ability to make decisions for yourself and to be responsible for your own actions, which has implications for empowerment. Giddens (1994) introduced the concept of the "autotelic self", which refers to an individual who has "an inner confidence which comes from self-respect, and one where a sense of ontological security originating in basic trust allows for the positive

appreciation of social differences. It refers to a person able to translate potential threats into rewarding challenges." (Giddens 1994: 192).

This section has highlighted the potential impact organisational process and management style can have on self-efficacy. The researcher will explore this impact with team members, as well as how line managers see their actions impacting on the self-efficacy of their team members and themselves.

2.9.   The cognitive model of psychological empowerment

Authors who have built on Conger and Kanungo's (1988) work include Thomas and Velthouse (1990) who developed a cognitive model of empowerment by endorsing the view that empowerment is motivating, following from the definition of power meaning to energise. The authors focused on an individual's view of being given a task to complete by looking at the intrinsic task motivation, which they defined as "those generic conditions by an individual, pertaining directly to the task, that produce motivation and satisfaction" (Thomas and Velthouse 1990: 668). The authors defined task as including activities and a purpose, which follows from Hackman and Oldham's (1980) model of job meaningfulness, and builds on Deci's (1975) model of intrinsic motivation that referred only to activities. This addition of purpose has implications for line managers in how they communicate the importance of the work of their team members. It would seem that one key role of a manager is to assess which elements of a task are positively valued by people, so that the task becomes the central aspect of motivation and empowerment.

Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) cognitive model is shown below and states that an individual's cognition about a task will influence their judgement and behaviour and will impact on the likelihood of an individual starting and completing an empowered task.
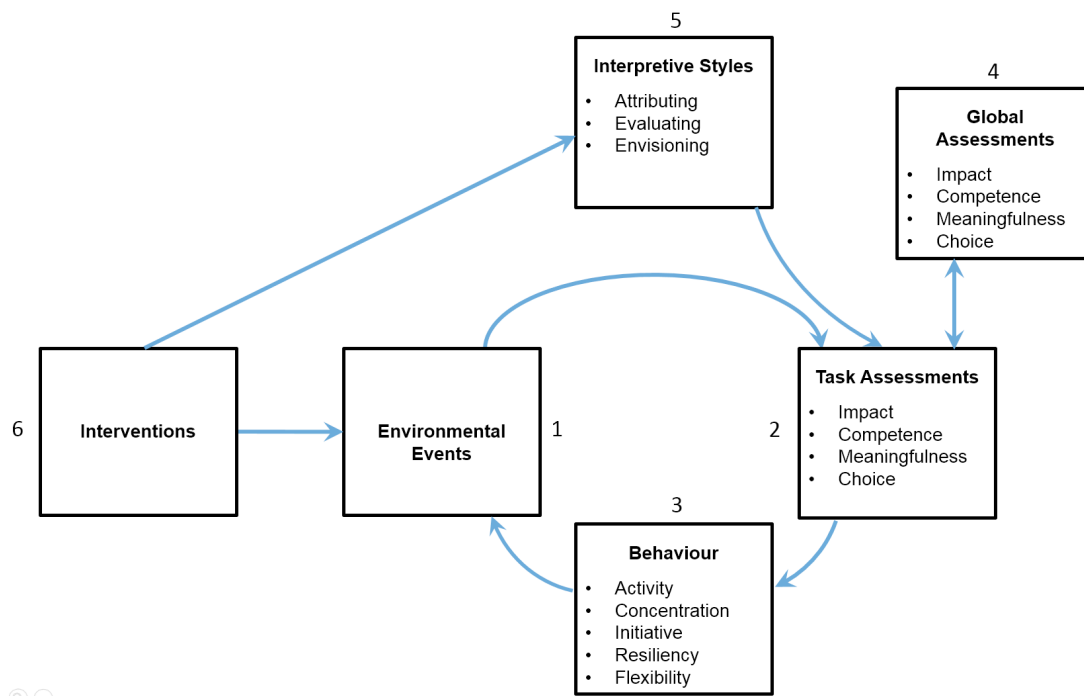
Figure one Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) cognitive model of empowerment.

At the model's core is a cycle of environmental events giving information to the individual about current behaviour consequences and circumstances relevant to future behaviour, which impacts the task assessment in terms of meaningfulness and choice, which then impact on the individual's behaviour. The quality of the task assessment is not purely an objective assessment, instead relying on interpretations or cognitions of reality which are based on the individual's generalised beliefs which include impact, competence, meaningfulness and choice as well as how the individual is interpreting the event (their interpretive style). The individual's interpretative style consists of three subjective cognitions that are evaluation: how well a task is progressing; attribution: what influenced past events; and envisioning: what could happen in the future. An individual's subjective evaluation against these three criteria will influence their decision to undertake the task, and will create positive or negative cycles, having a positive or negative impact on empowerment. The final element of empowering interventions offer methods of influencing the many variables working in this model to increase an individual's task assessment, these interventions come either in the cluster of environmental

events upon which the task assessment is based, or changing the individual's style of interpreting these events. This model would seem to be thorough examination of empowerment, and this researcher wonders if these items and this comprehensive approach is within the awareness of a line manager or team member, and instead this approach is one that researchers have created based on their understanding. This highlights for this researcher the "real-world or groundedness" of research participants, and to avoid leading people by using academic concepts. This model is thorough and attempts to define the steps that happen at an almost unconscious or unaware level for line managers and team members. The researcher is reminded to work from participant's own experience and language.

The four task assessments are consistent with expectancy theory (Lawler 1973) in that impact aligns with performance-outcome expectancy and competence an effort-performance expectancy. Impact is defined as the degree to which a behaviour will make a difference in terms of contributing to achieving the task and purpose (Abramson et al 1980). Competence is defined as the extent to which an individual can complete the task successfully with the skills they have which is aligned to Bandura's (1977) work on self-efficacy, in that low-efficacy can lead to individuals avoiding situations that require skill, which in turn leads to a lack of skill development and skill mastery. Conversely high self-efficacy leads to the individual contributing more effort, being more resilient and achieving higher levels of skill. Meaningfulness is concerned with the implicit value of the task goal or purpose, and this value is made within the individual's own frame of reference or values (Hackman and Oldham 1980). Low levels of meaningfulness can result in detachment, apathy and what it now called disengagement in work, and higher levels of meaningfulness create involvement, focus and commitment (Kanter 1968). The final task assessment is choice, and explores how responsible an individual feels they are for their actions, or locus of causality (de Charms 1968). This is aligned to self-determination (Deci and Ryan 1985), which produces initiative, resilience, creativity and self-regulation, and if individuals feel themselves controlled by events they experienced lower self-esteem, negative emotions and stress. These task

assessments would seem to have greater influence on the success of task achievement, and are within an individual's control and are based on the work of Bandura (1977 and 1986) and Deci (1975). They also capture the essence of expectancy and reinforcement dynamics (Lawler 1973) where the effort, the required level of competence and the meaningfulness of the outcome impact on the level of choice perceived by the individual in taking the task, as well as their influence in during the course of task completion. Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy and internal locus of control are two factors that underpin impact and competence, and this area of task achievement would seem good inclusions into the researcher's qualitative research. The researcher will explore with team members how they monitor their own task achievement: do they have any meaningfulness associated with their work and where does this originate from? The researcher also appreciates the skill level required by the line manager in facilitating this task understanding. Within psychological empowerment there are implications for the competence level of the line manager to encourage empowerment.

Thomas and Velthouse (1990) wrote that behaviour was intrinsically motivated in that it is not dependant on the quality of supervision or reward, so that individuals can work hard and demonstrate flexibility, initiative and resilience. This behaviour would then have a positive outcome and would give more evidence of competence, choice, impact and meaningfulness, leading to a self-fulfilling cycle. This means that task assessments have an impact on behaviour and then outcomes, and can reinforce in a positive or negative way. Low task assessments can lead low initiative, a lack of flexibility and stress, which give the individual evidence of the low task assessment. The writers went on to show that specific leadership styles shape task assessments, and that a charismatic style of leadership (House 1977) can shape competence and meaningfulness task assessments, and transformative leadership (Bennis and Nanus 1985) shapes impact, competence and meaningfulness task assessments. A deeper exploration of leadership styles follows in a later section of this literature review. This researcher is unsure of the validity of this research in that research on employee engagement (MacLeod and Clarke

2009) highlights the role and style of the line manager has a direct impact on the motivation and behaviour of the team member.

The researcher will examine with team members how their cognition about their work tasks influences their performance, whether they see themselves as being empowered and how their line manager influences this cognition. The researcher will also look at how line managers perceive their activities as influencing impact, competence, meaningfulness and choice (Thomas and Velthouse 1990).

2.10. A multidimensional view of psychological empowerment

Spreitzer (1995) took a psychological view of empowerment, developing Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) four cognitions and developed a multidimensional measure of empowerment, and researched how a person's perceptions of their work environment allow people to see work as liberating or constraining. Meaning was defined as the value of a work goal or purpose, and having a fit between work role and the individual's own beliefs, values and behaviours (Hackman and Oldham 1980) contribute to meaning. Competence, or self-efficacy is defined as the individual's belief in their own ability to perform with skill (Gist 1987), and is aligned to effort-performance expectancy (Bandura 1989). Self-determination means an individual's sense of having a choice to initiate and regulate their behaviours and resulting actions (Deci, Connell and Ryan 1989), and can be seen as autonomy for making decisions about work process, pace and effort. Impact is the amount of influence an individual has to contribute to strategy or operating outcomes in their organisation (Ashforth 1989), and is the opposite of learned helplessness (Martinko and Gardner 1982), and is influenced by each specific work context rather than being a general measure such as internal locus of control (Wolfe and Robertshaw 1982).

The research found that the four cognitions of choice, meaningfulness, impact and competence all contributed to an individual's perception that they were empowered. There would appear to be overlap or mutual reinforcement

between these factors, and Spreitzer's (1995) work was not a longitudinal study so these are factors that have a positive effect on empowerment, rather than factors that cause managers to empower. The researcher will take heed of the author's recommendation to look at the impact of leadership on empowerment. Again it is highlighted that psychological empowerment involves people influencing business strategy and operating outcomes. It is unclear how Ashforth (1989) defines this influence. In the experience of this researcher defining business strategy is reserved for a limited number of senior managers and specialists.

Spreitzer (1996) took this work further in researching the influence of the work unit and how empowered individuals impact their social structure. The writer found that the following factors had a positive influence on empowerment: clear lines of responsibility, clear goals and tasks, a manager with a wide span of control, a participative work environment where people feel valued, and having access to the organisation's goals, vision and direction. Access to resources was found not to be related to empowerment, and larger work units offered more meaning to individuals, and those with more education were found to be more empowered (Spreitzer 1996). There are implications for managing highly empowered team members, in that role ambiguity can create stress and goal conflict, and that having clear goals is a determinant of work effectiveness (Locke et al 1981). Thus if a line manager and team members can create role clarity for the team member empowerment is more likely to result. The line manager can also encourage a more participative work climate, encouraging team members to network across the organisation. Access to resources will be ignored for this research, as Spreitzer (1996) wrote that there might have been ambiguity in the research questions relating to resources. One learning here is to be clear and specific when exploring access to resources. The research was not longitudinal, so it cannot be concluded that the structural factors cause individuals to be more empowered, instead it highlights that individuals who report high levels of empowerment tend to report being more involved in the social structures of their workplace than those who report as having lower levels of empowerment.

2.11. Further refinements to psychological empowerment

Empowerment opportunities were found to be limited where employees perform routine, repetitive production or service roles, as the cognitive aspects of self-determination and impact are limited, whereas employees who have complex tasks and enriching job characteristics have more scope for all four cognitive aspects (Yukl and Becker 2006). The work performed by participants is complex and multi-faceted.

Logan and Ganster (2007) found that at the heart of any empowerment effort there should be an explicit activity to increase the decision-making authority of team members, and that this would have an increase in the team member's perception of their control or self-determination. The authors highlighted the need for direct line manager support for empowerment, as without it they felt that employee attitudes would be destructive (Logan and Ganster 2007). This shows the duality of psychological empowerment in that line managers are actively involved in the performance success of highly empowered team members.

The four cognitions of empowerment (meaning, competence, choice and impact) were explored further by Wang and Lee (2009) in terms of how the cognitions interacted with each other. They explored whether the cognitions had an additive effect or interactive effect. An additive effect would imply that the four cognitions are independent of each other, and each has its own effect on outcomes, whereas an interactive effect implies that the cognitions either reinforce or supress the effects of the other cognitions. They wanted to explore what would be the interactions to create the best possible outcome for empowerment from an individual, line manager and organisational perspective, and the outcome they chose to explore was job satisfaction as this has an impact on organisational performance (Ng and Sorensen 2008). They wrote that motivation, turnover and organisational commitment were also linked to job satisfaction (Judge 1993, Martin and Bennett 1996, Williams and Anderson 1991). Job satisfaction is defined as "a pleasurable or positive state that is a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants

from a job and what one perceives it is offering" (Locke 1976: 1300), and Thomas and Tymon (1994) stated that empowerment is more likely to be found at higher levels of job satisfaction. The researcher will explore whether team members experience high levels of satisfaction and motivation, and the influence of the line manager on these two factors.

Wang and Lee's (2009) findings reinforced the gestalt view of the four cognitions in a complex way, and specifically that choice has a weak but negative effect on job satisfaction when both competence and impact are high or low, but choice has a positive effect when one of competence or impact is low, and the other high. Impact had no effect on job satisfaction when choice and competence were either high or low. The effect of impact was positive only when one of the cognitions is high and the other low. Overall they found that high levels of choice and competence reinforce the positive effect of the meaning cognition on job satisfaction. The findings reinforced the helplessness concept in that in a low competence and low impact situation giving more choice lead to less job satisfaction. One concerning finding is that a high level of one cognition can reduce the positive effect of another cognition, which has implications for job stress, well-being (Karasek 1979) and job content (Warr 1987). This highlights that empowerment can have a negative effect on employees when the four cognitions combine in a less than constructive way. This outcome is compounded when as individuals we perceive situations differently, and our ability to handle and manage stress may be more important to our own well-being and job satisfaction that the level of importance we attach to any or all of the four cognitions. The research gave warning that empowerment is not a simple iterative process, and the outcome will be related to how individuals experience each work situation. The researcher mentions the potential negative effects of empowerment on workplace stress and wellbeing. This researcher will be alert to an indicators of stress that can be linked to empowerment. This would seem to be counter to the intention of empowerment being a motivational experience.

This research offered implications for management behaviour in that line managers should pay heed to the impact of all four cognitions, so that if for

example a line manager focuses in increasing a team member's level of choice, they should attend to competence if the level of impact is low or improving the perception of impact if competence is low. This highlights the need for management training to assist line managers in creating optimal conditions for empowerment and job satisfaction success, as well as developing observational skills to spot when a team member is experiencing stress or a lowering of well-being. Wang and Lee (2009) summarised by stating that the meaning cognition had a strong positive effect on job satisfaction, and that if line managers were to focus here they would see job satisfaction increase. If the line manager then became over-ambitious offering high choice, competence and impact when the team member had an average level of meaning would potentially have a negative effect on job satisfaction, performance and hence organisational performance. A quote that sums up this deliberate approach to empowerment is "the way one dimension affects job outcomes is not constant and additive but may be enhanced or suppressed by the levels of the other dimensions or the combination of the other dimensions. Thus, empowerment theorists must focus on identifying optimal combinations that represent balanced or fit situations in different work contexts, which are essential to employee well-being and other job outcomes." (Wang and Lee 2009: 290).

There appears to be a range of views on whether performance related rewards affect self-efficacy, with Bandura (1977) coming from social learning theory perspective, stating that assigning intrinsic motivation has a positive effect on self-efficacy, whereas the cognitive evaluation theory (Deci 1975) would state that the influence of an inner drive for competence attainment has a more positive impact on self-efficacy than reward. It would seem that positive incentives promote interest when they increase or validate self-efficacy, with rewards for performance attainment increasing interest in the task, as opposed to interest declining when they are rewarded irrespective of the level or quality of task attainment (Boggiano and Ruble, 1979, Ross 1976), the key being to provide information on personal competence. The influence of attainable sub-goals that are aligned to future rewards is another aspect of motivation aligned to increasing self-efficacy. Having standards to

measure performance increases an individual's level of satisfaction (Locke, Cartledge and Knerr 1970), and when these are sub goals (small, more immediate task attainment measures) the level of intrinsic interest increases, as opposed to having larger, more future focused goals that are harder to link to current performance and attainment, which can cause disillusionment and a reduction in self-efficacy. This influence of proximal self-motivation is another factor to explore in people's experiences of empowerment. Self-efficacy would seem a foundational factor in the success of empowerment, and one that managers can influence, and will form part of this research. Deci (1975) and Ross (1976) have mentioned reward as an influencer of task attainment and hence potentially empowerment. The researcher will explore any direct or indirect link between empowerment and reward.

Going deeper into the research on psychological empowerment has given the researcher insights that will inform her research in the following ways. Firstly to look at the complexity of the work undertaken by team members. Secondly in relation to the four cognitions do team members perceive themselves to be motivated? And lastly what is the level of self-efficacy for team members, and does the activity of their line manager influence this?

2.12. Measuring psychological empowerment

Tuuli and Rowlinson (2009) set out to explore if psychological empowerment improved job performance, looking at the behavioural perspective of performance in terms of measuring behaviours relevant to the achievement of organisational goals, rather than the outcome perspective of the task consequences of that behaviour. The assumption that psychological empowerment has positive performance benefits has been explored by Thomas and Velthouse (1990) and by Parker and Turner (2002), based on the premise that employees have a more complete understanding of their work than their managers and so can schedule work and resolve work issues. Tuuli and Rawlinson's (2009) research found that psychological empowerment has direct and positive task and contextual behavioural consequences when examined from the intermediate steps of managers

developing people's ability, and hence creating more self-confident workers, which has implications for the researcher's focus on how managers create the conditions for empowerment. Tuuli and Rowlinson (2009) looked at how empowerment impacted on the behaviours relevant to achieving organisational goals. This researcher will explore how team members believe empowerment impacts their work performance, as well as any change in behaviour. The researcher appreciates that there are many external factors that influence job performance, and yet it would seem fundamental to assessing the success of the empowerment experience to look at the impact on job performance.

When comparing empowered employees with those exhibiting the indicators of learned helplessness Campbell and Martinko (1998) found that empowered employees did not transfer ownership to a higher authority, that they felt they had control over tasks, and tended to make less negative statements such as "to tell you the truth I don't know of anything I have experienced that has been great" (Campbell and Martinko 1998: 190). Learned helplessness is defined as "a debilitating cognitive state in which individuals often possess the requisite skills and abilities to perform their jobs, but exhibit suboptimal performance because they attribute prior failures to courses which they cannot change, even though success is possible in the current environment" (Martinko and Gardiner 1982:196). They found that empowered staff reported less tedium, less depression and more persistence, and interestingly more anger, which served as a reaction to a specific external situation that stimulated pro-active and empowered behaviour. The researchers concluded by saying that learned helplessness and empowerment are different ends of the same continuum, and recommended these constructs are better understood so that organisations can better facilitate empowerment. It will be interesting to learn more about what participants see as the opposite to high empowerment.

Dewettinck (2003) highlighting that only 6% of variance in employee performance can be attributed to empowerment, recognising an intermediate stage of performance determinants such as motivation, ability and opportunity

(Liu and Fang 2006 and Blumberg and Pringle 1982). The writers found that power-sharing behaviour predicted and significantly explained individual performance through extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, suggesting an indirect link between empowerment and job performance. Vroom (1964) viewed job performance as a function of motivation (the desire to perform) and ability (the competence to perform), with Peters and O'Connor (1980) adding a person's opportunity to perform as a third element in job performance. These three factors of opportunity, motivation and ability are potentially the link between job performance and empowerment, in that the cognitive aspects of psychological empowerment (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact) link to opportunity, motivation and ability. These three factors have implications for how line managers support team member's empowerment in that line managers can encourage ability development, create opportunity for team members to perform and behave in a motivational way to influence the team member's intrinsic level of motivation. These line manager behaviours will be explored in this research.

When looking at Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) multidimensional conceptualisation of empowerment (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact) empowerment may make a difference to the three expected outcomes of effectiveness, work satisfaction and job-related stress. Spreitzer, Kizilios and Nason (1997) found that meaning was positively related to work satisfaction, competence protects people from job-related stress, self-determination was related to work satisfaction, and that impact was related to effectiveness. Spreitzer et al (1997) highlighted the multi-dimensional view of empowerment and that only by working on all four dimensions of empowerment will positive outcomes be achieved. They found that self-determination had the least influence, which could imply that autonomy is less important than having meaning, competence and impact in the workplace. This could be due to an increase in focus on teamwork and collaboration rather than sole working. This research does have implications for managers, in that in order to gain the greatest benefit from any empowerment activity they should adopt and multi-dimensional view, which is summarised by Liden and Tewksbury (1995): "a piecemeal approach to empowerment sends mixed

signals throughout the organisation and runs a high risk of failing to accomplish the intended outcomes" (Liden and Tewksbury 1995:13). The researcher wonders if there is such a complete experience of all the dimensions, and especially how much scope or freedom there is for impact.

De Val and Lloyd (2003) took another approach to measuring empowerment. They took as their empowerment definition "the involvement of employees in the decision making process, inviting the members of the organisation to think strategically and to be personally responsible for the quality of their tasks, favouring and rewarding employees for behaving always in a way that they consider more suitable to satisfy customers and to improve the organisation's functioning" (De Val and Lloyd 2003:102). They created a measurement tool based on two components: the degree of extent of empowerment and the specific dimensions of empowerment. The degree of extent refers to the hierarchical level of people involved in empowerment. The second component was divided into three dimensions, the first being the formal or informal approach to empowerment, finding that the more formal norms or rules for empowerment the more participative will be the management style (Cole et al 1993), and the more informal approach is due to the relationship between individual and their manager, and does not guarantee a long-term or sustained approach. The second dimension is the direct or indirect way in which the empowerment takes place. Dachler and Wilson (1978) affirm that ideal empowerment is the immediate and direct involvement of members of the organisation in the decision making process, whereas indirect empowerment occurs where an individual influences someone else (Dachler and Wilpert 1978). The final dimension is the degree of influence along the decision making process, from the manager saying the decision has already been taken, to managers delegating decision making to their subordinates (Dachler and Wilpert 1978). In taking these elements the researchers devised a questionnaire used with 1800 companies with statistically significant results, showing that these elements can be used to distinguish the type of empowerment happening in organisations. This distinction of direct or indirect empowerment helps the researcher to see the multifaceted nature of involvement.

King and Ehrhard (1997) take an objective approach to measuring empowerment, and they developed a commitment cohesion assessment measuring loyalty, value congruence and affective commitment, and state that "when an individual reaches the affectively committed stage s/he is truly empowered and is willing to make personal sacrifices, perform beyond normal expectations, work selflessly and can contribute to the organisation's overall effectiveness – for the good of the organisation" (King and Ehrhard 1997: 139). Their definition describes empowerment as the organisation's life force, and is developed by socially indoctrinating individuals into the organisation's norms and values. This seems very far away from the work of Thomas and Velthouse (1990) and Spreitzer (1996). The questionnaire they developed and tested for use by managers and human resource professionals to assess an individual's level of cohesion to their organisation is designed to be used as a tool to enhance employee attraction and working conditions by suggesting activities that managers can do such as providing realistic communications, designing jobs with variety, and designating and reinforcing positive work attributes. This paper highlights that when aspects of empowerment such as self-efficacy are ignored achieving empowerment in an organisation can become an objective and mechanistic process.

The Employee Direct Participation in Organisation Change project (EPOC 2000) surveyed forms of direct participation in organisational change in Europe and defined participation activities as those involving consultation, delegation or devolving decision making on work tasks, work organisation or working conditions in a range of methods including face to face and arm's length one to one arrangements, temporary and permanent groups, and individual and group delegation. The survey found that all forms of direct participation had a positive effect on the economic performance of the organisation (as reported by 90% of respondents). It would seem that delegative participation where management give people increased discretion and responsibility to organise their own work is aligned to empowerment definitions. The EPOC survey found that factors that contributed to the success of direct participation included extensive consultation, qualifications

and vocational training, and using many forms of involvement. The figure experiencing teamwork and group work was 17%, 8% experiencing group delegation and 25% experiencing individual delegation. The number of organisations practising these empowerment practises does seem low, and the report highlights that more companies are following more Tayloristic work concepts. The report does highlight differences in defining empowerment, and that caution is needed in that empowerment could in fact be delegation.

Edwards and Collinson (2002) endorse the rhetoric gap in empowerment practises, their research into six different multi-sector organisations found a high favourability from managers for participative problem solving, and a low understanding of what empowerment meant, with organisational factors such as budgets negatively impacting on empowerment. The researchers also found that managers were more comfortable with the terms involvement and participation, and the challenge may be deeper in that managers do not wish to attempt to create the conditions for successful empowerment. Most managers desired control systems, tight performance monitoring and achieving stated goals. The more fluid approach of empowerment was not what they sought. This research underlines the need to be cautious when using the term empowerment. What motivates line managers to empower when Edwards and Collinson (2002) found that line managers wanted tight control?

The 2004 Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS) is a useful source of recent data about management activity. The book Inside the Workplace (Kersley at al 2006) highlighted that 72% of workplaces promoted team working, with 83% of teams given responsibility for specific products or services, and 61% of team members decided jointly how work should be done. The survey uses five items as a means of measuring influence: the pace, selection of tasks performed, how to do it, the order in which tasks are carried out and the time tasks are started and finished, and shows that overall 38% of workers have a lot of influence over these five factors, which increases to 64% for managers and senior officials, indicating that the higher you are in the organisation's hierarchy the more influence you have. 71% of

respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the scope for being able to use their own initiative, and 58% were satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of influence they had over their job. These results would seem to indicate high levels of empowerment activity, aligned with high levels of employee satisfaction.

The differing results of research measuring empowerment would seem complex, and varied dependant on the definition of empowerment, and the elements that contribute to the definition of empowerment. The researcher will ask participants how they measure the success of empowerment.

2.13. The role of a leader

The role of a manager has changed since McGregor (1960) wrote about theory X and Y managers. The distinction between manager and leader has been made in recent years, with managers seen as working with bureaucratic processes such as planning, organising and controlling, and leaders seen as people who create desire and motivation in others by noncoercive means (Kotter 1985, Zalenik 1989). Nicholls (1987) quote summarises these approaches: "management can get things done through others by the traditional activities of planning, organising, monitoring and controlling – without worrying too much about what goes on inside people's heads. Leadership, by contrast, is vitally concerned with what people are thinking and feeling and how they are to be linked to the environment, to the entity and to the job." (Nicholls 1987: 21).

Alvesson (1992) writes that many managers combine leadership and management activities successfully, giving organisations flexibility of approach, and being able to focus on both the task management and the people engagement aspects. There are many theories of leadership, and this researcher will explore two theories that have been prevalent in the literature since the 1980s: transactional and transformational leadership. Both theories have much to offer an exploration and understanding of empowerment.

Burns (1978) wrote that leadership in organisations was present in two ways, either transactional or transformational. Transactional leadership is based on bureaucracy, authority and legitimacy in the organisation and transactional leaders focus on task-oriented goals, work standards, task completion and employee compliance. Job performance tends to be managed using a rewards and punishment approach. Conversely transformational leadership motivates employees by focusing on values and ideals, leaders articulate the organisation's mission and employees accept the credibility of the leader. Burns (1978) stated that the two types of leader behaviour were separate and existed at either end of a spectrum and that a leader was either transformational or transactional. This researcher thinks that there are more than two leadership approaches, or perhaps more depth than this binary approach may indicate.

Bass and Avolio (1994) and Bass (1990) have deepened the knowledge of transformational leadership by proposing that transformational leadership consists of four dimensions: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration. Idealised influence is defined as behaviour that results in follower admiration, trust and respect of the leader, and involves the leader providing a vision and sense of purpose, putting the needs of the follower over their own needs, risk sharing and being open with followers. Inspirational motivation involves the leader giving meaning and challenge to the follower's work, showing a commitment to the goals of the organisation, encouraging followers through enthusiasm and optimism. Intellectual stimulation encourages new ideas and problem solving and new approaches to job performance from followers. Individualised consideration involves leaders listening, being attentive and valuing follower's achievements, coaching and development needs.

Bass (1990) also gave more depth to transactional leadership by saying there were three elements: contingent reward, management by exception (active) and management by exception (passive). Contingent reward involved the manager rewarding efforts, rewarding good performance and recognising accomplishments. Management by exception (active) meant the manager

observing and taking corrective action if an employee deviated from the agreed rules and standards, and management by exception (passive) involved the manager purely getting involved if agreed standards were not met.

These theories would seem to have some alignment with psychological empowerment in that the transformational leader can increase follower's self-efficacy (Bandura 1994) by giving feedback, providing opportunities for growth of competence and mastery, and encouraging a high level of commitment to goals. These activities are also aligned to Thomas and Velthouse (1990) writing on the individual's interpretive style in that whilst accepting these three cognitions are in the individual's domain, the line manager can encourage evaluation by giving feedback, learning to enhance attribution and offering a vision which could impact envisioning.

Transformational leaders can also create a climate where the four cognitions of psychological empowerment (Spreitzer 1995) are encouraged to be developed by the individual by highlighting the value of the job holder's work, encouraging competence belief by giving feedback and opportunities to learn and grow, offering opportunity for increased self-determination and communicating more about the vision and mission of the organisation to enhance impact.

The structural approach to empowerment gives line managers a different role from the one of directly controlling resources (Mathieu et al. 2006) into one of enabling team members to create their own controls by creating their own self-imposed goals and priorities (Purcell and Hutchinson 2007). This does imply a line management skill set of clear communication, encouragement, giving feedback and enabling development of competency. This could be counter to the 'traditional' view of controlling line managers (den Hartog, Boselie & Paauwe, 2004), and is one where the line manager creates the climate for the accountability for work tasks to transfer to a team member, and trusts that the individual can complete the task, and potentially follow a different process that the line manager would have done and get a successful outcome. This follows

from Kirkman and Rosen (1999) who found that a team leader's empowering leadership behaviours were positively linked to team member empowerment, and the behaviours included developing a team members sense of self-control, encouraging responsibility and autonomy, and inviting team member input. Furthermore, Chen et al (2007) found that leadership climate had a positive relationship with team empowerment (Chen, Kirkman, Kanfer, Allen & Rosen, 2007). The researcher will investigate how line managers assess their own skill level in the areas of clear communication, encouragement, giving feedback and enabling development. This will be compared with how team members experience these skills. It also shows the importance of skill development, and the researcher will explore if both organisations support line manager skill development.

Following from Bandura's (1981) writing on self-efficacy a manager's role in empowerment can be seen as promoting a person's favourable beliefs in themselves and their competence, so their personal expectations of their effectiveness are increased. An increase in self-efficacy leads to people putting in more effort, being more persistent and resilient in the face of organisational obstacles and challenges. It will be interesting to see in this research what specific activities managers do that contributes either positively or negatively to self-efficacy. Writers have also researched how the context of the organisation can increase or decrease self-efficacy, with factors such as bureaucracy and authoritarian management styles (Block 1987) fostering dependency and less meaningful goals. Other factors that can negatively impact of self-efficacy include reward systems, job design, competitive pressures and organisational change (Nadler 1980, Kanter 1979 and 1983, Tichy and Devanna 1986). This research will investigate the context in which the senior managers from the two organisations operate in to see if they fall into the more constructive, self-efficacy promoting contexts.

One aspect that would be influential for empowerment to be successful is working in partnership, with Rowlands (1998) stating "we need to move away from any notion of empowerment as something that can be done to people or for people. Empowerment is important not as an instrumentalist notion or

rhetorical device, but it is an active tool which, if used thoughtfully, can be used to achieve change with justice" (Rowlands 1998: 30). This implies a moving away from hierarchy to a working with, a partnership or collaborative approach. How does the line manager achieve this in their role? is it practical or achievable?

What are the leader behaviours that are empowering? Arnold, Arad, Rhoades and Drasgow (2000) found that there were five behaviours that fostered team empowerment. These are leading by example (having a personal commitment to one's own and the team's work, and having high standards), coaching (helping the team to become more self-reliant), participative decision making (giving team members information and having input to making decisions, expressing ideas and opinions), informing (sharing all company information and policy), showing concern and interacting with the team (taking time to talk about concerns and focusing on wellbeing). The behaviours of a leader that supports team empowerment are much more involving and giving power to the team. This researcher is interested in how these behaviours are encouraged and developed in managers. Arnold et al (2000) do not pay attention to the empowerment success timeframe: the research was carried out in organisations that claim that empowerment is already present. This researcher wonders if there are any other leader behaviours that need to be present to encourage empowerment to develop in teams. It would also seem that Arnold's researched behaviours are relevant to leaders who encourage and engage, and as such are broader than empowering leader behaviours. This researcher in her professional career has encountered managers whom display these behaviours and yet their teams are not empowered in terms of the psychological construct in that they do not have freedom to choose what work to do, what resources to use and nor have access to resources.

Taking the research on leadership behaviours further Pearce and Sims (2002) compared the impact on team effectiveness of different forms of leadership including aversive, directive, transactional vertical versus shared leadership. The researchers found that shared leadership, which has its roots in the work of Mary Parker Follett (1924), and is defined as leadership shared amongst

peers is an important predictor of team effectiveness : "leadership is a potentially important antecedent of the effectiveness of empowered teams" (2002: 184). They highlighted six empowering leadership behaviours: encouraging independent action, encouraging opportunity thinking, encouraging team work, encouraging self-development, using participative goal setting and encouraging self-reward (2002: 175). This research was carried out with change management teams who undertook complex work and who were relatively autonomous, and dealt with work from problem identification to resolution. Essentially they were project teams bought together for a specific project, and as such were temporary in nature. This researcher will be researching more established operational teams who manage day to day work tasks rather than project work. The two organisations participating in this researcher's work have hierarchical or vertical structures where the line manager is seen as the person in charge, whereas in Pearce and Sims (2002) research the leadership was shared. These differences maybe significant in determining the research outcomes and findings. The team members who participated in Pearce and Sims (2002) research were recognised as being autonomous, which is not true of the team member's participating this researcher's work.

One central aspect of empowering leadership behaviour is sharing knowledge. Srivastava, Bartol and Locke (2006) defined knowledge sharing as "team members sharing task-relevant ideas, information and suggestions to each other" (Srivastava, Bartol and Locke 2006: 1239), which occurs when leaders gave enhanced opportunities to share knowledge to solve problems and make their own decisions. Srivastava et al found that team efficacy (as defined as "the belief of team members in their joint capability of executing certain behaviours necessary to attain a desired level of performance on specific tasks" Bandura:1997) was an important step in empowering leadership leading to high team performance. This highlights the relationship between structural or relational empowerment and psychological empowerment in that structural empowerment comes from the leader and psychological empowerment comes from the team member, and that when both forms of empowerment are present team performance is enhanced. This researcher will look at both forms of empowerment in her research, exploring

how both leaders and their teams experience empowerment. This researcher will explore how the leader behaviour increases individual and team efficacy and what mechanisms, approaches or frameworks the line manager uses to enhance team member efficacy. This research does reinforce that empowerment as a purely power sharing concept is an incomplete picture, and that including the motivational, self-efficacy based view of empowerment offers more complete approach.

Srivastava's research did not examine the organisational mechanisms that supported empowering leadership, and this researcher will examine the utility of organisational processes such as performance management, access to development and career planning in enhancing the experience of empowerment. The research was carried out with management teams: teams of people managing other people, tasks and processes. The teams participating in this researcher's cases are not always management teams, some do manage other people and some are experienced sole contributors.

This researcher will examine how the line manager foster and encourage empowerment and how these activities are experienced by team members. Being an empowering line manager is clearly a shift from the transactional and hierarchical styles of leadership and it will be interesting to see if line managers are making this shift.

2.14. Performance management approaches

Performance management is seen as a method for creating better results in organisations "by understanding and management performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, standards and competency requirements" (Armstrong 2009). Performance management is defined by Weiss and Hartle (1997) as "a process for establishing a shared understanding about what is to be achieved and how it is to be achieved and an approach to managing people that increases the probability of achieving success" (Weiss and Hartle 1997: 199).

Implicit within performance management is a mutuality of benefit for the organisation and the employee, and an active participation of employer and employee in contribution to success.

The three distinct phases of performance management are planning performance, supporting performance and reviewing performance (Taylor 2009). Planning performance entails line manager and team member agreeing clear goals and expectations for the next performance period, and is regularly reviewed to ensure currency of the goals (Torrington et al 2002). During the supporting performance phase the line manager is seen as enabling performance, managing the opportunity and enhancing the competency of a team member (Peters and O'Connor 1980, and Blumberg and Pringle 1982). This would seem to fit with the line manager role in empowerment in terms of enhancing the four cognitions: building competence, enhancing self-efficacy and giving information that can support impact and meaning (Thomas and Velthouse 1990). This implies an active role for the line manager as having a "continuous role in providing support and guidance, and in oiling the organisational wheels." (Torrington et al 2002: 298). The final phase is reviewing performance which involves appraising the performance of the employee against agreed goals and expectations, and offering a form of performance rating to this performance outcome (Taylor 2009). Armstrong and Baron (2005) have refined this approach into recommending that performance is managed throughout the year, moving from an episodic to a continuous approach.

Performance management has been found to support job satisfaction and the employees understanding of their performance (Harley et al 2010), which has links to self-determination (Thomas and Velthouse 1990), self-efficacy (Deci 1975) and meaning (Spreitzer 2006). Armstrong and Baron (2005) reinforce this by writing that one advantage of performance management is that people can monitor their own performance and discuss what they can do to improve performance. This would seem aligned to psychological empowerment, specifically the cognitions of self-determination and impact.

This reading has given the researcher awareness of the potential impact of organisational processes on the empowerment experience. Specifically do line managers and team members consider the processes of performance management and organisational communication to support the experience of empowerment?

2.15.   Structural and psychological empowerment as the researcher's frame of reference

The relational and psychological approaches to empowerment appear to be founded in the two parties working together where relational empowerment focuses on the manager and how they give power to the team member, and psychological empowerment focuses on how the team member becomes highly empowered. There would seem to be a dilemma in the writing on empowerment, in that is empowerment given, or do people take and desire empowerment? One definition states "empowerment exits in an organisation when lower level employees feel that they are expected to exercise initiative in good faith on behalf of the mission even if it goes outside the bounds of their normal responsibilities; and if their initiative should lead to a mistake – even a serious one – they trust that they will not be arbitrarily penalised for having that initiative" (Appelbaum and Honeggar 1998: 29). The authors contrast this with their experience of senior managers who are challenged by giving up control, and can see empowerment as a way to set task expectations, define deadlines, who will be involved, in other words effectively maintaining a large element of control. The article is summarised by saying that empowerment is not a "ready-made" process, and that effort, time and commitment are needed to make empowerment work.

One link between structural and psychological empowerment is researched by Siegall and Gardner (1999), in terms of the contextual factors of empowerment and how these impact on psychological, as defined by their concept of inner nature. The blend of structural and psychological is highlighted in the quote "while one can change attitudes by first shaping behaviours, we believe that the true benefits of empowerment (however

defined) will not be seen unless people first perceive themselves as being empowered. For example, if a person has the organisation's permission to act autonomously but does not believe that he or she has the capability of acting effectively, then the autonomy will not result in improved outcomes for either the organisation or the person" (Siegall and Gardner 1999: 705). Siegall and Gardner (1999) examined the organisational factors that affected employee's inner states and found that communication with the supervisor and general relations with the company were associated with three of the four psychological empowerment states: meaning, self-determination and impact. They also explored concern for performance which was defined as "the employees desire to cut costs, improve quality and generally improve organisational performance" (1999: 709) and found it was associated with meaning and self-determination. This researcher would like to find out more if the psychological empowerment component of competence ("the confidence in ability, a self-assurance about personal capabilities to perform work activities and a sense of mastery regarding the necessary job skills" (1999: 713) can be influenced by team members having performance management systems that they can access and give them the responsibility to manage and measure their own performance, rather than systems which are more hierarchically based.

Siegall and Gardner (1999) did not find that there were any contextual factors associated with the competence element of empowerment, and proposed that this was due to the high change environment of the organisation, and that regular skill development sessions and group problem solving sessions could have positively affected the employee's sense of competence and reduced the impact of the contextual factors researched.

This researcher will take structural and psychological empowerment theories as the basis for the research, and the line manager experience of supporting empowerment, following from Appelbaum and Honeggar's (1998) writing on how line managers make empowerment work within their teams. The line manager may wish to have highly empowered team members, but unless the

team member wishes to be highly empowered the intention will not bear fruit (Tuuli and Rowlinson 2009).

There would appear to be gaps in the literature on empowerment in the areas of how managers and employees can make empowerment work (Pearson and Chatterjee 1996). By acknowledging the binary, power over approach to motivation there would seem to be more onus on how the manager can create the conditions for empowerment to be successful. Definitions of power by Fenton-Creevy (1995) and Burke (1996) endorse the power concept of A giving power to B, whereas writers such as Conger and Kanungo (1988) move away from the power over view to one where empowerment is a motivational construct, with the line manager's role is one of strengthening self-efficacy in their teams, and empowerment becomes a process to foster self-determination. Thomas and Velthouse (1990) stated that the task itself should be motivational, and created their own assessment criteria to foster empowerment success.

Both approaches to workplace empowerment have the same intended outcomes in that employees will work more effectively and so benefit the organisation and enhance customer satisfaction (Kanter 1977 and Conger and Kanungo 1988). Both approaches to empowerment can happen at the individual, team or organisation wide level (Bowen and Lawler 1992). Both approaches are based on power, in relational empowerment the line manager passes empowerment to the team member, in psychological empowerment team members perceive themselves to be a in state of empowerment, thus having power to make decisions.

It could be said that there is a linkage between the two approaches in that line managers and organisations can create structures and processes that when followed lead to the act of empowerment (Kanter 1979), and yet without employees at a cognitive level accepting these conditions and feeling that are empowered empowerment will fail. The origins of these approaches would seem to be based on different traditions or foundations of power. The sociological school of power focuses on sharing power, the act or process of

"doing" empowerment from the employer or manager perspective, and in contrast the psychological school focuses on the person "being" empowered from the employee perspective. The researcher will use both approaches to empowerment, specifically exploring the empowerment experience and the role of a line manager.

Commitment is a common concept to both approaches to empowerment. Argyris (1998) writing about why empowerment fails in organisations identified external and internal commitment in the workplace. External commitment is aligned to compliance, command and control cultures and where employees have a small opportunity to make changes improve processes or productivity. Internal commitment occurs when employees are committed to work for their own personal reasons, and is aligned to psychological empowerment. Argyris (1998) argued that organisations promoting empowerment programmes created more external commitment, and created mixed messages in terms of employees being told that they had freedom, and to execute that freedom in a specific way, which resulted in employees feeling less empowered. Argyris (1998) encouraged organisations to accept that empowerment was not an end in itself, purely a means to improve performance, and that organisations should encourage employees' internal commitment through encouragement and working conditions. This argument highlighted the role of a line manager in encouraging internal commitment and is aligned to psychological empowerment.

The sharing of information from the organisation to team members is common to both empowerment approaches. Giving significant information to team members shows trust (Heller 1971) and a high level of information transparency enables effective decision making (Kotter 1996). The information shared with team members includes financial operating results (Lawler, Mohrman and Ledford 1995), business plans, goals, future technologies, and competitor data. This information allows team members to be informed, to appreciate the context for their work, and to appreciate the consequence of their decision.

This researcher realises that both approaches to empowerment (structural/relational and psychological) will be used as frames of reference for her research, as well as examining how organisational processes contribute to the empowerment experience.

2.16. Summary of literature review

The field of empowerment would appear to be simple, and yet complex. Yukl and Becker (2006) wrote "more clarity is also needed about the conditions that determine whether empowerment will be effective…we need more research on the effectiveness of specific empowerment behaviours and practises" (Yukl and Becker 2006).

Psychological empowerment in terms of individuals believing themselves to be highly empowered is too simplistic in looking at empowerment in organisations. How the role of the line manager contributes and encourages empowerment adds to the understanding, and how empowerment is measured gives more meaning.

Section 2.2 attempted to review the changing world of work, and there is a broad consensus that employee participation is becoming more popular in organisations. The focus on intrinsic motivation as an element of job satisfaction (Walton 1985) is a key driver of this change.

Section 2.3 considered the foundations of empowerment, looking at the influences of McGregor (1960) and Likert (1961) in encouraging more participative approaches in organisations. Job enrichment gave employees accountability either horizontally or vertically, and was found to be successful if employees were motivated by high-order needs. Job enrichment lead to creating jobs that offered employees personal responsibility, and began to change the line manager role to one of consultative encourager. Other forms of employee participation were explored, including quality circles, high commitment and high involvement management.

Power and power in the workplace were considered in sections 2.4 and 2.5. and identified the challenge of how people with power give this power to others (Habermas 1987).

Structural and psychological empowerment were defined in sections 2.6 and 2.7, with structural empowerment coming from the line manager and organisation (power holders) and psychological empowerment being a cognitive state held by the team member.

Self-efficacy was defined in section 2.8, and further refinements to psychological empowerment were explored in sections 2.9 and 2.10, understanding how intrinsic motivation can be encouraged by organisations and line managers by working with impact, meaningfulness, self-determination and competence. The role of the line manager in supporting the conditions for successful empowerment would seem a valid line of research for this researcher.

Section 2.12 explored the variety of ways researchers measure empowerment, with the approach to measuring the indicators of empowerment to examining if employee participation is present. This area offers much learning for this research in terms of being clear on what the researcher is using as the definition and indicators of empowerment.

The role of a leader is contained in section 2.13 with specific reference paid to transactional and transformational leadership. Elements of transformational leadership apply to the role of an empowering line manager.

This literature review has highlighted for this researcher that a combination of structural and psychological empowerment will be the foundations of her research. The learning from the literature review can be summarised in the figure on page 77.

The researcher now defines empowerment in the following way:

Empowerment in organisations is a three-fold construct that benefits the organisation, line managers and team members.

Firstly the activities of line managers encouraging team members to have accountability, competence and confidence to be able to successfully complete all elements of their role.

Secondly team members having a desire, motivation and belief in their competence to take responsibility, to shape their job role, to make decisions and to manage their workload in such a way as to excel in their role and add real value to the organisation.

Thirdly organisational systems and processes being available and used by all organisational members. The employee is able to understand and influence the organisation's goals, objectives and strategy, to have access to mechanisms and tools that will help them to define and measure their own performance contribution, as well as employees working with their line manager to create their own career and development pathway within the organisation.

Empowerment is essentially a three-way collaboration for the benefit of employees, line managers and the organisation to be successful and sustainable. Team members have full responsibility for their role, and line manager enable this to happen and organisational systems support employees to be responsible for their own and the business performance, all within a context of defining the organisational mission, strategy and plans.

The next chapter identifies and justifies the research question, the methodology and data analysis approach for this research.

Structural Empowerment

Leader psychology
- Self-efficacy

Leader behaviour
- Leading by example
- Coaching
- Participative decision making
- Informing
- Showing concern

Psychological Empowerment

Team member behaviour
- Taking responsibility
- Making decisions
- Ownership of outcomes

Team member psychology
- Meaning
- Self determination
- Impact
- Competence

Organisational empowerment

People processes
- Recruitment
- Training
- Development

Resource processes
- Budgeting
- Resource allocation

Performance processes
- Objectives/clarity
- Performance monitoring
- Performance appraisal

Understanding processes
- Strategy
- Organisational information and updates

3.0. Methodology

3.1.   Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological approach of the research and explores the process used to identify, invite and select participants, design of data collection, the coding and analysis of collected data, the explanation of the ethical practises considered, and any research limitations will be identified. The aim of this research is to explore the empowerment experience from the viewpoint of the line manager and team member. Underpinning this research are these research questions:

- How do organisational processes and mechanisms enhance or enable the experience of empowerment?
- What are the line manager activities and behaviours that influence the empowerment experience of team members?
- How do team members experience psychological empowerment?

The case study approach will be used as this will give a rich and in depth understanding of empowerment, and the method to gain the rich data is interviews with line managers and their team members.

3.2.   Research rationale

Exploring the line manager and team member experience of empowerment allows for a comparison of intended and experienced behaviours, reflections and critiques that can assist in understanding the experience and identify behaviours and mechanisms that contribute to making the empowerment experience more effective. This means looking at both structural and psychological approaches to empowerment.

Structural empowerment as defined by Conger and Kanungo (1988) and Kanter (1977) places emphasis on line managers encouraging empowerment by giving power to their teams, by involving team members in decision making and by giving employees input into their career planning and personal development. Thomas and

Velthouse (1990) highlighted the impact of the organisational environment as another aspect of structural empowerment on how people perceive their own empowerment. Psychological empowerment has been defined by Spreitzer as "a motivational construct manifested in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. Together these four cognitions reflect an active, rather than passive, orientation to a work role. By active orientation I mean an orientation in which an individual wishes and feels able to shape his or her work role and context." (Spreitzer 1995: 1444). This gives a greater understanding of how the empowerment experience can be enhanced by line managers and organisations. Pearson and Chatterjee (1996) write that "overall a great deal of interest has been shown for how empowerment works rather than how to make it work" (Pearson and Chaterjee 1996: 17) and Wang and Lee (2009) write that "empowerment theorists must focus on identifying optimal combinations that represent balanced or fit situations in different work contexts, which are essential to employee well-being and other job outcomes." (Wang and Lee 2009: 290).

It should be recognised that the research also arises from a professional and personal curiosity in this area based on the researcher's experience of working with line managers and team members for over twenty-five years.

The contribution of this research is the focus on how structural empowerment (the line manager actions and organisational processes) and psychological empowerment (the team member) interplay in the experience of empowerment. Past research has mainly used quantitative methods to explore if empowerment is present and this research will use a qualitative approach to give a deeper exploration of the experience of the different parties, which can result in a more thorough understanding of the line manager role.

3.3. Research question

Specifically this research is focused on the empowerment experience of eight line managers and their team members from two organisations. It explores how they define and experience empowerment, the reason the line manager supports empowerment, and if there are any boundaries to empowerment.

This research gives line managers and team members the opportunity to explore their experience of empowerment, their attitudes, motivations and mechanisms that help or hinder empowerment.

The key place to begin research methodology would seem to be the research question, Hanke (2009) reminds that this is the most important part of the research, in that the question will guide the literature review, suggests the questions to ask, highlight where to find data and provide the framework for writing up the research. Developing the research question is an iterative process, and should fit the criteria suggested by Hanke (2009) which include relevance to real-world problems, pre-research, highlighting a dimension of debate that was previously ignored, using specific questions which provide information that highlight the issue (rather than being purely descriptive).

Research questions are designed to explain a puzzle, and should express the essence of the research: *"They are the vehicles that you will rely upon to move you from your broad research interest to your specific research focus and project, and therefore their importance cannot be over-stated".* (Mason 2007: 20)

Mason (2007) gives a useful checklist on research questions including the encouragement to have questions that are coherent and transparent, and that they make are open enough to allow exploratory enquiry, and are grounded in the relevant background.

This researcher started the work with a desire to find out more about the empowerment experience in organisations. The initial research question was:

- *What is the empowerment experience in two organisations?*

Having now completed the literature review this researcher appreciates that psychological and structural empowerment combine to underpin the empowerment experience. It is the dynamic between what the line manager does to create empowerment (structural empowerment), and what the team member believes about themselves (psychological empowerment), and organisational mechanisms that all

contribute to the empowerment experience. As such the research questions have been refined to take this learning into account. The research questions to explore are:

- *How do organisational processes and mechanisms enhance or enable the experience of empowerment?*
- *What are the line manager activities and behaviours that influence the empowerment experience of team members?*
- *How do team members experience psychological empowerment?*

3.4.   Research Approach and Design

When considering the approach to best explore the research questions the researcher needs to consider the purpose of the research, the timescales available, their own philosophical viewpoint and the possible outcomes.

The theoretical research and literature review influenced the field research, and these known theories of empowerment are tested by the interpretation of data gathered from the research, and by finding the truth from this research in building on the existing body of knowledge about empowerment (Willis 2007). The researcher will use both the psychological view of empowerment as espoused by writers Spreitzer (1995 and 1996), Stander and Rothman (2010), Wang and Lee (2009) and Menon (1994), and the structural view of empowerment as espoused by Thomas and Velthouse (1990) and Kanter (1977). Psychological empowerment comes from social psychology theory and makes that assumption that empowerment is based on the perceptions of employees, and exists when employees believe they can exercise some control over their job. Structural empowerment explores the actions of the power holders who transfer power to the less powerful, and by granting decision-making, power and authority down through the organisation employees can impact organisational outcomes. This view of empowerment looks at the organisational context and environment in terms of processes and conditions that can support employee empowerment.

There are two approaches to research theory: inductive or deductive theory. Deductive theory "represents the commonest view of the nature of the relationship between theory and social research." (Bryman 2008: 8). The researcher begins with what is known about a specific topic and then deduces a hypothesis that is then subjected to empirical research, seeing if these hypotheses apply to specific situations or examples. Deductive theory is usually associated with quantitative research. Inductive theory has the opposite approach, in first observing specific situations and then establishes generalisation, so first the researcher collects data and then develops a theory based on the analysis of the data (Saunders 2003). Inductive theory is generally adopted in qualitative research and is aligned to interpretivism (Bryman 2008). Therefore an interpretive approach is thought the best paradigm to approach this research as it will give the opportunity to understand individual's experiences and meanings, and can contribute to theory generation (Bryman 2008).

3.5. Case study approach

The researcher endeavours to explore the empowerment experience, which fits with Schramm's definition of a case study: *"The essence of a case study, the central tendency among all types of case study, is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and what was the result."* (Yin 2009: 17 quoting Schramm 1971).

The research fitted with Yin's definition of a case study in that firstly the research investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and in its context, and that the research manages to explore many variables, and that the research used two sources of evidence - the line managers and their team members - so that data could be compared, and uses theory to inform the data analysis.

The research will follow Thomas's completeness approach (2011) in that the empowerment experience will be examined from many perspectives:
"Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions or other systems which are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of

phenomena that provides an analytical frame – an object – within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates." (Thomas 2011: 23).

The pragmatic aspect of research data lead the researcher to decide to use a case study approach in the research design, where the organisations participating will provide a rich source of data, accepting that all data is interpretive and will not speak for itself. Gerring (2007) writes that: *"The social sciences are defined by their focus on decisional behaviour – actions by human beings and humanly created institutions that are not biologically programmed. Thus, any social scientific explanation involves assumptions about why people do what they do or think what they think, a matter for intentions and motivations. Social science is, of necessity, an interpretive act."* (Gerring 2007: 70).

The case study approach offers an opportunity to think about the empowerment experience, and using a story board or mind map can assist in identifying the areas to explore in the case study. Here is the story board that results from the researcher's literature review, and the initial research question of "How do people

in two organisation's experience empowerment?".

Figure three: storyboard of research themes

One factor in case study selection is the quality of the case study in terms of the problem or question being explored or answered, using effective methods, sufficient information about the researcher and the research process and the clarity of the main claims (Hammersely 2005). The researcher notes that is would be tempting to have this as a 'tick box' criteria and that there are deeper meanings in terms of ensuring that the research findings and conclusions are clear and that

alternative reasons are explored, and that any research choices are clearly explained and reasoned. This researcher's three research questions are:

- How do organisational processes and mechanisms enhance or enable the experience of empowerment?
- What are the line manager activities and behaviours that influence the empowerment experience of team members?
- How do team members experience psychological empowerment?

This will allow an in depth exploration of the empowerment experience from the viewpoint of the line manager and team member, highlight the organisational mechanisms that foster empowerment, and takes into account both structural and psychological empowerment approaches.

One factor in the case study approach is the local knowledge of the researcher. Both organisations are clients of the development company the researcher manages. Company A is a scientific research company spread over two UK sites and has partner businesses in the US and Europe and employs 1600 people. Company B is an engineering company based in the East of England with over 2000 staff. Both companies are heavily regulated, and have clear processes that people must adhere to for much of the work. Both companies have been in business for many years; over 30 years for company A and 70 years for company B. Both companies have clear intentions of promoting talent from within the organisation, and actively encourage staff to develop themselves. Within both companies there is no active policy of promoting empowerment, both companies are financially successful and have welcomed being involved in this research. They would both like the researcher to come back and share the findings from this research with people.

The researcher expects to find some evidence of empowerment in both organisations because she has worked with line managers and team members from both organisations in delivering development programmes and knows that people talk about empowerment. These conversations are in terms of how line managers want to and do see themselves as empowering their teams, and team members

speak about being empowered. The researcher understands that both organisations want their line managers to have a more consultative and involving management approach, and that there is no specific encouragement for empowerment, no specific reward for empowerment nor any specific organisational development programme targeted at empowerment. The desire is more informal, with the word being used by senior leaders at management briefings and in meetings.

In selecting the two organisations in which to conduct the research the researcher has sought to have organisations of fairly similar size (1600 and 2000 employees), in the same part of the UK, operating in two different sectors, one being scientific research, the other being engineering. Hanke (2009) recommends that each researcher defines their universe with criteria for selection of the research group, explicit criteria of selection of candidates into the research group and that the researcher is clear about the comparability between groups (Hanke 2009). Each organisation claims to value people, to believe in talent development and to provide opportunities for people to develop and take responsibility. The line managers were senior managers reporting to a Board Director, and all of whom had at least two years of being senior manager, as this length of time should give respondents enough time to understand their role. A mix of male and female participants was sought, although only two line managers were female, which follow research from Cranfield University that showed *"that women make up only 12.2% of the directors of FTSE 100 companies (2009), and just 7.3% of directors among FTSE 250 companies - where half have no women in the boardroom at all".* (Financial Times 2010).

It was decided to research four senior managers from two organisations of a similar size, both of who have been in business for over 30 years and who have a clear management structure. The line managers had been in their current position for over two years, and their team comprised of at least four or more direct reports (team members). The target group was limited in this way because:

- The length of service in their current role gives people time to settle in to their role, to understand the requirements of their role and to develop relationships with their team members

- Interviewing four senior managers in two organisations would give a range of responses and give a meaningful comparison
- Managing at least four team members would give a comparison of experiences between the four from each line manager, as well as comparisons between the team members from different managers.

All of the team members who have worked for the senior manager for at least eighteen months will be invited to be interviewed, as this should be sufficient time to have an in-depth experience of being managed by that manager.

Ragin (2008) states that case study research is all about casing which includes defining the topic, including the hypothesis(es) of primary interest, the outcome, and the set of cases that offer relevant information vis-à-vis the hypothesis (Ragin 2008). A temptation is to link the research findings to other line manager's experience of empowerment that are outside the scope of this research. Looking for relationships between different elements of the case could lead to causal connections, and these findings cannot claim to be externally valid in being representative of other line managers experiencing empowerment. These potential causal connections are grounded in across case evidence, by comparing interviews from within each organisation as well as across both organisations.

There are many units to look at within the case study, as table two shows

Comparison	
Company A	Company B
Each line manager in Company A	With each line manager in Company A
Each line manager in Company B	With each line manager in Company B
Line managers in Company A	With Line managers in Company B
Team member of Line manager 1 Company A (and then line manager 2/3/4)	With other Team members of Line manager 1 company A (and then line manager 2/3/4)
Team members of Line manager 1 company A	With other team members of other line managers within company A
Team members of company A	With team members of company B
Supporting mechanisms in company A	Supporting mechanisms in company B

Table two: case study comparisons

This approach can be classified as multiple case studies that offer multiple comparisons, and the researcher notes the requirement to be clear in the classification and categorisation so that accurate comparisons are made.

3.6.   Theoretical position and approach to the methodology

A phenomenological design was proposed for this research, where the researcher sought to explore and capture understanding and people's descriptions of their experiences. Phenomenologists believe that all knowledge is value laden; that all knowledge is subjective and just as important as the knowledge is how the knowledge is obtained. Alfred Schutz began the application of phenomenology to the social science arena and wrote:

 "The world of nature as explored by the natural scientist does not 'mean' anything to molecules, atoms and electrons. But the observational field of the social scientist

– social reality - has a specific meaning and relevance structure for the beings living, acting and thinking within it. By a series of common-sense constructs they have pre-selected and pre-interpreted this world which they experience as the reality of their daily lives. It is these thought objects of theirs which determine their behaviour by motivating it. The thought objects constructed by the social scientist, in order to grasp this social reality, have to be founded upon the thought objects constructed by the common-sense thinking of man, living their daily life with the social world." (Bryman 2008: 16).

This researcher wants to examine the thought objects relating to empowerment. Bogdan and Taylor wrote that *"the phenomenologist views human behaviour…as a product of how people interpret the world…In order to grasp the meanings of a person's behaviour, the phenomenologist attempts to see things from that person's point of view."* (Bogdan and Taylor 1975: 13 – 14, from Bryman).

This research focused on interpreting the empowerment experience, and examining if it was a constructive one for both line managers and their team members. Implicit for the phenomenological researcher is that they need to understand their own beliefs, attitudes and point of view, as well as that of their research subjects. This understanding informs how they make meaning from their research. When researchers take a phenomenological viewpoint they should be aware and state their own involvement in their research and identify how subjective they might be in understanding their results and findings. By doing this any potential bias or subjectivity maybe reduced, corrected or balanced by seeking alternative findings.

The researcher knows both organisations that will participate in this research, and both are fee-paying clients of the researcher's consultancy practise. The researcher knows the line managers who agreed to participate in the research, and some of the team members. The later section on ethical considerations explores these implications in more depth.

3.7. Validity

When aspiring to the achieve validity there are three aspects for the researcher to consider. Firstly construct validity, measuring what the research proposes to measure, which will be addressed by having multiple people being interviewed, as well as having informed colleagues review the case study report.

The second validity measure is internal validity, which is defined as seeking to establish causal relationship in which certain conditions lead to other conditions. The internal validity of this research can be summed up in Gerring's challenging quote that *"the fundamental problem of causal inference is that one cannot rerun history to see what effects X1 actually had on Y in a particular case…. There are no time machines."* (Gerring 2007: 151). What happens pre-empowerment is difficult to explore as both organisations have not been following an interventionist approach to empowerment, the managers that are participating in this research have had no specific training or development in empowerment, so having a pre- and post empowerment set of results is not possible. There was an element of spatial comparison between the empowerment experiences of both organisations, and between the equivalent line managers both within the organisation and in comparison to their equivalent counterpart in the other organisation.

The third validity measure is external validity defined as the challenge of generalising findings from research to other situations, specifically known as analytic generalisation. In this research this means generalising the findings from people's empowerment experiences to other people's desire to experience empowerment. The researcher is aware of the desire to generalise, that the particularising/generalising distinction can be seen as a continuum, and that potentially findings from this research may be a relevance to other cases of empowerment, or other line managers empowering. The temptation is to generalise, to see the factors that are general to management practise and the researcher is mindful of Gerring's quote:
"The defining characteristic of the case study is its ability to infer a larger whole from a much smaller part. Yet both retain some importance in the final product.

Thus, all case studies are to a certain extent betwixt and between. They partake of two worlds: they are particularising and generalising." (Gerring 2007: 70).

The final case study success measure is reliability defined as if the research can be repeated, following the same protocols, will the same results and findings be reached. The researcher documented the research plan in order for this to happen.

3.8. Qualitative data collection methods

3.8.1. Qualitative and quantitative research

There could be little to distinguish qualitative and quantitative research except the fact that quantitative researchers use measurement and qualitative researchers do not (Bryman 2008).

Quantitative research is a research strategy that uses a deductive approach to the relationship between research and theory, in which emphasis is placed on testing theories. Hyde (2000) compares both methodologies and argues that quantitative research aims to "describe the general characteristics of a population, and to ignore the details of each element studies", and qualitative research methods focus on what he called the particular. The particular gives the researcher the experience of studying a topic in-depth potentially through a smaller number of participants.

The researcher will be looking at participant's experience of empowerment, and qualitative research will give data in depth and detail so that understanding can be generated of this experience.

3.8.2. Selected research strategy

Bryman (2008) highlights a variety of collection methods for qualitative research:
- Ethnography or participant observation
- Focus groups
- Document analysis

- Language based collection
- Interviewing.

This research will use interviews as the method of qualitative data collection.

3.8.3. Interviews

In-depth interviews have been chosen as the research method because the researcher appreciates that the interview will draw upon the participant's specific experiences of empowerment, their judgements in the empowerment process, and how their work performance was affected. As such the researcher understands that the data will be contextual and interactional, and will take cues from each dialogue to ensure that each interview offers rich data, with the researcher taking an active and reflexive (Mason 2007) role in the interviews.

The research was intended to be explorative and the intention of the interviews was to explore the perspective of each participant a semi structured interview approach was decided upon, in which the researcher had a range of questions intended to open up the discussion, and then a degree of fluidity to respond to the content of each interview. This follows the approach recommended by King (1994):

"a low degree of structure imposed on the interviewer, a preponderance of open questions, a focus on specific situations and action sequences in the world of the interviewee rather than abstractions and general opinions." (King 1994:15)

One research choice is to know more about less, or to know less about more: the deep or broad debate. By virtue of their name the in-depth interviews provided a richness of data, looking at the why, when and how of empowerment, thus lean to the knowing less about more side of research.

Paying due focus to meaning in actor's actions is one aspect of this research, following from Becker's (1970) view that: *"To understand an individual's behaviour we must know how he perceives the situation, the obstacles he believed he had to face, the alternatives he saw opening to him. We cannot understand the effects of*

the range of possibilities, delinquent subcultures, social norms and other explanations of behaviour which are commonly invoked, unless we consider them from the actor's point of view." (From Gerring quoting Becker 1970: 64).

The researcher contacted the most senior Human Resource (HR) person from two organisations and explained the goals and process for the research. One HR manager was very reluctant to approve their organisation participating in the research as the organisation were about to embark on a restructure and experience job losses, so they felt that people would have a high element of suspicion about the research. After a meeting to explore the situation the researcher decided to not progress with the organisation, as the participants would be experiencing the additional stress of a work restructure, with the associated distraction of worrying about their own job future. The researcher identified another organisation of similar size, and the HR Director gave permission.

The researcher wrote an email that was sent to the HR Director, and they in turn forwarded to all senior managers (see appendix five).

Seven senior managers expressed an interest from company A, and eight from company B. After discussing with each senior manager the research and the specification of research participants the four from each were selected. Two line managers from company A did not have enough team members, another had not been in position for two years. In company B two line managers decided they did not want to participate and did not give a reason, one line manager did not have enough experience and the fourth did not have four team members.

The researcher then wrote an email for the line manager to send to all their team members explaining the research, and inviting them to participate (see appendix six). The researcher had constructive responses from team members, some agreeing to participate, and others who stated that they did not qualify for the research so the appropriate email was sent thanking them.

Scheduling all interviews was a time consuming process, and the researcher managed cancellations of interviews by revising the interview schedule and managing to meet with all participants over a three month period.

The researcher completed all line manager interviews and transcribed and coded the line manager interview before the team member interviews. This gave time to reflect and prepare for the team member interviews.

Organisation A	Line manager	Number of team members participating
	1	3
	2	4
	3	3
	4	3
Total	4	13
Organisation B	Line manager	Number of team members participating
	1	4
	2	2
	3	4
	4	4
Total	4	14

Table three – number of participants in each organisation

3.9.   The research plan

The researcher created a research plan that *"guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting observations. It is a logical model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning causal relations among the variables under investigation."* (From Yin 2009: 27, quoting Nachmias and Nachmias 1992: 77-78).

Research design should deal with a logical problem, from defining clear research questions with a "how" or "why" beginning, a proposition to study a specific area,

defining the unit of analysis or the case to be studied, how data will be linked to propositions and how the findings will be interpreted, and will have criteria for interpreting findings. (Bryman 2008). Appendix one shows the research plan**.**

One aspect of research methodology considered is the skills of the researcher, Yin (2009) states *"The demands of a case study on your intellect, ego and emotions are far greater than those of any other research method. This is because the data collection procedures are not routinised….a well-trained and experienced investigator is needed to conduct a high-quality case study because of the continuous interaction between the theoretical issues being studied and the data being collected. During data collection only a more experienced investigator will be able to take advantage of unexpected opportunities rather than being trapped by them – and also will exercise sufficient care against potentially biased procedures."* (Yin 2009: 68)

The skills of a good case study researcher as highlighted by Yin (2009) seemed to fit with the researcher's work experience as consultant and professionally qualified coach, in terms of asking good questions, being a good listener and being adaptive and flexible. One challenge could be remaining unbiased and interpreting the data from interviews and the researcher used colleagues and their own PhD supervisor to prevent this from happening. Working with the balance of the social dynamics and getting research material that enhances understanding needed focus, so that the interviews did not become purely a social interaction about how the person experiences empowerment. Keeping the interview running smoothly, making reactive decisions about where to question and explore next, whilst bearing in mind the strategy for each interview will all be essential skills for the researcher. Mason (2007) recommends that researchers develop a topics and issues card, detailing areas of research and suggested questions to ask. (See appendices two and three.)

The care and sensitivity required for in-depth interviews covers the following aspects: gaining informed consent, protecting people interviewed from harm and protecting their privacy and confidentiality. Specifically the researcher realises that when interviewing line managers and their team members about the empowerment

experience their reflections maybe different, and so their confidentiality will need to be kept. Appendix four gives details of the consent form the researcher used.

3.10. Findings from the research interview pilots

Piloting the communication material and the interview questions for both line manager and team member gave me insights into both the research process and the experience of empowerment.

3.10.1 Learning about the research process

The research questions used during the pilot interviews were too broad which meant that it was difficult to analyse any detail in the data, and so I defined the categories of data collection to use and ensured that the interview questions would give focus to these topics. This helped to focus and guide the interviews. I also made sure I kept open to new and unexpected data during the participant interviews.

Questions asked at the beginning of the interview that were designed to open up the interviewee's thinking were too open and did not give any meaningful data, and indeed did not appear to put the interviewee at ease. The opening questions included:

- Tell me about how you manage people?
- How to do you manage the performance of your job?

The responses were very vague and did not assist in relaxing the interviewee, or give any data for the research.

The researcher found that taking time at the beginning of the interview to explain the purpose, approach and whole process of the PhD research helped both the researcher and participant to settle into the conversation.

The researcher will give a clearer explanation and overview of the research and then start with the following questions:

- How do you define empowerment (line manager)
- How does your line manager empower you? (team member)

Allowing time for the participant to think, reflect and elaborate on their initial answers proved a rich source of data. Indeed the participants highlighted some areas to add to the research guide in terms of trust in the management relationship, how much contact the line manager had with the team member, and how the line manager evaluated the success of empowerment.

Allowing two hours for the line manager interview was the right time allocation, and the interview with the team member could be reduced to one and a half hours, as the team member's interview questions were not so numerous.

The transcription of each interview took much more time than anticipated and the researcher decided to transcribe one line manager interview themselves to appreciate the experience, and then to fund a professional transcriber for the rest of the interviews.

The interview participant may need to be prompted to give more information, so having some supplementary questions ready can help the interview process. Supplementary questions developed as a result of the pilot interviews include:
- Is there anything else you would like to do to improve how you empower your team members? (line manager)
- How do you know a team member is doing a good job? (line manager)
- How do you use the current performance management approach? Does this help you be a better line manager? (line manager)
- Are there any differences in the way you manage an empowered team member vs a team member that isn't empowered? What are the differences? (line manager)
- How do you know that you are doing a good job? (team member)
- How do you monitor your own work performance? (team member)

- How would you describe the relationship you have with your line manager? (team member)
- How do you use the current performance management approach? Does it help your performance?
- Is there anything more your line manager could you to help your job performance? (team member)

The communication material emailed to both pilot participants did give an overview of the research, and allowing more time at the beginning of the interview to explain again and to answer any questions will help the research process. Relying on interviews as a data collection method meant that openness and trust was important to gaining insights and material from participants. This trust was partially built by emailing and then calling each participant to explain the research, the areas we will be speaking about during the interview and the confidential nature of the interviews.

3.10.2 Learning about the empowerment experience

The pilot interviews highlighted the negative experience of the organisational appraisal, and I decided to be more open to data about participant's experience of appraisals, asking supplementary questions to delve deeper into their experience. The line managers thought the current performance management approach gave team member's clarity on expectations, regular updates on their performance and a forum for talking about performance. The team members had a different experience in that the formal setting objectives process and the monthly performance conversations did not aid the individual's understanding of performance achievement or performance expectations. This would seem to be highlight the work of Thomas and Velthouse (1990) who stated that organisational processes can leave employees feeling powerless to achieve their potential. The researcher will explore with line managers and team members what are the aspects of relational empowerment that show trust and that offer the opportunity for team members to achieve their potential.

The team members involved in the pilot did highlight the skills of their line manager in terms of listening and coaching skills, which does reinforce the work of Riley and Ripley (1992). The researcher will explore how the line manager shows that they are listening and coaching, and how the team member experiences this approach.

The pilot interviews did highlight the empowerment climate as a key factor (Seibert, Silver and Randolph 2004) in terms of structures and practices that support psychological empowerment. The researcher will explore with line manager and team members if they experience the empowerment climate as being supportive, and how the structures and processes help or hinder empowerment.

The team member echoed the research of Thomas and Velthouse (1990) in that they expressed that they were internally motivated and that the behaviour of their line manager did not greatly impact on their motivation. The researcher will include interview questions for team members that ask about what motivates them, how their line manager impacts their motivation, and how they assess their own performance (following the task assessment approach).

Spreitzer's (1996) work on how individuals influence their work unit was highlighted in the team member pilot interview. The team members mentioned that they felt valued by their line manager, that they were able to influence their work performance and make changes to how they did their work, that they knew the goals of the organisation and that they were aligned to these goals. The researcher will spend more time with team members exploring what the line manager does that leads to these experiences, and what impact these experiences have on each team member.

In summary the researcher learnt that the interviews have the potential to give a deep level of richness to the empowerment experience, that looking at both

psychological and structural empowerment gives a broad picture of empowerment, and that the interviews need to go into detail to get the depth that is possible.

The revised interview questions are shown in appendices one and two.

3.11. Data analysis

Each interview was typed into a transcription, and made ready for data analysis. An extract from an interview is given in appendix seven. Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend very specific data manipulation techniques such as developing categories for data, and placing all data evidence into these categories, looking at the frequency of events, and then looking at second-order numbers such as variances and means. The danger with this approach would seem to be a "wood for the trees approach" in that the story of the data may not emerge if the researcher starts by getting into the detail of each interview. To avoid this pitfall Yin (2009) recommends adopting one or more of his highlighted analytic strategies to assist in crafting the story of the research. The most preferred strategy was to rely on the theoretical propositions that lead to the case study approach, in this case that empowerment is a positive experience for both parties will led the researcher to look for examples, experiences and processes that create this positive experience, or that detract from the empowerment experience being a positive one. The second strategy was to develop a case description by using a descriptive framework for organising and analysing the case study, which was less preferable than using theoretical propositions but could be used as a second option should the first does not work. The third strategy of using qualitative and quantitative data did not apply to this research and the fourth strategy of examining rival explanations was adopted as a "sense check" to explore what else could be causing a positive experience of empowerment.

Once the research strategy has been identified Yin (2009) highlights five analytic techniques the researcher can use which are pattern matching, explanation building, time series analysis, logic models and cross-case synthesis. The researcher used pattern matching, comparing the patterns in data found against those predicted from

theory. There were patterns to analyse from the different interviews from within each organisation as well as patterns between both organisations for people fulfilling similar roles.

The following themes for indexing will be used:

1. The line manager beliefs about how to manage

2. The capability of team member

3. Organisation and line manager communications

4. Reflections on the organisation culture

5. Empowerment definitions of the line manager and team member

6. Line manager style

7. Reasons for empowering team members

8. The motivation of the line manager

9. Performance management practises

10. The process of empowerment as experienced by both line manager and team member

11. The self-confidence of the line manager and team member

12. The level of trust in the management relationship

13. The level of personal organisation of the team member

14. How the team member feels encouraged by their line manager

15. The level and type of feedback and information the team member gets from their line manager

16. How much freedom the team member feels they have to do their job

17. The type of performance management activity undertaken by the line manager or team member.

3.12. Qualitative data analysis software

The researcher had originally decided to use word documents, and to develop a coding system and use highlighting to annotate the transcripts. This proved very cumbersome and not effective, so the researcher decided to use N-Vivo for the qualitative data analysis. A short review of data analysis software available lead the researcher to select N-Vivo so that consistent and uniform processing of the data could happen, as well as the researcher enjoying the code and retrieve mode to use

participant's own words. This gave an excellent method for identifying, comparing and clustering themes from different interviews. Another practical reason is that the researcher found the on-line tuition produced by QSR International to be extremely useful. The data was held on a separate laptop in the researcher's home office, it was password protected and securely backed up using cloud storage.

Each pattern was be used as an indexed theme, and highlighted when they were seen in the interview data. The researcher adhered to Yin's (2009) four principles of high quality analysis by attending to all the evidence, taking into account major rival interpretations, identifying the most significant aspect of the case study and using prior, expert knowledge when analysing the case study. When presenting the case study material the researcher used a linear-analytic structure, first identifying the topic to be studied, the review of relevant literature, the methodology, findings from the data and finishing with conclusions and implications. Yin's final definition of what makes an exemplary case study was also be reviewed on a regular basis, and was seen as aspirational, in terms of the research maybe very significant to the researcher, but it probably will not be of interest to the general public or will not be nationally important!

3.13. Ethical considerations for this research

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC REF, 2004: 7) defines research ethics as:

"The moral principles guiding research, from its inception through to completion and publication of results and beyond – for example, the duration of data and physical samples after the research has been published."

The research is to be overt: the purpose, structure and outcomes of the research is explained (Silverman, 2000). A briefing note for people involved in the research is to be given which explained the purpose and aims of the research, what will be explored with them, what will happen to their comments, and offering them a follow up meeting once the research has been completed to share the conclusions (see appendix five).

Bryman (2008) recommends using informed consent forms to confirm that participation is voluntary, people can refuse to answer any question, people can withdraw from the meeting at any time, withdraw their data within two weeks of the meeting and to confirm what happens to the information. A consent form was used with all research participants (see appendix four). Informed consent can have so many meanings, the researcher made it clear that participants gave consent to participating in the interview, and the subtler forms of consent such as using the data generated by interview in ways seen fit, the data would be analysed and compared with other data, and that the data and analysis will be published (Mason 2007). Key gatekeepers such as human resource managers will also be informed, and asked to give their consent to employees participating in this research, as well as being offered a follow up meeting once the research has been completed to share the conclusions.

Appreciating the relationships the researcher has with both organisations the researcher respected the confidentiality of each interview, in that if the researcher was asked about each interview the confidentiality of the meeting was honoured by not giving away any details. Indeed this did happen by one organisation's HR Manager, who asked the researcher if she thought any of the line managers participating in the research empowered well, and how motivated were the team members. Acknowledging that the HR manager was curious about the research interviews the enquiry was given the response of respecting anonymity, and that the researcher would share the general research findings with the organisation once the research was successfully completed.

Participants who agreed to participate were assured that their words would remain anonymous in the written researcher report. To manage the confidentiality of all participants the researcher will use the following system below:

Organisation	Line manager	Team member
A or B	1,2,3 or 4	W, X,Y or Z

Table four – participant's anonymity notation approach

Example: A1W – organisation A, line manager 1, team member W.

The researcher appreciates that they could be researching sensitive matters, and needs to develop trust and openness to encourage people to give meaningful data. Some data collected may be very personal – the motivations and drivers for managers, the reflections of the team members on their line manager and the level of trust between line managers and team members. This data will be used sensitively, and the researcher will protect the participant's identity when the data is published. If very personal or painful data is shared with the researcher empathy and rapport was be shown, so that the participant believes the research experience to be a positive one.

One ethical dilemma could be that the researcher may be tempted off the research path by spotting an opportunity to develop their business. As the researcher runs a successful development consultancy business they are always seeking opportunities and ways to develop their business. The participant they are meeting may discuss other business challenges, problems or projects where the researcher recognises they could add value. The researcher was clear on the purpose of the meeting, and will ask that other topics be discussed at separate meetings.

The research interview will take one to two hours, which is a significant time for busy line managers and team members. Appointments will be made in advance with each participant, and confirmed in an email three days before the interview.

The location of the research meeting could be key to the quality of the data. Meeting in the manager's office could results in distractions and interruptions. The researcher will ask that the organisation book a quiet meeting room, and when the researcher contacts each participant with an outline of the research and agenda for the meeting, they will suggest meeting in that quiet meeting room.

The researcher will email each research participant a copy of the transcript of their interview to make sure the notes are an accurate representation of what is said. This keeps the participants involved, as well as validating accuracy. Participants will be asked for the email address the researcher should use to send the transcript, as the researcher appreciates the sensitivity of the data, and that other people could access emails, and letters could be opened.

Storing data requires thought. Password protecting records on a computer, coding the names of people and organisations and careful use of examples are some of the researcher's key actions.

3.14. Limitations of the research

The research will be conducted in two large organisations that have been operating for at least thirty years. There may be other influences to play in smaller or younger organisations, and the research findings should not be extrapolated to these. The researcher acknowledges the attractiveness of generalisation in that potentially other line managers will be able to learn from this research, and empower their teams in more effective ways. The line manager's characteristics, experience and career background maybe typical of line managers, and so their experience of empowerment may resonate with a wider manager audience. There may be lessons for similar organisations in which case factors and explanations may offer learning for other managers, especially since this research was conducted across two organisations operating in two different contexts.

The researcher identifies the themes upon which the in-depth interviews are based in advance. Where the researcher was aware that more depth or richness would be beneficial questions will be asked to elicit detail or richer responses, and some opportunities for wider reflection may have been lost.

Miles and Huberman (1998) write of the danger for researchers of moving from specific instances of research to a set of generalisations as follows: "each case has a specific history, which we discard at our peril" (Miles and Huberman 1998: 194). Accepting this it is still relevant to state that the goal of this research is to explore the empowerment experience from the viewpoint of line managers and team members. The researcher hopes that this research will create reflection, conversations and learning for people involved in the empowerment experience.

3.15. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the principal research design considerations that both informed and influenced the research methodology and method selected. The research approach adopted for this study is qualitative in nature. The key objective is to explore the empowerment experience in two organisations, with a view to arriving at the factors that contribute to the empowerment experience being a constructive one for the organisation, line managers and team members.

In order to achieve the objectives, the research is exploratory and interpretive in nature, it is qualitative and it adopts a case study approach.

To support this methodology and achieve the research objectives, in-depth interviews will be used. The ethics, validity and reliability of in-depth interviews were considered.

Having established the methodological approach followed to collect data for this research, the following chapters of this thesis will present the data collected and analyse the information gathered.

4.0.   The experience of structural empowerment

4.1.   Introduction

This chapter explores how line managers experience empowerment: their definitions, their activities and their views of empowering their team members. Encompassing the structural view of empowerment the utility of organisational processes to support empowerment from the line manager and team member perspectives is examined. The findings show the utility of both the formal and informal performance management approaches in terms of line manager and team member activities and behaviours, and the line manager's role in performance managing an empowered team member (Alvesson 1992). Performance management was paid specific attention as the writings on psychological empowerment focus on the individual and the four cognitions (Spreitzer 1995), and the researcher wanted to pay attention on how the line manager engages with the team member (Nicholls 1987), and utilises existing organisational processes such as performance management to monitor team progress, productivity and achievement of team objectives. The chapter will use participant transcripts to show from a structural empowerment perspective how the line managers and organisations approach and seek to support empowerment, and whether any difference or similarities exist in the approaches of the line managers in the two companies.

4.2.   Supporting mechanisms - Company A and B performance management policy and approach

How an organisation approaches performance management can assist in the structural empowerment experience. Company A and B both have performance management policies which consist of annual performance objectives, formal performance reviews every six months and a suggestion that more frequent meetings are held to review progress. Both companies place the ownership of using the performance management system into the hands of line managers. Phrases in the policy that serve as indicators of this are:

"Your manager will meet with you to agree your objectives...you can expect your line manager to review your progress during the year.. your annual appraisal is the time that your line manager reviews your performance" (Company A).

These are echoed in Company B:

"You can expect your line manager to meet with you to set out our priorities and then define your objectives. These will form the basis of your performance reviews during the year… You will have a mid-year and end of year appraisal with your manager… your performance will be rated." (Company B).

The performance management approach in both companies would appear to be very hierarchical, with line managers instigating all activities and the team member being a contributor to these conversations, rather than the team member using the approach to measure and monitor their own performance. Performance management is part of the structural dynamics of empowerment and in both organisations ownership and instigation sits with the line manager.

4.3. How is performance monitored and managed in the empowerment team member/line manager relationship?

4.3.1. Formal performance management

All line managers interviewed from both organisations initiated formal performance management processes that included agreeing clear objectives, regular one to one check in meetings and end of year appraisals that evaluated and reviewed job performance and gave a performance rating. These performance management meetings were very much initiated by the line manager, and were mainly hierarchical in approach (Mathieu et al. 2006). One manager in Company A said:

"Their performance is managed by having appraisals. We have yearly appraisals that are graded. So they're given a rating that is based on how they achieved their objectives, how they've demonstrated the correct behaviours, and how they've performed against their job description." (ALM3).

Other line managers at Company A also echoed the performance management approach of the line manager instigating the formal performance management approach. All four Company A line managers spoke using "I" when starting to talk about the formal performance management approach *("I book the meetings… I think about each person's SMART objectives… I think about how the person is doing")*. Company B line managers mentioned a more collaborative approach to agreeing targets and objectives in both companies, however these approaches were initiated by the line manager. (Purcell and Hutchinson 2007).

"We jointly agree what the objectives are and they typically flow down from my boss to me to interrogate what do I need to flow down plus what are my functional objectives; what are we trying to achieve as a team. We flow these out. We review those six-monthly but on a more regular drumbeat basis we have, every third week a team meeting. We discuss issues and we talk about challenges and what are we delivering, what should we be delivering." (BLM1).

The line managers interviewed from both organisations did not speak about any positive impact formal performance management practice had on the empowerment levels of their team members. Line managers recognised that the drive to undertake these formal processes was driven by the organisation's need to classify performance, to give some form of comparison and to trigger giving reward. Some recognition was given of the performance management approach aligning team members to the goals of the organisation, following from Friedman's (1977) exploration of responsible autonomy.

4.3.2. Informal performance management

When line managers from both organisations were asked about how they managed the performance of their team members they spoke mainly about the more informal interventions that were aligned to creating ownership and awareness of an individual's performance. These were giving advice, sharing experience and asking questions to help the team member reflect on their activities. Line managers used open questions to elicit thought and awareness in team members, helping each

person to reflect on their performance, what has gone well and what they could improve. Questions included:

 "How are you doing? How are you getting on with that objective? How's it coming along? Are you struggling?"… "What's next, who is he going to talk to next, what does he need from me, does he need want me to be involved, is he happy to cover this on his own, how is he going to do it?" (ALM3).

Line managers who asked this type of question appreciated that it helped team members to consider their performance, generating ideas they might not have thought of on their own. The intention seems to be to create an awareness of self-determination (Deci, Connell and Ryan 1989) and competence (Bandura 1989). Line managers mainly monitored job performance by using an informal monitoring approach, offering support rather than by getting very involved in the detail.

Most managers from Company A and B spoke about being clear with team members in that when there was a performance issue, disagreement or a difference of opinion they were clear that their role as the more senior person was to make the decision. Managers from company B were more aware of this power hierarchy and each of them spoke about their experiences of being directive, of telling team members what needed to happen and of giving clear feedback on challenging performance issues. This would seem in opposition to their language when speaking about defining performance objectives and using the formal approach, where they spoke of "we" and more collaborative approaches. This would also seem counter to empowerment in terms of self-determination and choice, as well as counter to some team members who spoke about taking action and then involving the line manager, potentially following the phrase *'better to seek forgiveness than ask permission.' (Block 1987:16).*

Line managers in both companies spoke about their involvement in task completion by checking in, by monitoring and measuring progress. Many managers spoke about the need for updates on progress towards task completion, and no one mentioned purely leaving a team member alone without any support or showing interest. There would seem to be a balance point for line managers, in that too much checking in

can display a lack of trust in the performance of the empowered team member, and too little could create abandonment in the team member. (Abramson, Garber and Seligman 1980). Is empowerment really happening in these organisations, in that the line manager is not giving the power and potentially the trust to the team member to complete the task, instead they are checking on progress?

This is best summarised by this quote:

"If I give someone a task to do over the longer time, I usually plan in to check up on how they're getting along with the progress because I don't want to get to the end of a two-week project and then they're two weeks behind where they should be." (BLM4).

Line managers from both Company A and B explored their approach to giving feedback, and believed that they were open and honest with their team members in their assessment of output and behaviours and hoped that their own honesty created a reciprocal honesty in terms of team members being open about challenges and concerns about task achievement. Line managers intended to increase the self-awareness of team member's competence, and so assist the team member's level of self-efficacy (Gist 1987).

"I think we have very open, honest conversations and I'm very keen to let them know that I'm certainly not perfect and there are projects that I struggle with and please don't tell me that you're fine with something when you're not because that's not what you'll hear from me. If I'm struggling, I'll tell you I'm struggling. But I would hope that we have very honest, truthful conversations." (ALM2).

The third line manager from company B mentioned that the empowered team member faces the consequences of failure, as well as the potential benefits of succeeding. There would seem to be an implicit threat in this quote, and when asked to expand on their meaning the line manager was clear that the rewards were there if the team member succeeded, but that if they failed the consequences would sit with the team member, as well as any retribution or punishment. There would seem an almost abdication message here in that the team member is alone in managing their

performance. This could be the line manager over-extending team member self-determination into abdicating their own line management responsibility (Appelbaum and Honeggar 1998).

"I think when you're empowering someone, there's a certain amount of accountability transferred into that individual as well. So as well as responsibility, they're getting accountability as well. So you're allowing them to make their own decision but also I think for me, there is then an expectation that they will be facing consequences if something doesn't turn out right or if it turns out very well then they also face the consequences of being a major success story." (BLM3).

There was also an appreciation by line managers that they would intervene if they felt that their team member was failing to achieve when either the task was not going to be completed in the agreed time frame or to the agreed standard. The approaches mentioned all seemed to be on the supportive and collaborative side of management. One line manager mentioned:

 "I certainly am very happy to roll my sleeves up and get stuck in but I wouldn't want to take it off somebody. I would still want them to remain involved. I might have to step in and help and become part of the team the kind of helps together till it's done." (ALM3).

Being more confrontational about performing at an under expected level was only mentioned once:

"I only confront people when I am absolutely certain that I'm doing the right thing by confronting them and where I feel it's absolutely necessary. So other than that, it tends to be more supporting and also ensuring that the people have what they need to do their job, that the conditions are right for them to do their jobs in. So I wouldn't say I'm an avid task master." (BLM3).

Most line managers from Company A and B spoke about being willing to have the performance improvement conversations if deemed necessary, and mainly line managers adopted a more supportive and encouraging approach as a first stage.

The following quote shows the line manager intention of giving the team member freedom to manage their own performance, to be accountable and to have self-determination (Deci 1985). This view reinforces and supports the psychological view of empowerment and the line manager role from a structural view.

"I think it's worth a conversation first before saying 'Don't worry about it, I'll do it.' I don't think that's particularly empowering, just taking something off somebody. It's then setting a precedent of how things might come out in the future, that if I do this this time, then every time they're struggling, it then kind of gives them the permission well, don't worry about it because if I start struggling, the line manager will take me from me. Obviously if there were serious issues and things needed to be reassigned then I would look at helping them, but if it's their task and we've discussed it upfront and they were happy to take it on but they are struggling then I would help them with what they were struggling with. That could be helping in a practical sense of well, if you'll do that bit, I could you help you do that bit, or it could be a conversation around well, what is it that they're struggling with? What could we think of to get you past this block?" (ALM3).

This view is reinforced by the views of two line managers from Company B mentioned this difference in approach for team members who are and who are not empowered:

"If I have empowered someone I expect them to take action. The people in my team who aren't empowered will see me getting involved much earlier, I do keep a tight assessment on what they do and will get involved, fact find and solve problems. I try not to do this with people I have empowered." (BLM2).

"I get more involved more quickly with my direct reports who aren't empowered; I intervene and tell them what is expected and how to get the task done." (BLM3).

Line managers speak about their informal or intuitive approach to knowing if a team member is performing well, rather than a more formal, objective assessment of competence for highly empowered team members. Line managers spoke about more documented assessments and owning project plans for team members with

low empowerment, and these project plans sat with the team member who had autonomy and high empowerment (Menon 2001). It would appear that most line managers go further than the formal approach, doing more than the performance management requirements imposed by their organisation.

"I am more supporting rather than coming in with a big stick, with the rather old-fashioned style about focusing on failure. I tend to be more focusing on what people are doing well and trying to encourage them to do more of that. So I do try to look out for where staff have performed well and that goes down to the administrators as well. And if I think they've done something well then I will actually go and see the individual and say, well done, I think you did that well. Then maybe that promotes a bit of a discussion about other bits of the job - I found it's quite effective." (BLM3).

There are elements of the five leader behaviours as identified by Arnold et al (2000) in these interviews. Coaching of team members and encouraging participative decision making are mentioned by line managers from Company A and B. throughout the interviews the researcher experienced the line managers as having a personal commitment to their work and having high standards for themselves and their team. Line managers from both company A and B did not mention talking about well-being with their team members, and they did talk about how they shared their performance concerns with their team members.

4.4.   Communication of company information

Kanter (1986) and Lawler (1992) suggest that for empowerment to occur people should know data about the organisation's activities and strategies, the external environment, competitors and business performance (Lawler, Mohram and Ledford 1995). Line managers in both companies said that this was one function of objective setting, and company communication in the form of meetings, company presentations and written information gave team members an understanding of the company strategy and activities. Line managers in both companies spoke about the benefits they felt their team members gained by understanding the context in which their company operated, and that by understanding more financial information and

future strategy their teams had an appreciation of the reasons for priorities and activities.

"The business itself, and this is right from the CEO, they have twice yearly, all-employee briefings where they brief down to the staff all the things that are happening. As I've mentioned, we have various lunches and things that are going around the business where people are encouraged to get there from mixed groups to ask questions, all of that sort of thing happens. We have monthly team briefs whereby the message from the very top of the organisation is delivered to the next level. They deliver theirs plus local news to the next level, and they deliver plus local news to the next level." (BLM2*)*.

Only line managers from company B spoke about the more informal conversations and discussions:

"If there's something that I think this individual would benefit from, I'd try to give him the information immediately. So as soon as I've got it and that's useful to that individual, I'm going to see him right away, sit down and run through it with him and have a bit of a discussion about the context and how that may affect what we want to do. I may even sometimes do it too quickly but I'm quite keen not hold onto information that other people would find useful. So as soon as I've got something that any time they might need, I'll go and I'll speak to him very quickly about it informally." (BLM3).

Line managers from Company A spoke more about the formal mechanisms for company information to be communicated, coupled with knowing that all information was on the Company's internal website so that if team members wanted to find out more information it was available to them. There could be several reasons for this including endorsing the psychological empowerment view of team members taking responsibility for meaning and impact (Spreitzer 1995), or alternatively that company A line managers adopted a more passive role in communication.

Team members from both companies gave passing reference to these formal communications events, and did not speak about gaining any personal value or benefit, which would imply that team members either seek other avenues to get this

information, or do not require this information to be highly empowered. Team members seemed to prefer informal communication, discussing company news with colleagues rather than a more formal presentation.

"I attend the company updates, we are told about new business, new projects, and how it affects us. It is just a distraction really; I don't learn anything new or helpful." (BLM4X).

Overall line managers from both companies believed that company communications helped their team members understand the task performance expectations, gave people insights into priorities and an awareness of business strategy and context (House and Dessler 1974). There was no matching belief mentioned by team members, in that team members did not mention sense-making processes as having a positive contribution to their job performance or to empowerment. Instead team members found the objective setting element of performance management to be of value in giving some context and impact. It would seem that line managers are either missing out on maximising more informal communication, or may not be fully utilising the potential of these meetings.

4.5. Line manager definitions of empowerment

Line managers were very clear in their own definition of empowerment, and that all thought it meant a team member knowing that they had the resources and self-belief to complete a task. Line managers also paid specific reference to their activities to support empowerment. The following quote echoes Gist's (1987) and Bandura's (1994) work on competence or self-efficacy in terms of an individual's belief in their capability to do their work activities. It also implies an awareness that the individual can successfully complete the task, an almost imperceptible appreciation that the team member has the power and control to be empowered.

"Empowerment is that sense of knowing that you have what you need to just get on and do something, that you have it in your control, that you've got the resources that you need, whether that's physical resource or the internal resources of yes I know I can brief that or present that or yes, I can handle that…I think it's that ability to

decide that you want to do something and to make happen, for me. So as well as the resources, it's the decision that I'm going to make it happen". (ALM3).

The next line manager again speaks of the almost imperceptible nature of empowerment in that the team member knows that the line manager will endorse their decisions. They pay reference to having the tools they need to complete the job. When asked more about what tools meant the line manager gave examples such as budget, skills and access to people whose opinion they may need. This quote has resonance with structural empowerment in that trust is implied, and that the team member has decision-making authority (Matthews et al 2002).

"If my direct reports are feeling empowered then they need to feel that they can make decisions, effect change and don't necessarily need to come and consult with me on every single aspect. They are accountable for those decisions and the delivery of the output from those decisions because you make a decision for a reason so they are then accountable for that, and that they feel they have my support, that I'm going to back their judgment, their opinion. So those are sort of key things and that they have the tools to make those decisions and be responsible for that activity without coming back to me all the time." (BLM1).

Other line managers in both companies further reinforced structural empowerment in terms of the transfer of power, of giving empowerment to a team member, with the assessment that the team member has the right skills to deliver what is required:

"Empowerment is giving, is enabling people to make decisions without recourse to higher authority all the time as long as they have the right skill set to do that. I think there are analogies being made in empowerment and driving a car. You can't just go and drive a car unless you are trained to use it and you're given a license to do it. So it's giving them license to enable them, after they've got the right skill set to make decisions that can move the process on quickly". (BLM4).

There are some interesting implications for team member competence, in that the line manager implies that one aspect of empowerment is the team member recognising that they have the right skills to do the work, that the line manager trusts

the team member to make decisions and move tasks forward to a successful conclusion. This subtly implies that there is no performance failure risk because the line manager knows that the team member can achieve task success. Implicit here is that both line managers and team members have an understanding and assessment of the competence required for each task or project, so that both parties have confidence in successful task completion.

In practical terms for the line manager is structural empowerment purely a letting go of how a team member executes a task, with a high level of certainty that the team member will be successful? Rather than taking power to go beyond expectations, is structural empowerment from the line manager perspective purely letting team members know that they are accountable for their job performance, and giving them the freedom, within organisational confines, to do their job? This would seem to be more aligned to a good management practice for experienced team members, which could be from a line manager perspective the definition of structural empowerment. This view was endorsed by line managers from company A and B.

"Off the bat, I would say delegation is more directing. Can you do this piece of work? Whereas empowerment, I'm not being so prescriptive. John has a job profile. We know what his role is. I understand what his role is. Hopefully, he does. I believe so but I don't break that down into individual tasks and so to deliver that role, John, I'm asking can you do this, this, this and this." (ALM4).

"The word empowerment means that if I give somebody that task, I want them to go away and think rationally about what they're doing and understand when they're making decisions but actually that's within their gift to do - I wouldn't expect them to be making necessarily a technical decision on something that wasn't their specialty, their specialised subject." (BLM2).

Line managers have differing views on their contribution to team member empowerment, some see their role in empowerment as enabling their team member to be empowered, that the tasks that the team member is doing is within the competence of team member, and where the team member is unable to perform the task requirements within their competence they would seek advice from their line

manager. Essentially the team member sets the pace and approach to the work within the framework of agreed deadlines and priorities. This would mean the team member experiencing competence development, and that there are boundaries to empowerment in terms of budget or spend implications to a business. This aligns to the empowerment climate concept of Seibert, Silver and Randolph (2004) in that the line manager is supporting empowerment. Other line managers from company A and B saw empowerment as developing in team members additional skills and confidence and encouraging the team member to go beyond their identified job role.

There would seem to be an element of a line manager 'playing safe' in the sense of giving freedom to team members whom the line manager knew could do the job was repeated by line managers in both companies. Empowerment may be a natural extension of managing people, and that by empowering people line managers encourage their team members to make decisions, and that this happens after the team member has been working with the line manager for sometime: up to eighteen months with some line managers. This endorses the structural or relational empowerment approach, in that line managers passing power to their team members (Kanter 1977). Until this level of trust is formed it would seem that line managers remain involved in the detail of the work of their team members.

4.6.   The reasons that line managers enable and encourage empowerment

Some of the reasons for line managers in company A and B empowering team members were to enable team members to solve problems themselves without relaying information to more senior people to make the decision (Parker and Turner 2002), and team members feeling more resilient and flexible (Thomas and Velthouse 1990).

Three out of four managers from both company A and B were aware that empowerment gave the team a wider spectrum of competence, in that more people could deliver the task delivery expectations of the team, and that empowerment would enhance the reputation of the team and increase the level of service by offering more flexibility of who can deliver to customers:

"It will give the department more value. So I can just say well okay, L can do that for you or M can do that for you. It's just seems that we're more of a depth of department." (ALM2).

Several managers from both company A and B mentioned this increase in team competence or functional flexibility as a reason for encouraging empowerment in team members. Line managers believed that by giving the team member the freedom to decide to progress their work the team member would deepen their competence and that the team member would learn more by making decisions themselves. The line managers believed that by giving freedom for team members to deepen their competence showed that the line manager valued their team members. This freedom to take action and the line manager giving feedback helped the team member to understand where their role linked to the wider organisation, which encouraged alignment to the organisation (linking to the meaning aspect of psychological empowerment). The quote below describes how a line manager believes that high empowerment helps the team member to contribute more to the organisation than if they had low empowerment. Empowerment is seen as enabling employees to achieve more and so increase their contribution to the business (Thomas and Velthouse 1990).

"To make and feel that they're doing something that's worthwhile, that they don't feel like they're just a part of a process or just a locker man-machine, if you like, who's just told what to do and he comes in at 8 o'clock in the morning, switches his brain on, he does what he wants, and the goes out the door. He feels like he's contributing to the progression of the organisation and he feels more valued. If the guy feels valued for doing it he's likely then to give you a lot more than treating them as if you're a unit of labour, I need you on that job that day, do that job for me, thank you very much." (BLM4).

This was coupled with an appreciation that team members may not execute tasks in the same way as the line manager, and that mistakes might be made and that was part of a development and learning process:

"So by empowering them, I'm hoping to hone them up quicker, learn by their mistakes because if you just go through a whole structured bit and try to tell them everything about every stage we will still be here in five years' time. Maybe you will get there quicker if you have to go find it yourself, I find. Go teach yourself something. Learn by mistakes." (ALM2).

The above quote also highlights the move from the hierarchical power over approach to management (Clegg 2008) in terms of telling a team member what to do, to the team member finding out and taking responsibility for their actions. This has resonance with structural empowerment in that this quote shows the line manager giving the team member space, letting the team member develop their competence and understanding that this approach may hasten competence development.

There would seem to be the potential for this to be a negative experience for the team member, in that they could feel almost abandoned and left to find their own way, almost a sink or swim approach to managing people rather than a deliberate decision to show trust in a team member's abilities. This would seem to be in opposition to a responsibility of a manager to develop team members, to encourage and foster team member self-confidence and well-being. This line manager speaks of an impatience to empower, and that empowerment as they define it is about saving time, learning from mistakes and to encourage team member responsibility.

Some line managers highlighted the motivational aspect of empowerment in that line managers believed that empowerment created a more interesting work challenge for people, and that even in what were perceived as more standard process driven roles such as administration empowerment could happen. This line manager felt that by giving their team members the freedom to decide how they completed tasks, which processes to use and to make improvements to existing processes that more interesting and mentally challenging work would be created for team members. The line manager felt that by following this approach to giving freedom of process the team members would know that their line manager has trust in them, had confidence in their abilities and that it created a sense of ownership of results. This quote is typical of line managers from both company A and B, and shows the benefits of structural empowerment:

"I think you sense more enthusiasm from people if you've empowered them, and the feeling of ownership, and the fact that it means that even for the people doing the administration, I think that they feel they own the job rather than they're doing the job." (BLM3).

When line managers were asked about their reasons for empowering team members the most popular response from both companies was one of personal expediency, saying phrases such as:

"It also makes my life easier because I don't have to do everything", "to get stuff off my desk, simply, honestly." (ALM1).

Expediency and making life easier was aligned with line managers realising they cannot do all work tasks themselves, and that work output would be increased if team members were empowered to complete tasks or projects themselves. This would seem to endorse the role of a line manager as encouraging responsible autonomy (Friedman 1977) to contribute to achieving the organisation's goals.

Another popular response was that line managers from both companies encouraged empowerment by their team members for almost altruistic reasons, in that it felt the right thing to do, to give people responsibility was a natural and almost unconscious management process:

"I think it's in my nature. I think it's just how I'm made." (ALM3).

Management style and beliefs about how people should be managed also were discussed. All line managers believe that empowerment was the way to get the best from people, and that their own personal experience of being managed in a more hierarchical power approach early on in their career meant that the line manager chose to be a more empowering manager:

"I just truly don't believe it's how you get the best out of people, if you try and control and constrain and tell them "no" or suppress them. That's not something that I try and

do at work. That's just a belief that I have that there's a huge amount of potential in everybody and I don't feel threatened if Y's doing a project really well or Z's really doing really well and they're getting a lot praise. I don't think, blimey, maybe they should have my job. And I've been under managers who have, I think, behaved in that way. They've kept their good people down for fear of their own job or reputation or whatever it was." (ALM3).

Three line managers from company B highlighted a belief that if a team member knew that they were accountable for the task that the team member would take more care and effort to be successful. This would seem to point towards an appreciation of another benefit of structural empowerment:

"It's really to enable them to do their jobs because, as I've said, if you don't empower people to do something then they're deferring back to whoever the manager happens to be. It really makes it very hard for them to do their job and the fact that if they're also not empowered, they are unlikely to take the same amount of care with the decisions that they're making because they're thinking that somebody else is going to be responsible for this. If they know that their decision is the final decision and they've got to make it, they're going to put the effort in. Yes. And I think that's quite important." (BLM3).

This researcher could not find a similar intention in Company A line managers for team members to take more care and effort. The reason for this difference is unclear.

The reasons line managers encouraged their team members to take higher levels of empowerment ranged from wanting to develop the competence of their team, so increasing work volumes and productivity, to more altruistic reasons of believing that is the right way to manage people. Some of these reasons would seem to be in line with the elements of psychological empowerment: competence, choice and impact (Wang and Lee 2009) were mentioned by almost all line managers, although the impact aspect seems only to apply to influencing operating outcomes rather than the broader strategy of the organisation (Ashforth 1989). By supporting empowerment line managers were able to reap benefits for themselves in terms of increasing their

reputation for delivery within the organisation, and the organisation benefits in terms of productivity and speed of delivery. However if the line manager endorses empowerment to achieve these benefits without any supportive or encouraging relational empowerment behaviours these hoped for benefits may not be achieved, in that there would seem to be a potential negative outcome of a team member feeling abandoned without any line manager intervention or attention, and this "sink or swim" approach could have a negative impact on job performance and organisational benefits (Wang and Lee 2009).

4.7. The indicators that a line manager uses in order to be comfortable and confident with a team member being highly empowered

The structural approach to empowerment gives line managers a different role from the one of directly controlling resources (Mathieu et al. 2006) into one of enabling team members to create their own controls by creating their own self-imposed goals and priorities (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). This does imply a skill set of clear communication, encouragement, giving feedback and enabling development of competency. This could be counter to the 'traditional' view of controlling line managers (den Hartog, Boselie & Paauwe, 2004), and is one where the line manager creates the climate for accountability for work tasks to transfer to a team member, and trusts that the individual can complete the task, and potentially follow a different process from one that the line manager would have done and get a successful outcome. This follows from Kirkman and Rosen (1999) who found that a team leader's empowering leadership behaviours were positively linked to team member empowerment, and the behaviours included developing a team members sense of self-control, encouraging responsibility and autonomy, and inviting team member input. Furthermore, Chen and his colleagues found that leadership climate had a positive relationship with team empowerment (Chen, Kirkman, Kanfer, Allen & Rosen, 2007).

One line manager in company A spoke about a gradual process of different interventions that build up to a team member taking empowerment, and that they realised that to start working with a team member by encouraging empowerment may not be successful, and could be experienced as stress by the team member:

"I like to just delegate straight out to show that I trust in what they can do or give them empowerment to go do something but sometimes I miss the instruction, mentoring, guiding, or coaching stages of it and then they don't see that as a positive empowerment. They see it as potentially it's a bit beyond them." (ALM2).

This was the only line manager from both companies to speak about some form of progression of management activities to develop team members to be ready for empowerment. There would seem to be a readiness implied in that the team member if empowered too early may struggle and not achieve which could have a negative impact on the team member, potentially causing stress and/or a reduction in productivity.

This quote also indicates a blurring of understanding between delegation and empowerment in that the line manager mentioned empowerment and delegation seemingly interchangeably.

Line managers in company A spoke more about concepts relating to self-confidence and the personal qualities of their team members (Spreitzer 1997). As well as an understanding of the competence level of the team member this line manager would seem to be referring to a motivation of a team member to want to be empowered, and also that the line manager believes that some team members may not want to be empowered. Implicit is that the line manager encourages or offers empowerment and that the team member did not wish to be empowered, this reinforces the elements of psychological approach empowerment in that if they are not present empowerment will not happen. This shows that taking a purely structural approach to empowerment does not lead to success, and that this line manager was aware that the team member needed to be ready, aligning to psychological empowerment.

"Sometimes empowerment doesn't work because there's just not the foundation to empower people on. You can put somebody in a very liberated and empowered, resourced, funded role but if they're not the right person, they're not the right person, whereas if you get somebody who just wants to bounce of the wall without feeling constrained, their level of understanding empowerment is going to be completely different. Working with someone who wants more, who wants to problem solve and

have authority can be a challenge, but one that I prefer to someone who refuses empowerment." (ALM2).

Most line managers in both companies mentioned understanding the competence of each team member as important, and that a line manager would have a conversation about how the skills of the team member matched those required for success. It is interesting to read the role the line manager sees themselves having in assessing competence, in that following Mishra and Spreitzer's (1998) definition of competence as the skills and abilities necessary to perform a job well and that the line manager allocates tasks based on this competence assessment. It would imply that the power rests with the line manager, and that even if a team member were to perceive himself or herself as being competent, the decision to give the team member the opportunity for empowerment rests with the line manager. Again this shows both structural and psychological empowerment in action.

"If I felt that if the task was theirs, it would be talking to them about that task, explaining why I felt that they would be the right person to do that task, what the task was, what did they think about what I was saying. Would they be happy to take it on? And then it would be talking about the detail about timeframes. If they reticent about taking it on, it would be exploring why they might be reticent or what part of it was making them feel challenged or going that's hard, and hopefully making somebody feel as though they could achieve that task." (ALM3).

The line manager above (ALM3) perceives their role in the empowerment relationship to be one of creating self-awareness and self-efficacy (Bandura 1977) so that the team member perceives that they can be successful. This does highlight a skill requirement for line managers in that this quote shows some of the five behaviours mentioned by Arnold, Arad, Rhoades and Drasgow (2000). Interestingly no line manager spoke about their own skill development in becoming an empowering manager.

One manager at company B mentioned that when they empowered someone they expected that person to conduct and complete the task, and not give that task to another colleague or one of their team members:

"So here I have responsibilities and I've discharged some of those down to these people here. All right. So today, these guys here are making decisions and I'm okay with them making those decisions. I don't mind that but below them, what I found out was that they have discharged some of that down to these guys here, and each of these guys here is going to be different to the next." (BLM2).

This was the only line manager who spoke specifically about their negative reactions to a team member handing a task to another colleague. It would seem for this line manager that empowerment does not allow for the team member to pass a task to a colleague to complete it, instead that the empowered task should remain with the team member themselves. This would seem to go against the concept of self-determination, as described by Spreitzer (1995) as having choice or freedom about how the work can be carried out and to select the most appropriate way to perform the task, which could include delegating the task to a colleague, and yet be aligned to structural empowerment coming from the line manager to the team member, and not beyond.

Line managers spoke about the length of time that line managers and team members have worked together as a factor in determining the level of confidence that line managers had in successful task achievement. The longer people had been working together the greater amount of trust and confidence the line manager had that the task would be successfully completed to a good performance level:

"I'm saying with my team because they quite disparate, on a daily basis, I won't even know what all of them are doing with any certainty. They could be doing all sorts of different things and I won't know and I largely leave them to get on with it because I couldn't possibly be keeping an eye on what everybody's doing all the time. So that's kind of how we have to work." (BLM3).

Two line managers from company B mentioned that it could take up to eighteen months for this level of maturity and trust to develop in the management relationship, and that until that period of time had elapsed they would be unlikely to encourage empowerment in the team member. In defining the role of a line manager in the

empowerment relationship it would seem relevant to factor in the time duration of the management relationship as an influencer to the line manager encouraging empowerment. The researcher could find no reference to time of the management relationship as a factor of a successful empowerment relationship in any literature read for this research. The research on structural empowerment pays mention to steps in the line manager passing power to the team member, but not to the time duration before a line manager empowers a team member. Spreitzer (1996) highlights the factors in psychological empowerment, Freidman (1977) writes about responsible autonomy, and yet researchers do not write about the duration that it takes for the line manager to feel comfortable and confident in supporting empowerment. Identifying this duration and assessment criteria may give line managers a yardstick or expectation as to the timeframe for modifying their behaviour from hierarchical to structural empowerment, and may help team members to have a benchmark of how long they should expect to move from low to high empowerment.

Only one line manager spoke of the learning that they experience from empowering their team members, and that they empower their team members to get the job done, and that how the team completes the task is for the team member to decide. This reinforces the self-determination aspect of psychological empowerment that Bell and Staw (1989) spoke about in specific reference to work methods, pace and effort, as well as the passing of power from a structural empowerment perspective:

"*For me, as long as the end result was what we set out to achieve but they did it slightly a different way, I'm find that quite stimulating, I'd be inquisitive of how they'd gotten to that same result using a different method. I find that interesting. As long as the outcome was first required, if they did it a different way because maybe I could learn something from that and that'd be good. So I don't prescribe how they do stuff. I'll just dip in and test logic and just make sure they're comfortable with what they're doing and give them a support if they ask for it and need it, but generally be there, not detached from it. Don't just fire and forget, if you like.*" (BLM4).

There would seem to be two main factors that influence the line manager in deciding when they support team member to be empowered: the competence level of the

team member and the duration of the management relationship. Line managers only spoke about empowerment in terms of team members doing tasks within their job remit, and mentioned several times that they still had oversight or involvement to monitor progress. The question 'when do line managers feel comfortable/confident with empowerment?' could be answered by saying that 'when they know their team member is completely competent to deliver a successful outcome.' No reference was paid to the meaning dimension of empowerment, in that line managers did not mention team members contributing or influencing strategy or broader work projects such as function wide improvement projects or strategic reviews of the business and the market (Kirkman and Rosen 1997).

4.8.   The empowerment container – what is empowered?

It would seem appropriate to now move to look at what is empowered. Do line managers perceive there to be any boundaries to empowerment in terms of what the team member can do, how much freedom is given, are there any limits in terms of mechanisms such as spend or resource allocation, and is there any contested space? How does the line manager encourage the team member to take the power for task achievement? Menon (2001) distinguished between two forms of ownership: the goal ownership which relates to the team member having ownership of the goals of the organisation, and perceived control which gives the team member ownership of the means to achieve the organisational goal. How does the line manager encourage both forms of ownership?

Empowering leadership was defined by Srivastava, Bartol and Locke (2006) as the behaviours that encourage power to be shared with team member, the empowering managing would seem to use different behaviours to those of a hierarchical manager and this section explores the behavioural difference. How does the team member decide what needs to be done, when it needs to be done and how to do it? What (if any) specific processes or mechanisms help them to be highly empowered?

4.8.1. Do line managers see any boundaries to empowerment?

One foundation of psychological empowerment is employee perceived power, and Menon (2001) explores that at the individual level power can be experienced in three dimensions: perceived control, perceived competence and power energising towards achieving valued goals. In these interviews line managers spoke of giving control (responsibility) to their team members, and by encouraging and helping the team member to believe that they are competent that empowerment was fostered at the team member level. Line managers did not mention any specific activity in relation to helping their team member believe their work was meaningful, or aligned to company values or goals. This could be implied by the formal performance management approach line managers used, as well as communicating company messages, news and plans.

All line managers from both company A and B spoke about the giving of responsibility to take action to complete a work task to team members (Kirkman and Rosen 1999), and one line manager spoke that by symbolically telling the team member that they now had the authority to sign off a procedure showed that the team member is responsible. This meant that in a document showing who was responsible for the quality of each procedure the line manager has signed it and indicated that the team member was responsible, and that each time that specific process was completed the team member would sign to show completion. This gave the team member authority to approve a specific limit of budgetary spend, to ask colleagues to work overtime and to order materials needed to successfully complete the task. There were activities that were outside of the control of the team member and these included recruitment of people to keep the team functioning, the ordering of new equipment used in the process, or agreeing a longer completion time with the internal customer (another team elsewhere in the organisation). The line manager did not elaborate any further into their own behaviour to facilitate their team member being highly empowered. This sign off would seem to symbolise for this line management giving accountability or perceived control to their team member, following the structural approach to empowerment:

"So what I try to do now is to make the staff more accountable for their actions by giving them responsibility. The business actually requires me to authorise the process but what I said to them is 'you sign your part of the form. If you're unhappy with it, sit down, talk to me about it, and I will sign it off. I'm not going to read the process through anymore. Now your signature is the one that's actually going to make the thing go into print.'" (BLM3).

This is aligned to other line managers who spoke of giving team members the opportunity to participate in meetings that the line manager would usually attend, allowing team members to give presentations to more senior employees and team members making recruitment decisions. These would seem to be indicators of structural empowerment activity. Line managers from both company A and B spoke that these activities were not ones that a team member with low empowerment would undertake, showing a stretch of boundary for highly empowered team members.

This manager spoke about trusting the team member to take different decisions than the line manager would have done had they been doing the task, that empowerment implied a relinquishing of wanting to control how the task was done:

"To empower somebody you have to trust them to get on with it and let go, allowing them to do something the way that they would do it, not necessarily the way that I would do it. So you might have a conversation about what the end result looks like or what the finished article looks like but the fact that they might get that by slightly different route to the one that you would have taken is immaterial as long as you reach the expected end goal." (ALM1).

Most line managers spoke about one of their management functions as that of being clear on expectations, of being able to motivate their team members and define the boundaries for performance. These structural empowerment activities also align to a promotion of self-efficacy (Bandura 1977) as a means of encouraging the team members to believe in their own capabilities would seem a key element in the line manager role in an empowerment situation. This would seem to couple with being clear on performance expectations. When asked about how the line manager decided when empowerment would be effective this line manager said:

"It takes a lot of different types of people to make a good team, and you need to know the strengths and weaknesses of each of your players in the team so that you can get the best out of them in terms of performance. So I like to talk to people, understand what makes them tick, and then apply their skills appropriately in the right areas and do that with obviously some sort of guide in terms of what performance output we're looking for in terms of what it is we're aiming to do." (BLM4).

When prompted into giving more detail the line manager talked about giving his own ideas to the team member on what the team member should do to achieve task success. What the line manager called guiding was suggesting what had to be done and how the team member should do it he then reflected that this was not really empowerment, even though his first thought was that he was empowering his team members. This would seem to highlight the dilemma for line managers when they want to promote empowerment: what is the line manager's role, and how do they still ensure that their team will be successful? This tension on the one hand is for the line manager to be successful and achieve their team's agreed performance objectives, and on the other the team member's desire to be empowered and have impact and choice (Thomas and Velthouse 1990) would seem to be at the core of the empowerment debate. In this example the implicit need for line manager control would seem to influence this line manager in his management behaviour, and what he originally termed as empowerment was control. This would seem to be a contested area in the experience of structural empowerment: do line managers pass over power and exhibit the six empowering leadership behaviours highlighted by Pearce and Sims (2002): encouraging independent action, encouraging opportunity thinking, encouraging team work, encouraging self-development, using participative goal setting and encouraging self-reward, or do line managers merely allocate work to experienced team members and suggest how it is completed? The evidence from these interviews is mixed: some line managers from both company A and B did believe and gave examples for encouraging opportunity thinking, self-development and team work in their team members, and three line managers from both companies (two from Company A and one from Company B) spoke of subtly controlling what their team members did, under the banner of empowerment.

Line managers from both companies saw one of their primary roles as defining the overall direction for their team, and then each line manager then encouraging team members to achieve this direction. Another line manager from company B stated that the line manager's role is one of distance, direction setting and stepping back from getting involved in the team member's task detail. This would seem to endorse leadership behaviours associated with structural empowerment.

"I do try to set an overall direction with people's involvement. So I try to make sure that I understand where we are going. So that's part of it, is looking along the top. And then underneath that, it tends to be supporting and encouraging…if I keep coming down, pointing out things that aren't absolutely right then I'm concerned about the effect upon the individual's performance. I wouldn't be doing that." (BLM3).

Line managers in both companies spoke about their awareness of how their management style and approach could have a positive or negative impact on each team member, and that they needed to calibrate and adapt their own behaviours to encourage each team member to perform to an optimum level (Bennis and Nanus 1985). Some line managers stated that they did not want to strong or over-bearing, with one manager saying:

"I don't aspire to having a massive ego. In fact, I've advocated before we should all have our egos taken out when we come into a work environment where you need people to work as a team because the ego will be a barrier to you to engaging people and empowering people because you don't want to let go of the power that you've got. If you hold onto this power you stay as the boss, dictating what needs to be done, rather than giving the power to your team." (BLM4).

When asked about how they approached line management, line managers were clear that their style influenced the effectiveness of their team members. Some line managers spoke about being optimistic and believing that their team members would be high performers, solve problems and generally achieve the tasks and projects within their level of responsibility. These managers also felt that this conviction

influenced their team members into being more self-confident in their own capabilities, and to be more empowered. One manager said:

"I think they would say that I was relaxed, hopefully supportive, encouraging, calm. I would hope empowering in that I don't kind of hover over them and that they have been coached rather than telling. I know obviously I do sometimes need to tell and give direct, "I need you to do it like this.' 'I need you to do it this way.' I really do try and use coaching styles and questions to explore what they want to do, or their objectives or the projects that they're working on." (ALM3).

4.9. Summary of findings from chapter

Both companies have formal performance policies that are initiated by the line manager group. The intention in these approaches is to give line managers the frameworks to set the goals of each team members, monitor their progress against these goals and then classify and rate performance.

Line managers from both companies believed that informal performance management approaches such as regular conversations did encourage empowerment in terms of contributing to self-determination, competence and self-efficacy. They felt that giving feedback on performance, both positive and improvement helped their team members be aware of their contribution and development areas. There would seem to be a 'safety net' for empowerment in that line managers said that they would intervene if they felt an empowered team member was failing.

Line managers are aware of being less involved with team members who they consider to be highly empowered, displaying the leader behaviours identified by Arnold at al (2000). There would seem to be a balance point to this involvement in that too little involved maybe experienced as abandonment by the tea member, even though the line manager's intention is to show trust and give freedom.

Company communication was thought to be beneficial for team members, in that line managers believe it gave information on company strategy, activities and

performance. Line managers hoped that this helped team members have role clarity and an understanding of how they contributed to company performance.

Line managers were clear that they encouraged team member empowerment by development, showing trust, supporting and coaching. The reasons they encouraged empowerment ranged from expediency, to believing that it was the right way to manage and that it increased their own personal reputation within the company. One difference between the companies was that line managers in company B believed that team members would take more care and work harder to be successful if they were empowered. Involving team members in meetings, broadening their job role and encouraging them to meet with more senior managers were all activities that the line managers did for already highly empowered team members, rather than in the route to enabling empowerment.

Assessing team member confidence, competence and motivation to be empowered were all factors line managers considered when assessing team member empowerment readiness. One factor was the duration of the management relationship in that line managers would be more ready to empower a team member if they had worked with them for at least eighteen months.

Defining business strategy and team direction were seen as line manager activities, even with empowered team members, and the line manager than gave this direction to the team member in a discussion about performance goals. Line managers from company B spoke about stepping back from the detail of the work of an empowered team member, instead seeing their role as an encourager.

There was a high degree of similarity of approach to empowerment in line managers of both companies. Structural empowerment activities included giving feedback, setting team direction and encouraging and coaching. Empowerment would seem to be limited to tasks that are within the competence of team members to complete successfully, and that team members are given the freedom to prioritise and decide how they will complete these tasks (Thomas and Velthouse 1990). The mention of skill development is aligned to current role expectations in essence that team members develop their skills to be more effective or efficient at their current role

(Wang and Lee 2009). No line manager spoke about giving empowerment on a task that was perceived to be outside the team member's competence or capability (Bandura 1977). There would seem to be a "playing it safe" approach to empowerment, and a lack of empowerment of non-day-to-day tasks or involvement in anything more strategic. Line managers perceive that the boundaries to empowerment would seem to be within the team members current role expectations and that levels of competence can be increased to give the team member a broader set of role tasks, and that the line manager's role is to look at strategy, future direction and translate this into performance requirements for their team.

Line managers from both companies do see their activities as contributing to the empowerment experience of team members. By giving feedback, by giving responsibility and power, by enhancing team member competence, by offering context and meaning line managers do perceive themselves as encouraging the empowerment of the team member.

5.0   The psychological empowerment experience of team members

5.1.   Introduction

Having examined the structural experience of empowerment from the organisational and line manager perspectives the researcher will now turn to the team member experience of empowerment. The researcher will use the psychological view of empowerment as espoused by writers Spreitzer (1995 and 1996), Stander and Rothman (2010), Wang and Lee (2009) and Menon (1994). Psychological empowerment comes from social psychology theory and makes the assumption that empowerment is based on the perceptions of employees, and exists when employees believe they can exercise some control over their job. Spreitzer (1995) modified the model of Thomas and Velthouse (1990) and defined empowerment as follows:

"...A motivational construct manifested in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. Together these four cognitions reflect an active, rather than passive orientation to a work role. By active orientation is meant an orientation in which an individual wishes and feels able to shape his or her work role or context." (Spreitzer 1995: 1441).

The researcher proposes that psychological empowerment in the workplace occurs when a team member believes that they have the appropriate skills, an attachment to the purpose of their organisation, the freedom to decide what needs to be done, how to complete the work and when to work. This is coupled with a structural aspect of empowerment in that the line manager plays an active role in encouraging the team member to take responsibility, authority and power for achieving key aspects of the work of the team, so that the line manager actively contributes to the success of the team member empowerment, and it is the employee who ultimately decides if they are empowered. As well encouraging the team member, the line manager can also create the conditions that foster and encourage their team members to be empowered by showing their trust and belief in the team member's capability by giving positive feedback, and by stepping back from any day-to-day involvement in

tasks. The foundation is that the team member believes that they are empowered, thus they have task autonomy to make their own decisions on work process, and can self-monitor their performance progress to know that they are delivering the requirements of the task, and by being more proactive in managing their relationship with their line manager to keep the line manager informed. Workplace empowerment involves a working relationship in which the team member believes that they have freedom and discretion to decide how to do their job and the line manager's role is one of enabler and encourager. Essentially the team member takes empowerment and the line manager supports this action in their managerial activities, rather than the line manager actively giving empowerment.

5.2. Team member definitions of empowerment

The team member definitions of empowerment seem to align to the psychological definitions of empowerment in terms of the four cognitions. In terms of competence and self-determination (Gist 1987, Deci, Connell and Ryan 1989) team members see themselves as being able to make decisions, in impact (Ashforth 1989) team members see that they have an influence over their work but not the wider strategic activities of their organisations, and team members would seem to perceive a fit between their behaviours and the requirements of the job role (Hackman and Oldham 1980). There would seem to be a transition from not being empowered to being empowered, where the line manager does begin to be more "hands off", and gives the team member freedom to make decisions.

"To be empowered, I would say, is giving you everything that you need to be able to get on and do something. You've got the right tools and you've got the right support mechanisms around you to be able to do something." (BLM1Y).

Team members from both companies spoke about having freedom; the scope to make decisions and to know the line manager would be supportive. Here are quotes from team members in both companies:

"For me to be empowered, it's for me to work in my business areas, make decisions, implement decisions, make changes without having to tell anybody, tell her, or consult with her, or worry about what she thinks. I'll just get on with it." (ALM1X).

"I guess empowerment is being empowered effectively to fulfil your role and not only I think free reign—not exactly the right word—but within the confines of the company structure and governance, procedure, system, policy and all, being given the latitude to fulfil the role that you're charged with fulfilling. Latitude is probably not quite the right word there but given the prerequisites, the wherewithal to actually do that and free reign to get on to get the job done. But I guess also there's a two-way street with that from an empowerment perspective. I guess it's also having that communication back to LM1 as well to make sure that we have an understanding of where we are." (BLM1X).

It would seem that team members from Company A were more reluctant to involve their line manager to talk about work, to seek their opinion or to get clarity. The work itself is fairly complex, and yet seven of the team spoke about not involving their line manager, and the other Company A team members did not mention actively involving their line manager. Company B team members from the four line manager teams all spoke of involving their line manager, and understanding that empowerment meant having the freedom, responsibility, skills and motivation to do their work.

This quote highlights the positive impact of psychological empowerment on individuals. It would seem that the team member appreciates the impact of their role (Ashforth 1989) on the wider business. This quote implies an understanding of the organisational context and how the team member contributes to organisational success.

"But she just lets me get on with it. She never challenges anything that I've done - why are you doing that or why haven't you done this? I don't get any direction in terms of workload from her at all which suits me down to the ground. This means I enjoy my job as I work out what needs to be done, I know where it fits into the business need and can make a difference." (ALM1X).

5.3. Is the team member able to decide what needs to be done, when it needs to be done and how to do it?

The line manager trusting the team member was a concept that was frequently mentioned by team members from both companies. Trust was defined by team members in both companies as being given the freedom to make decisions, to have an almost endorsement from the line manager, that an absence of line manager intervention meant that the line manager trusted them and the team member was empowered.

"It's empowerment. He trusts me to get on with a good job … good's a strange word. He trusts me to do the best I can with what I've got." (BLM3X).

"He's never actually said yeah, I trust you but he doesn't say not to do it and he lets me get on with the job so by letting me get on with things and if I have a problem go and see him. He doesn't need to be bothered by what I'm doing because that's my job." (BLM3Y).

These quotes mentioning trust would seem to follow Deci's (1989) reasoning that for people to feel empowered they should experience their work environment as liberating and offering freedom, rather than constraining or controlling. It would seem in these quotes that team members perceive their work environment to be one that offers them freedom to make decisions, to use their skills and resources in an effective way and to believe that their line manager trusts them. Trust appears to be subtle in that the team members do not mention that their line manager told them that they were trusted, instead that the line manager actions of giving freedom and latitude were symbolic of being trusted.

Team members do understand that there are limits to what is empowered, and that within the boundary for empowerment are budget spend, minor process improvements, resource allocation and communication. Most line managers and team members are in agreement that empowerment involves having the tangible resources as well as a sense of knowing that they have the power to make decisions. Team members speak about being empowered within their role, in that

they are empowered in how they do their job rather than by taking additional responsibilities beyond the boundary of their job. Perceived control was highlighted by many team members in terms of impact and choice (Thomas and Velthouse 1990). The aspects of decisions that were within the boundary for team members from both companies included making slight changes to a process that did not have any budget implications, deciding on the order or sequence of tasks, as long as the deadline was met, seeking the opinions of colleagues at similar and different levels in the organisation, and signing that a stage in process had been completed and so could be passed to another team. Team members from all teams across both companies were in agreement as to the scope of empowerment.

"If I'm fully empowered, it means to me that I'm able to make all the decisions that will affect me delivering my project on time and to whatever the budget happens to end up as. I'm fully empowered to make all of those decisions. That doesn't mean to say that anybody above me will agree with them but I should be able to have that access to make my case and understand either the acceptance of that case or the rejection. I should be given that chance to do that. So I don't actually make these big decisions, I just suggest to senior managers and they make the decisions on where the project should go next. I just manage the day to day operations, I can make suggestions on the big decisions, but the senior managers actually make the decision." (BLM4X).

"I am told 'if that's what you feel that you want to make that decision, that choice, that route then go with it. It may not necessarily be the right choice and we'll have a look at it after but that's your choice'. I did have that. I cannot make decisions on large spend, on long term changes, these have to be done by my manager, but the immediate choices I can take and know that I will be supported." (BLM4Z).

Team members would seem very aware of the boundary of empowerment being firmly within the requirements of their role, they did not speak of taking "power" from their line managers for tasks that were not aligned to the team member, or spotting tasks and projects that were outside of their job parameters or job description. Team members appear to be satisfied being empowered within their role, team members spoke about being busy and having enough to do within their role. Empowerment for

within role tasks would seem to give people enough opportunity for job satisfaction, aligned to Ashforth's (1990) view on impact within empowerment as being able to influence the outcomes of work. This contrasts with some line manager activity of believing that they encourage team members to be involved in activities beyond the scope of the team member's role.

The following quote highlights one boundary to empowerment in that the team member feels empowered to run their work on a more operational way, and that their line manager still has responsibility for strategy and product development. This recognising of a boundary for strategy and long term thinking was mentioned by three team members from two teams in company B, and was not referred to at all by company A.

"Personally, I feel like I'm empowered because when I have gone to him for authorisation for instance. He goes, "Actually, you don't need confirm with me. You are perfectly authorised to do it yourself" but there's nowhere in the company legislation that tells you you're authorised to do or not. It's like sometimes I think am I meant to be doing this or not so I will ask him, but every time I ask him, he goes, "Go and do it yourself. Just go for it. You know what you're doing is right. Your thought process is correct. I'm happy for you to go and deal with that stuff." So yes, I feel empowered by him in the sense I can pretty much run my part of the business and try and make it fully effective, and kind of go and makes the contacts and makes the necessary enquiries and even to the point where I can call up customers or whatever I need to do to make things happen and he's there if I say it's a good idea to support it. However I cannot go further and create new products and develop my part of the business. That is still my manager's job." (BLM2X).

There would seem to be a boundary or limitation to these decisions in terms of magnitude of decisions or power. Specific financial budgetary limits were mentioned by some line managers, and there were organisational limits to financial spend or approval that were allocated to job grade, and one manager circumvented these guidelines by telling their team member that they could now sign off a greater capital expenditure. The more operational decisions could be taken by team members, and team members appreciated that bigger decisions involving strategy or large budget

spend would be decided by senior managers, and that they could share their views, but these views would not necessarily be accepted (House 1988). Activities that were outside of the control of the team member included recruitment of people to keep the team functioning, the ordering of new equipment used in the process, or agreeing a longer completion time with the internal customer (another team elsewhere in the organisation). Also outside of the team member's empowerment boundary were employment flexibility, people had a specified time to start and finish work, and people tended kept to these times, working longer to get the task completed without the opportunity to earn any immediate financial or flex time reward. Sometimes these boundaries were defined in documentation, on other occasions team members spoke about conversations with their line manager that agreed the boundary, and other team members spoke about just knowing how far they could go and did not mention a desire to take more responsibility or power.

There would appear to be limits to empowerment, and that the organisation would still have control over decisions with a great business impact that purely operational decisions. The psychological empowerment conditions of perceived control and perceived competence (Menon 1991) were mentioned in many interviews, and little mention was given to goal internalisation in terms of making a difference to the wider organisation or world (Bennis and Nanus 1985).

"If I'm fully empowered, it means to me that I'm able to make all the decisions that will affect me delivering my project on time and to whatever the budget happens to end up as. I'm fully empowered to make all of those decisions. That doesn't mean to say that anybody above me will agree with them but I should be able to have that access to make my case and understand either the acceptance of that case or the rejection. I should be given that chance to do that. I stay within my role though, rather than looking wider at long term plans or large scale improvement projects. I make a difference at my level, which contributes to the department and business success." (BLM4X).

There is an element of confusion in the last quote, in that the team member mentions having the freedom to make decisions, and yet they need to make their case to other

people to get their decision endorsed or approved. This would tend to show making recommendations rather than decisions. The power would still seem to rest with the line manager rather than the team member. The team member is aware of the impact of their job on the wider organisation, which would seem to seem to align with Spreitzer (1997).

Another team member in the same team spoke of making decisions that were potentially not the same one as that they knew their line manager would make in that situation, but that their line manager would support them, and review the decision with them after the task had been completed to learn and assess performance. This would seem to indicate an appreciation of freedom to decide how to complete a task, even when the team ember is aware that process they follow will be different to their line manager.

"If that's what you feel that you want to make that decision, that choice, that route then go with it. It may not necessarily be the right choice and we'll have a look at it after but that's your choice and that's how I felt I did have." (BLM4Z).

5.4. Does the team member lead and self-monitor their work?

One aspect of psychological empowerment is that the team member is able to self-monitor their performance and progress, and can calibrate their own success, rather than relying on their line manager to tell them. This implies from a structural view that the organisation has systems and processes that are accessible to the team member and that provide performance feedback. Coupled with this aspect of empowerment is an appreciation by the team member that they have responsibility of completing work, quality checking and passing the work to internal customers.

A team member Company B confirmed this approach to handing over responsibility for signing off work and authorising processes. This would seem a more deliberate and overt statement of trust, rather than the perceived approach of Deci (1989). There could be an implication for line manager behaviour, in that the line manager may wish to deliberately show that they wish to empower their team member, so offering their endorsement of the team member's empowerment.

"Personally, I feel like I'm empowered because a lot of the time I have gone to him for authorisation and he says: "Actually, you don't need to confirm with me. You are perfectly authorised to do it yourself' but there's nowhere in the company legislation that tells you you're authorised to do or not. It's like sometimes I think am I meant to be doing this or not so I will ask him, but every time I ask him he says 'go and do it yourself. Just go for it. You know what you're doing is right. Your thought process is correct. I'm happy for you to go and deal with that stuff.' So yes, I feel empowered by him in the sense I can pretty much run my part of the business and try and make it fully effective, and kind of go and make the contacts and make the necessary inquiries and even to the point where I can call up customers or whatever I need to do to make things happen and he's there if I say it's a good idea to support it." (BLM2X).

The team member and other team members of LM2 mentioned that they felt a transition, from having low levels of empowerment where they could make recommendations to their line manager on courses of action that should be taken, to having high levels of empowerment where they took a course of action without involving their line manager.

A team member from company A mentioned that their line manager endorsed this lack of involvement approach of their line manager:

"And what I really like is the trust you've got. You haven't always got someone jumping on your back all the time. You're left to it to a certain degree. LM4's not always breathing down my neck or is done this, done this, done this, and that's what I like about it. You've got your own like independence, so to speak." (ALM4X).

It would seem that line managers may either tell their team members that they are empowered before the team member starts a piece of work, or have a more informal approach waiting until their team member talks with them and then explain that they would like the team member to take higher levels of empowerment, or simply leave space and freedom for the team member to increase their level of empowerment. Line managers mentioned all three approaches in these interviews.

A team member in company B summarised their views on the trust aspect of empowerment as:

"For me, empowerment is being able to take a decision yourself and being trusted to make the decision yourself without having to go back to your line manager for approval all the time and have the fear of consequence that you're going to be chastised for doing something wrong. The way I feel with LM2 is that if I do something, as long as I've got full justification for how I've performed, I don't feel like he's ever going to be 'Why did you do that?' or 'You shouldn't have done it' or 'Actually, maybe you should have done it a different way if possible'. That's what I feel empowerment is. It's to have that belief and be able to feel that confidence from your management that you're going to make the right decision and not feel like you're going to be put down if you do a little bit of something wrong, more like you'll be advised and encouraged to sort of do it again but maybe in a slightly different manner. That for me is what empowerment is." (BLM2X).

No team member spoke about having access to organisational systems to measure their performance. Three team members working for two line managers in company B spoke about using their own system of lists, spreadsheets and project plans to measure their progress. These were developed by the team member, kept on their own computer and not used by anyone else in their teams.

5.5. Does the team member experience the relationship between themselves and their line manager as open, exploring performance progress and initiated by the team member?

Team members experience empowerment as one of being given freedom to be able to prioritise their workload and know that their line manager is in the background. This highlights the existence of the self-determination (Deci 1989) and competence (Gist 1987) aspects of psychological empowerment. Team members spoke about the level of involvement of their line manager, some wanting more involvement, and some being satisfied by the current level of line manager involvement. One team member mentioned that if their line manager was more involved that they would find

it frustrating, that having a line manager that intervened more frequently or deeply in their work would show that they were not trusted. This level of line manager involvement would seem to be core to the team member being satisfied or otherwise with their experience of being highly empowered.

This is how is described by a team member from Company B:

"I think the first thing is his support is there if I need it. LM1 has quite a casual open management style that fits quite well to empowerment and he's keen to encourage people to develop. He's keen to encourage his direct reports to grasp the nettle and manage their areas of the business as well as they can, and he's absolutely happy to support them. So from that point of view, it's probably what I understand to be a fairly well-empowered situation." (BLM1X).

Some team members stated that would have liked more involvement from their line managers, and that there would seem to be an implicit abdication by the line manager, and that the "hands off" style of management had gone too far:

"I think they need to have more contact with me, much more contact, and actually see what sort of work I do and see my output because up until now—well, ever since I've been here—he doesn't see my output, my output. All of my output is seen by other people within the organisation. There's virtually none of that that he sees. It's not very often that he will actually set me a task to do. The tasks are coming in from elsewhere so he's got no handle at all on what sort of things I do, the complexities that are involved in those." (BLM1X).

This would indicate that team members do want their line manager to have some active involvement and acknowledge their job performance. The delegation of authority means that team members have the power to take decisions, and yet these team members do want some recognition or attention paid by their line manager. Line managers spoke about trusting their team members to produce work to the standard required by the organisation, and that the consequences of any error would be high. Trust is defined as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular

action important to the trustor" (Mayer, Schoorman and Davis 1995). These team members want more endorsement of this trust, and more contact by the line manager.

This team member mentioned the absence of line manager intervention again, this time in a positive way in relation to a display of trust:

"He leaves me alone to get on pretty much with what I want. If there's something urgent, he says I know you can multi-task, you can get a lot done, you can cover a lot of ground and you just need to work out what we're doing. I work on what priority. I could have five or ten things going on at once but in my mind I've got to work out which is more important." (BLM3Y).

Team members experienced empowerment as an absence of involvement with their line manager on day-to-day issues. The expected tension of employer control and employee freedom did not raise itself in these interviews in terms of line managers getting too involved in the work of their team members, the reverse was true, in that some team members wanting their line manager to be more involved, to communicate more and to give more feedback on work performance and progress.

There would seem to be present high levels of job satisfaction as defined as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state that is a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from a job and what one perceives it is offering" (Locke 1976: 130). It would seem that team member's encountered empowerment as having freedom or autonomy to regulate their work, the understanding that they are competent to undertake the requirements of their role, and that they have the opportunity to contribute to the wider organisation beyond their role requirements. Team members did not make reference to the meaning aspect of empowerment (Spreitzer 1996).

Team members from both organisations spoke of their own capability to assess their own job performance and progress, in effect reflecting on their own self-determination, competence and impact (Spreitzer 1996), and did not highlight any significant performance value that their line managers added with their formal or

informal performance management activities. Line managers mentioned that these activities gave themselves value in that they were kept informed on their team member's performance progress. There would appear to be a disconnect between the value of any informal performance conversations between line managers and team members, in that these conversations give the line manager value in terms of knowledge on task attainment, and do not give the team member any large performance value, and that they reported that these approaches were moderately valued as a mechanism for keeping the line manager updated on progress, in building the management relationship and helping the team member to reflect on their own job performance.

"I had a PDR with him back in March last year in which we set some fairly high level objectives but there was never any follow up to that and he kind of left me to my own devices, which I'm quite used to doing. I prefer it that way.
Researcher: So how did you know last year that you know if you're doing a good job or an okay job?
Respondent: Well, to use the analogy that no news is good news." (BLM3W).

"Ultimately, if I'm not doing a good job, somebody will tell him. If I'm doing a good job, nobody will say a thing. They'll just yeah, we delivered that, we delivered that, that was fine." (BLM3Z).

"I don't know if he knows if I'm doing a good or bad job, to be honest. I know myself when I'm doing a bad job. I know myself what can be done better but I am restricted by resource so I do the best that I can do with what I've got." (BLM3Z).

These quotes highlight that feedback on performance progress from the line manager to the team member does not always occur. It would seem that team members have an internal psychological sense of their progress, without a reliance on their line manager for performance feedback. This fulfils one of the elements in psychological empowerment in terms of self-efficacy (Gist 1987). This could potentially be a negative experience, in that if the team member is unable to self-monitor accurately their performance their evaluation could be inaccurate, or if their own personal level of self-efficacy was low they may feel abandoned or demotivated.

Team members spoke about looking at delivery schedules and other documentation to assess their progress as well as relying on their experience and competence to know that they were on track. Team members did not speak about having regular time to perform this self-monitoring function; it would seem an almost ad hoc part of their role.

5.6. Does the team member experience organisational factors present that encourage empowerment that include performance management and company communications?

Participants did not speak about skill development to support successful empowerment, either the line managers speaking of training in creating the conditions for supporting successful empowerment, or team members experiencing skill development that would increase their understanding of how to be highly empowered. Mention was given of skill development to increase role competence, and that line managers supported and encouraged this training, thus highlighting one aspects of the line manager's role in encouraging competence development (Bandura 1981). This increase in competence would be beneficial for the team members, the line manager and the organisation in increasing functional flexibility and so potentially contribute to business performance.

The formal performance management experience of team members was varied in both organisations in terms of frequency, agenda and rigour and team members from both organisations shared the view that the formal processes did not add any great value to team member productivity. The views ranged from saying that the annual formal process agreed objectives, so confirmed clarity received from colleagues on what was expected, to another team member saying the annual process felt like a going through the motions exercise to conform to an organisation wide policy. These traditional overt forms of organisational control would seem to be utilised by the line managers in the research with the intention of measuring output and results, and did not contribute any performance value to team members seeking high levels of empowerment.

When talking about more regular performance conversations team members from both Company A and B were more reluctant to identify the value that these conversations gave to their job performance, instead indicating that these conversations were 'lip service' to conform to the processes of the organisation and the line manager:

"Monthly one-to-ones, what happens?
Respondent: They're set up throughout the year and so we both have got a bit of an agenda. Ordinarily I would provide upfront sometimes an agenda of things that I want to specifically discuss but most certainly I usually update my reflective learning log. That gives her an idea of both my development plan kind of things that have gone under in a month by reflecting it all. And then we discuss that and we discuss the context of the stuff that I'm working on and how that's going, getting direction that I may need from her. Then in true coaching format, she asks me lots of personal questions about things that I've learned and what I would do differently and so on. This conversation seems to keep them happy." (ALM1Z).

This was the only team member from both companies to mention a reflective learning log. This individual said that the log allowed them to understand and think about their performance, to give an indication of their skill development progress, to identify any future development needs as well as helping them to prepare for performance and development conversations with their line manager.

There would seem to be mixed messages coming from line managers when compared to team members from both companies. Line managers defined their role as adding value to their team members by encouraging, supporting and using questioning to create ownership and awareness. Team members were made aware of the consequences of failure to achieve to the required standard, but it would seem as though line managers took constructive steps to support people to be successful. There is a level of belief by line managers that this approach encourages empowerment, by stimulating team members to question, seek clarity and contribute to overall team performance. Line managers spoke about wishing to be visible and approachable, so that team members feel more able to discuss work and job performance topics. One manager explained:

"I think that we have our discussion and that interaction is clearly pivotal because otherwise I might as well just sit in my office all day." (ALM4).

Team members endorsed the benefit of objective setting as part of the performance management approach in giving them an appreciation of the wider business context, business strategy and understanding what was happening in other areas of the business (Locke, Alavi and Wagner 1997), which links to the cognitive empowerment aspect of impact (Spreitzer 1996). Team members did not mention any positive contribution to their performance from annual performance appraisals and regular performance conversations with their line manager.

Team members spoke about company briefings and presentations, most spoke about these as being one way communication from senior managers to employees, and that they found out what was happening in the company. No-one spoke about how they related this communication to their role activities, their priorities and their job performance. Team members from company B spoke about the regularity of these communications, and that it was good to know that they happened, and yet no team member from either company spoke of any value gained from this communication. References were made to company information on a shared web site, and team members spoke of not having enough time to keep up to date. There was an indication from team members from both companies that they would like a more interactive and personalised communication.

"We do have big company briefings when we are told business updates. It would be better if these were done to each department or team. We could ask questions then, find out more and it might help us to understand and plan better. The way it is done to very one way, we are told." (ALM3Y).

5.7. Summary of findings from chapter

Team members from both companies are clear that being empowered is about having the freedom to make decisions, to complete their work in a way that they

decide, and to know that their work is aligned to the goals of the company. Team members perceive themselves to be trusted to make these decisions, knowing that they have the confidence of their line manager. There are boundaries to this decision-making freedom, and team members are clear where this boundary lies in terms of financial spending, recruitment decisions, major changes to process and agreeing longer delivery times with customers all being outside of the scope of their empowerment.

Knowing that you were empowered happened in three ways: the line manager telling the team member, the team member experiencing freedom to make decisions, or the team member asking the line manager if they were empowered. Some team members wanted more involvement from their line manager, others were satisfied and motivated by the relationship. There is a desire from all team members for some level of line manager involvement in having feedback and sharing opinions on work content. Too much freedom can be experienced as almost abandonment by some team members. One difference between the companies is that team members in company B spoke of actively involving their line manager in their work content (asking their opinion or getting clarity) and team members from company A did not mention this.

Team members spoke of their own capability in assessing and monitoring their own performance, and some had developed their own systems to do this. The line manager initiated performance conversations were primarily seen as beneficial to the line manager, and of moderate value to the team member in terms of helping them to reflect on their own performance. Team members built their own self-efficacy processes, rather than relying on the line manager. The structural dynamics of performance management were not experienced by team members as contributing to their psychological empowerment, instead these mechanisms were seen as to be conformed to. Company communications gave team members insights into company activities, but did not serve to enhance their empowerment experience in terms of meaning or impact.

Skill development to be empowered was not mentioned specifically by either team members or line managers, instead both parties spoke of developing the

competence of team members, which does align to one aspect of psychological empowerment.

Team members are active in shaping their own work, and do create competence, self-determination, impact and meaning. These psychological empowerment cognitions occur within an understood boundary of the current work role expectations.

6.0. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. Introduction

Empowerment is an often-used word in organisations, and one that the researcher feels is misunderstood and not fully appreciated. This research investigated the empowerment experiences in two organisations from the view of line managers and their team members. The research methodology was exploratory, aiming to induct understanding and insights from people's experiences of empowerment, rather than test a theory or hypothesis. A phenomenological design was used where the researcher sought to explore and capture understanding and people's descriptions of their experiences of empowerment. The case study approach highlighted the differences and similarities in the two organisations.

This chapter will outline the key conclusions and recommendations arising from this research. The general conclusions of the research and the implications for the theory and practise of empowerment will be presented first. I will then outline the implications of these conclusions and identify associated opportunities for further research into the empowerment experience.

6.2. The empowerment experience

The line managers from both companies do perceive themselves to be contributing to empowerment of their team members, following Conger and Kanungo's (1998) definitions of giving power to team members, and by giving decision-making authority to the team members. This decision-making was contained by the boundaries of the team member's role. Line managers used structural organisational processes such as performance management and company communications to enable empowerment. Line managers defined their role with highly empowered team members as supporting the team member by coaching, giving feedback, being available for advice and monitoring performance. Essentially by trusting the empowered team member they gave power to the team member to fulfil the requirements of their role without the intervention of the line manager.

The team members who participated in this research are highly empowered in accordance with the psychological empowerment (Thomas and Velthouse 1990) cognitions of competence and self-determination. Team members spoke of their confidence in their competence to perform their role (Bandura 1977) in accordance with expectations agreed with their line manager. Choice (de Charms 1968) or self-determination (Deci and Ryan 1985) was also mentioned by team members in relation to deciding how their day was structured, how they completed tasks and used resources. Team members did not mention meaning in terms of a fit between personal values and beliefs and the work role (Hackman and Oldham 1980). Team members did speak of their career plans and hopes to remain with the company, so one assumes that they experienced job satisfaction. Impact in terms of being able to contribute to task and purpose (Abramson et al 1980) was mentioned; impact in terms of the opportunity to contribute to strategy or the operating outcomes of an organisation (Spreitzer 1995, Ashforth 1989) was not mentioned. There appeared to be a satisfaction with the level of impact experienced by team members.

Team members do believe that they are empowered, thus they have task autonomy to make their own decisions on work process, and self-monitor their performance progress to know that they are delivering the requirements of the task. Team members are proactive in managing their relationship with their line manager to keep the line manager informed. There are several ways empowerment is acknowledged, by the line manager telling the team member they are empowered, by team members asking their line manager, or by the team member realising themselves that they are empowered.

The researcher defined empowerment in organisations in the following way: *Empowerment in organisations is a three-fold construct that benefits the organisation, line managers and team members.*

Firstly the activities of line managers encouraging team members to have accountability, competence and confidence to be able to successfully complete all elements of their role.

Secondly team members having a desire, motivation and belief in their competence to take responsibility, to shape their job role, to make decisions and to manage their workload in such a way as to excel in their role and add real value to the organisation.

Thirdly organisational systems and processes being available and used by all organisational members. The employee is able to understand and influence the organisation's goals, objectives and strategy, to have access to mechanisms and tools that will help them to define and measure their own performance contribution, as well as employees working with their line manager to create their own career and development pathway within the organisation.

Empowerment is essentially a three-way collaboration for the benefit of employees, line managers and the organisation to be successful and sustainable. Team members have full responsibility for their role, and line manager enable this to happen and organisational systems support employees to be responsible for their own and the business performance, all within a context of defining the organisational mission, strategy and plans.

The researcher found that how line managers encouraged structural empowerment was not matched by the 'receiving' experience of their team members. The line managers believed themselves to play an active role in encouraging the team member to take responsibility, authority and power for achieving key aspects of the work of the team, thus actively contributing to the success of the team member empowerment. As well encouraging the team member, the line managers also stated that they created the conditions that fostered their team members to be empowered by showing their trust and belief in the team member's capability by giving positive feedback and by stepping back from any day-to-day involvement in tasks. Team members did not experience these activities as helping them to be empowered. However much line managers believed that structural empowerment had a positive impact on the team member, team members were clear that only some activities had a positive impact. Performance conversations did not help their level of empowerment, and it was the more subtle behaviours of coaching, showing trust and

allowing space and freedom in decision making that helped the team member to appreciate that they were empowered. Team members believed that they had the appropriate skills, an attachment to the purpose of their organisation, the freedom to decide what needs to be done and how to complete their work.

This researcher has found that it is the team member who ultimately decides if they are empowered. The foundation is that the team member believes that they are empowered, thus they have task autonomy to make their own decisions on work process, and can self-monitor their performance progress to know that they are delivering the requirements of the task, and by being more proactive in managing their relationship with their line manager to keep the line manager informed. Employee empowerment involves a working relationship in which the team member believes that they have freedom and discretion to decide how to do their job and the line manager's role is one of enabler and encourager.

6.3. Dimensions of empowerment

The researcher identified five dimensions of empowerment:
1. The team member being able to decide what needs to be done, when it needs to be done and how to do it
2. The team member leads and self-monitors their work
3. The line manager encourages and enables the team member to have task autonomy
4. The relationship between line manager and team member is open, explores performance progress and is initiated by the team member
5. There are organisational factors present that encourage empowerment which include performance management and company communications.

Team members were able to make decisions about their tasks and knew the boundaries of these decisions in terms of budget and resources. There was an appreciation that decisions may be different to ones their line manager would make, showing an understanding of freedom to decide the what, when and how of their role.

Team members were able to lead and self-monitor their work (Freidman 1977) by using project plans, process charts or task to-do lists. They were aware of the consequences of failure, and kept the line manager informed of their performance progress.

The line manager encouraged task autonomy by giving feedback on behaviours, helping the team member to reflect on their progress, by displaying trust and patience. Line managers got involved much earlier with the performance of team members with low levels of empowerment, showing a difference in management behaviour.

The relationship between line manager and team member showed varying levels of openness. Performance progress was explored and was not initiated by the team member on many occasions. Line managers spoke of planning performance conversations, feedback was given to team members and the line manager initiated conversations on performance objectives. Some team members spoke of initiating conversations with line managers to review progress as well as knowing the line manager was available for support if needed.

Performance management and company communications were present in both companies, and their significance in encouraging empowerment was judged differently by team members and line managers. Line manager responses held that the formal approach to performance management (Armstrong 2009) contributed positively to team member's job performance in terms of giving clarity and being motivational (Burke 1986), although respondents did not speak about any positive and direct impact on team member empowerment. Team members responded with a different view of the value of formal performance management in that it at best reaffirmed the clarity they already had on their work priorities and at worst that it was purely a company process that demanded conformance. Respondents gave a mixed message on the utility of informal performance management processes. Line managers believed regular conversations increased the team member's self-efficacy (Bandura 1977) and competence. Team members did not highlight any significant value that was derived from informal performance management, instead using this mechanism to keep their line manager reassured about their performance progress.

Team members spoke of their own ability to assess their own job performance and progress by reflecting on their own competence and impact (Spreitzer 1996). Company communication was thought by line managers to give clarity of company direction and overall performance (Lawler 1992), and team members did not speak of any value gained from these events, instead using their own informal networks to gain this information.

The researcher concludes that four out of the five dimensions of empowerment were present in the two companies. The intended impact of each element was not always realised. Organisational factors were misaligned and did not encourage empowerment. The structural empowerment activities of line managers had a varied impact on empowerment. The greatest impact experienced was the informal interventions such as coaching and encouraging. Team members did have freedom to decide what to do, but within the boundary of their role. The relationship between line manager and team member was open, did explore performance progress and yet was not often initiated by the team member.

6.4. The line manager role within structural empowerment

Respondents saw their role as enabling and encouraging team member performance, whilst having overall responsibility for team performance. Line manager behaviours had the potential to positively influence the team member's experience of empowerment by giving feedback to enhance self-efficacy, giving freedom to enhance self-determination, by giving company information to enhance impact and by exploring team member's role clarity to enhance meaning. Team members experienced their line manager as showing trust by giving freedom to make decisions, and knew that their line manager supported them in being highly empowered. The team member experienced feedback as contributing to self-efficacy, giving freedom as enhancing self-determination, company information did not enhance impact and exploring role clarity was not mentioned as a contributory factor to meaning, indeed meaning (or its derivatives) was not mentioned by team members.

The role boundary was delineated by line managers who were aware that their role included strategy, large-scale projects and product development, and saw team members as being responsible for managing the delivery of their agreed tasks. There appeared to be a level of satisfaction from the team members for this division as expressions of desire to be more broadly involved were not mentioned. This finding links to transformational leadership (Burns 1978) behaviours, and an interesting finding was that some of the transactional leadership behaviours related to the activities of team members (task completion, work standards and task oriented goals). A word of caution should be raised in that one line manager understood empowerment, and mentioned their remorse in seeing their team doing great work without them (BLM2) and highlighted the challenge of line mangers finding their own role when working with highly empowered team members. This was not entirely unexpected as the traditions of hierarchical approach to management can be engrained.

Responses suggest that line managers saw the benefits to supporting empowerment as clustering into either enhanced team performance or personal expediency. All either explicitly or implicitly recognised that empowerment resulted in team members taking more care, having functional flexibility, being able to serve customers more effectively and ultimately improved the performance of their team. With regard to personal expediency line managers spoke about the time saving benefits that resulted in them being less involved in monitoring or doing the tasks of highly empowered team members. Financial reward was not overtly mentioned, instead a link implied between enhanced team performance, improved appraisal ratings and higher pay or bonus.

An interesting finding was that line managers identified that they needed an eighteen-month time period before having trust in the competence of their team member, and once they had this trust they modified their behaviour from a power over (Habermas 1987) approach to one that they believed encouraged empowerment.

The line manager role in empowerment is one of encouraging, building team member self-confidence and competence. More could be done to assist in creating

meaning and impact for team members, perhaps by developing useful communications and performance measuring mechanisms.

6.5.   The team member experience of empowerment

The responses of team members did connect to the academic definitions of psychological empowerment and that being highly empowered gave them job satisfaction (Locke 1976). There appeared to be an optimum level of empowerment (Warr 1987) and team members spoke about being given too much responsibility, or not enough feedback which lead to lowered job satisfaction and potentially job performance. This optimum level is different for different people, and highlights that empowerment is not a simple iterative process, and that there are many factors at play that influence the result. It also highlights the requirement for a line manger to be competent at understanding people, their motivations and reactions to stress or dissatisfaction in the workplace.

Team members had a clear connection between being highly empowered and job security and career success via increasing competence and performance. A desire was stated for increase in reward via an improved performance rating, and responses suggest that in company A this link was explicit, and in company B there were a range of factors that contributed to a performance rating. What emerged is that team members experienced empowerment as improving job satisfaction, and they found autonomy as motivating, and resulted in a pride in their work, indeed some team members stated that they would not want to be more closely managed.

There appeared to be a high level of satisfaction from team members towards their line managers, respondents appreciating the freedom they were given, understanding that they were empowered and that their line manager was supportive and confident in the team member's competence.

Team members did believe that they were empowered, and understood the boundaries to this empowerment in terms of their current job role.

6.6.   Underpinning concepts

Self-efficacy (Bandura 1994) was an underpinning concept of psychological empowerment, and was present in three ways. Team members reported indicators of high levels of self-efficacy in their belief in their competence, line managers gave examples for how their behaviour and giving feedback had a positive impact on a team member's self-efficacy, and thirdly line managers spoke of their own self-efficacy when working with highly empowered team members. Line manager self-efficacy is interesting in that some respondents mentioned being personally challenged by team members having high levels of empowerment. This challenge was due to line managers being unsure of their own role and skill levels in working with highly empowered team members.

The findings in relation to power were interesting. Line managers appreciated that empowerment meant that team members had more power, and team members actively sought this power, and expressed that they would be dissatisfied if this power was removed. This highlights a move from coercive power to coactive power (Follet 1918) and the subsequent changes in manager behaviour. Clegg et al (2006) wrote that "power is to organisations as oxygen is to breathing" (Clegg et al 2006: 3), and empowerment represents a move in some elements of power to team members. The source of power for line managers is still present in terms of legitimate and reward power (French and Raven 1959), and the ultimate sanction of terminating employment rests with the line manager. Team members have more technical or expert power, and this grows as competence develops. Team members were aware of the power of their line manager, and took steps to keep them informed of their performance progress, and understood that the ultimate sanction rested with the line manager.

6.7.   Academic contribution

My original contribution to academic knowledge is the examining of the empowerment experience from both psychological and structural perspectives. By exploring both the line manager and team member experiences and perspectives a more in depth understanding of the empowerment experience is offered. This has

contributed to the discourse on empowerment by looking at both perspectives, and finding that the structural empowerment mechanisms that line managers believe to be supporting team member empowerment are from the team member view in fact not contributing significantly to their empowerment. These formal mechanisms would seem to offer the line manager reassurance that work performance is happening, and it is the more informal line manager conversations as well as the actions taken by team members that contribute to a successful empowerment experience from the team member perspective.

I found that organisational empowerment involves line managers and team members both playing their part. Line managers show their confidence in the competence of the team member, and the empowered team member uses their competence to deliver on their role.

The more formal activities within structural empowerment do not contribute to the belief by team members that they are empowered. These structural mechanisms such as performance management seem to give reassurance to the line manager that empowerment is successful. The more informal structural empowerment activities such as giving feedback show that the line manager has confidence in the team member, as well as giving the line manager an element of reassurance and confidence in the team member being able to deliver.

This research highlights the role of team members in managing their own performance by using their own processes or mechanisms to monitor and measure performance. In essence structural empowerment dues not come only from the line manager or organisation, the team member also contributes to structural empowerment by developing their own empowerment mechanisms.

The limitations of this research is that this research was conducted in two large organisations that have been operating for many years. There may be other influences to play in the empowerment experience of people employed in smaller or younger organisations, and the research should not be extrapolated to these.

The researcher identified the themes upon which the in-depth interviews were based in advance. Where the researcher was aware questions were asked for more detail or richer responses, and some opportunities for wider reflection may have been lost (Miles and Huberman 1984).

The researcher explored the empowerment experience of team members and senior managers. The experiences of different management groups such as team leader and sole contributor may be different, and as such these findings should not be extrapolated to these. The influence of the Chief Executive of both companies would have been interesting to learn. What is their view and influence on empowerment?

The researcher could have included other forms of research such as observations of line managers and team leaders to see how performance conversations happen, the behaviours displayed by both parties and if these match the ones discussed in the interviews. Other sources of data could be explored including policy documents on reward, recruitment and development.

One main opportunity for further research is to explore the criteria line managers use to develop performance trust in their team members. Line managers spoke of a desire to trust their team members, and this usually took eighteen months to happen. Further research could be conducted into the features of this assessment.

Measuring the impact of psychological empowerment seems as elusive goal, and further research relating to organisational impact is recommended.

Researching empowerment in different organisations such as smaller and new start-up organisations, not-for-profit and service companies could provide useful comparison data.

6.8.   Practical implications

If empowerment is to be a successful and rewarding experience for both line managers and team members the researcher suggests that people participate in development to appreciate the implications for empowerment and develop their skills

in order to contribute effectively. The skill development for line managers and team members would centre on supporting the four cognitions of psychological empowerment.

Performance management practises need to be aligned with the emphasis on individuals managing their own performance, and could include helping people be more self-reflective, how they monitor progress and agreeing the role expectations between line manager and team member.

Recruitment may need to be revisited in that employers may be expecting employees to be highly empowered and recruitment practises and assessments could explore elements of the four cognitions to gain insights into candidates.

6.9.   Concluding remarks

I find the term subordinate as a way to identify a person who works for a line manager a derogatory term. The word is derived from the Latin *subiectare* that means to render submissive, subdue, to place under or to bind under (Etymology dictionary 2010). I have experienced employees as people who want to do a good job, who want to contribute and have meaning and purpose for the work they do. They are not less than a line manager and being highly empowered gives people the opportunity to realise more of their potential. I hope these research findings aid understanding of how the empowerment experience can be enhanced for both team members and line managers.

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Appendices

1. Research plan
2. Suggested questions to ask line managers
3. Suggested questions to ask team members
4. Consent form
5. Email to HR Directors asking for their agreement for the research in their organisation
6. Email to participants
7. Extract from an interview

Tables

Table one - Conger and Kanungo (1988: 475) Five stages in the process of empowerment

Table two – case study analysis

Table three – number of participants in each organisation

Table four – participant's anonymity notation approach

Appendix one - research plan

In selecting the two organisations in which to conduct the research the researcher has sought to have organisations of fairly similar size, in the same part of the UK, operating in two different sectors, one being scientific research, the other being engineering.

The researcher understands that both organisations claim that their managers empower their staff, and are encouraged to do so. The managers will be senior managers reporting to a Board Director, and who have at least two years of being senior manager, as this length of time should give respondents enough time to understand their role. Four of the direct reports of each senior manager involved in the research will be invited to be interviewed, with each direct report having worked for the senior manager for at least 18 months, as this should be sufficient time to have an in-depth experience of being managed that that manager. The researcher will use the case study approach, as defined by Gerring (2007) as "any phenomenon so long as it has identifiable boundaries and comprises the primary object of inference" (Gerring 2007:19) or "an intensive study of a single unit or a small number of units (the cases), for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units (a population of cases) without guaranteeing any sense of homogeneity or consistency" (Gerring 2007:37). The handful of subjects under the lens for this research will be four senior managers from each of two organisations, two from each organisation sharing a focus of line management being their secondary role purpose, another being a senior manager with a more operational and people focus, and lastly a support function senior manager (HR, finance or marketing). This allows for an intense study of each subject, and allows for comparison across the two organisations by researching simultaneously.

Each line manager interview will be scheduled for two hours, the direct report interview one hour. It is intended that there will be eight line manager interviews and thirty two direct report interviews.

Research question
The research will focus on empowerment, and will explore the following:

- How do organisational processes and mechanisms enhance or enable the experience of empowerment?
- What are the line manager activities and behaviours that influence the empowerment experience of team members?
- How do team members experience psychological empowerment?

How data will be analysed

Each interview will be voice recorded, and transcribed. Interviews will be analysed for common themes and differences. Areas to analyse include:

- The processes that help and hinder empowerment
- The line manager interactions
- The relationship between line manager and team
- How empowerment is fostered

Permission will be sought and given for each interview to be recorded. The researcher will use two digital recording devices (one for back up), and once the recording begins the interview will mention the participants name to give a record, and then the machines will be ignored until the end of the session.

Appendix two - Suggested questions to ask line managers

How do you define empowerment? How is it different than delegation?

Do you empower your direct reports?

What are your reasons for empowering?

What do you empower (look for whole tasks/projects or elements)

How do you monitor performance?

How do you select the right person to be empowered?

How frequently do you empower?

What do you do that creates a successful environment for empowerment?

What hinders your ability to empower your team?

What helps your ability to empower your team?

Is there anything else you would like to do to improve how you empower your team members?

How do you know a team member is doing a good job?

How do you use the current performance management approach? Does this help you be a better line manager?

Are there any differences in the way you manage an empowered team member vs a team member that isn't empowered? What are the differences*?*

Appendix three - Suggested questions to ask team members

Does your line manager empower you?

How do they do it?

How do they monitor your progress?

How much freedom you do have to decide how the empowered task or project will get done?

Do you get the opportunity to use your strengths and skills when you are doing an empowered task?

How important is it that you are empowered?

Is everyone in your team empowered?

How do you define the leadership traits or style of your line manager?

How do you know that you are doing a good job?

How do you monitor your own work performance?

How would you describe the relationship you have with your line manager?

How do you use the current performance management approach? Does it help your performance?

Is there anything more your line manager could you to help your job performance?

Appendix four - consent form

The purpose of this PhD research is to research the empowerment experience in organisations.

The researcher is comparing the empowerment experience of managers and their direct reports in two different organisations, by holding a number of face to face interviews.

This form represents your consent to participate in this researcher, and signifies that you agree to:

- Your participation is voluntary
- You can refuse to answer any of the questions asked by the researcher
- You can withdraw from the interview at anytime
- You can withdraw your data from the research within two weeks of the interview.

The interview will be recorded and no-one except the researcher and their supervisor will listen to the interview.

All the interview will be transcribed and all identifying information will be removed.

Parts of the interview might be used in the researcher's thesis and/or publications, without any information being traceable back to the interviewee.

Name……………
Date………………

Appendix five - email to HR Directors asking for their agreement for the research in their organisation

Dear ,

Thank you for agreeing to your organisation's participation in my PhD research in the area of empowerment. The research seeks to answer the following questions:

- What is the empowerment experience of both parties?
- What factors help and hinder the experience?
- Do people in two similar organisations have a similar experience of empowerment?

The research will be conducted by face to face interviews, with four senior managers from your organisation, and four team members from each of their teams. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed, and all data will be treated as confidential, with all identifying information removed. Parts of the interview might be used in my thesis and/or publications, without any information being traceable back to the interviewee.

Specifically the research will look at the following areas:

- The processes that help and hinder empowerment
- The line manager interactions
- The relationship between line manager and team
- How empowerment is fostered.

Having worked with some of your managers I would like to conduct my research with these people:

Each line manager will be asked to identify four team members to interview, all of whom have worked for them directly for a minimum for eighteen months.

All interviews will be conducted in a quiet meeting room at your premises, and each person will be asked to agree to the interview and to participate in the research, and to sign a consent form to that effect.

Once the research is completed and presented to the assessment panel at Leicester University I am very happy to come back and present by research findings to you.

I have attached some more details of the research.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research, it would be great that you could confirm this fairly soon, as I would like to contact participants at the beginning of July to book in their interview sessions. I envisage giving them similar details of the research as contained in this email and attachment.

Helen Askey

Attachment to HR Director email
Helen Askey – PhD Research Project – the empowerment experience

Introduction
I have been interested with the topic of empowerment for sometime. There is been much written, some with little academic rigour, and there has been plenty of misunderstanding in organisations about the topic. This research aims to find out what really goes on when managers empower people, and what are the conditions for effective empowerment.

The research fits with the post-positivist paradigm of Bryman (2008), due to the nature of the research questions and how the research will answer those questions. The theoretical research and literature review will influence the field research, and these known theories of empowerment will be tested by the interpretation of data gathered from the research, and by finding the truth from this research building on the existing body of knowledge about empowerment (Willis: 2007). The research intends to explore senior manager's experience of

empowerment, senior manager motivations for empowering, as well as if there is a comparative experience from the people being empowered, e.g. do people experience empowerment as a motivational process? Does empowerment add to their self-efficacy? The research is exploratory, aiming to induct understanding and insights from data, rather than test a theory or hypothesis (deduct). The research intends to understand data and experiences, rather than explain what is happening, which means the research falls under the epistemological position that "the subject matter of the social sciences – people and their institutions – is fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences and therefore requires a different logic of research procedure" (Bryman 2008:13).

PhD Research plan

In selecting the two organisations in which to conduct the research the researcher has sought to have organisations of fairly similar size, in the same part of the UK, operating in two different sectors, one being scientific research, the other being engineering.

The researcher understands that both organisations claim that their managers empower their staff, and are encouraged to do so. The managers will be senior managers reporting to a Board Director, and who have at least two years of being senior manager, as this length of time should give respondents enough time to understand their role. Four of the direct reports of each senior manager involved in the research will be invited to be interviewed, with each direct report having worked for the senior manager for at least 18 months, as this should be sufficient time to have an in-depth experience of being managed that that manager. The researcher will use the case study approach, as defined by Gerring (2007) as "any phenomenon so long as it has identifiable boundaries and comprises the primary object of inference" (Gerring 2007:19) or "an intensive study of a single unit or a small number of units (the cases), for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units (a population of cases) without guaranteeing any sense of homogeneity or consistency" (Gerring 2007:37). The handful of subjects under the lens for this research will be four senior managers from each of two organisations and four of their team members

as this allows for an intense study of each subject, and allows for comparison across the two organisations by researching simultaneously.

Each line manager interview will be scheduled for two hours, the team member interview one and a half hours. It is intended that there will be eight line manager interviews and thirty-two direct report interviews.

Research question

The research will focus on empowerment, and will explore the following:

What is the empowerment experience for both parties? What factors help and hinder the experience? Do people in two similar organisations have a similar experience of empowerment?

How data will be analysed

Each interview will be voice recorded, and transcribed. Interviews will be analysed for common themes and differences. Areas to analyse include:

- The processes that help and hinder empowerment
- The line manager interactions
- The relationship between line manager and team
- How empowerment is fostered

Each participant will be asked to sign a consent form, based on best practise as promoted by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and signifies participant's agreement to:

- Their participation is voluntary
- They can refuse to answer any of the questions asked by the researcher
- They can withdraw from the interview at anytime
- They can withdraw your data from the research within two weeks of the interview.

The interview will be recorded and no-one except the transcriber, the researcher and their supervisor will listen to the interview.

All the interviews will be transcribed and all identifying information will be removed.

Parts of the interview might be used in the researcher's thesis and/or publications, without any information being traceable back to the interviewee.

Confidentiality

Each participant in this research will have their privacy and confidentiality respected so that they can expect:

- Any data given at interview to be unattributable where possible, so that names will be removed, specific project names will be removed, as well as locations for work or meetings
- Each participant will not be mentioned by name or geographic location; numbers will be used instead (participant 1 etc.)
- All data will be passed for transcription to a third party who will accurately transcribe each interview, the researcher will then anonymise each interview
- All data will be kept in password protected data storage, and the researcher is registered with the data protection agency
- If anyone else from the participating organisation asks to read or listen to any interview their request will be refused
- The researcher's supervisor may listen to or read specific interviews
- Parts of the interview might be used in the researcher's thesis and/or publications, without any information being traceable back to the interviewee.

Next steps

I would like your agreement to this research, and I will begin contacting people to ask their consent to participating in the research, and I will then begin booking the meetings, I envisage that the interviews will happen during August and September. Many thanks

Helen Askey
June 2013.

Appendix six - email introduction to participants

Thank you for agreeing to your organisation's participation in my PhD research in the area of empowerment. The research seeks to answer the following questions:

- Is empowerment a positive experience for both parties?
- What factors help and hinder the experience?
- Do people in two similar organisations have a similar experience of empowerment?

The research will be conducted by face to face interviews, with four senior managers from your organisation, and four team members from each of their teams. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed, and all data will be treated as confidential, with all identifying information removed. Parts of the interview might be used in my thesis and/or publications, without any information being traceable back to the interviewee.

Specifically the research will look at the following areas:

- The processes that help and hinder empowerment
- The line manager interactions
- The relationship between line manager and team
- How empowerment is fostered.

The research will include these line managers:

- Line manager 1
- Line manager 2
- Line manager 3
- Line manager 4.

Each line manager will be asked to identify four direct reports to interview, all of whom have worked for them directly for a minimum for eighteen months.

All interviews will be conducted in a quiet meeting room at your premises, and each person will be asked to agree to the interview and to participate in the research, and to sign a consent form to that effect.

Once the research is completed and presented to the assessment panel at Leicester University I am very happy to come back and present by research findings to you.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research.

Helen Askey

Appendix seven – an extract from an interview

Interviewer: What are they like in managing performance, what mechanisms do you use, formal or informal, to manage performance of your team.

Respondent: Well, there are 10-10 that we do. Ten out of ten, 10 minutes at 10:00 to go through right, okay, what were you doing today? What are you achieving? This is the word that I use. What have you achieved for the team today? They'll come out and say what tasks they're doing. Then the next day what of those tasks did you get completed? Why did you get those completed? Who was stealing your time yesterday? Did you steal your own time? Did you get distracted? Did you procrastinate? Some people can accept that. Other people will respond with a reason or excuse that it wasn't there.

Interviewer: How do you cope with that, when they give you?

Respondent: Jesus, it's very frustrating and I take that to our two weekly meetings because yes, our short terms we have 10-10 and then I have the two weekly meetings, as in bi-weekly. Every other week we have a get together, individual one-to-one. I check what their objectives are, check what projects they're working on, what frustrations they have, what support they need, and then if there's anything I need, for instance say well like you're bringing too much of your home life in and it's affecting others, that you're on the phone, or people coming into the office to talk to you about subjects that are obviously personally related.

But I find that quite challenging, I must admit, because I don't know if I'm just being unfair and then do I want to upset that person who's obviously that person is in a position where they get upset by whatever is going on, and if I make a bigger deal am I going to lose more productivity because they're going to think well I don't if boss whatever. Oh, but I think I'm getting more and more thick-skinned to people. I think I don't really care if I annoy them or upset them to a point, if it's to the right point.

Table one - Conger and Kanungo (1988: 475) Five stages in the process of empowerment.

Stage one	Stage two	Stage three	Stage four	Stage five
Conditions leading to a psychological state of powerlessness	The use of managerial strategies and techniques	To provide self-efficacy information to subordinates using for sources	Results in empowering experience of subordinate	Leading to behavioural effects
Organisational factors Supervision Reward system Nature of job	Participative management Goal setting Feedback system Modelling Contingent/ competence based reward Job enrichment	Enactive attainment Vicarious experiences Verbal persuasion Emotional arousal Remove conditions listed in stage one	Strengthening of effort Performance expediency or belief in personal expediency	Initiation / persistence of behaviour to accomplish task objectives.

Table two – case study analysis

Comparison	
Company A	Company B
Each line manager in Company A	With each line manager in Company A
Each line manager in Company B	With each line manager in Company B
Line managers in Company A	With Line managers in Company B
Team member of Line manager 1 Company A (and then line manager 2/3/4)	With other Team members of Line manager 1 company A (and then line manager 2/3/4)
Team members of Line manager 1 company A	With other team members of other line managers within company A
Team members of company A	With team members of company B
Supporting mechanisms in company A	Supporting mechanisms in company B

Table three – number of participants in each organisation

Organisation A	Line manager	Number of team members participating
	1	3
	2	4
	3	3
	4	3
Total	4	13
Organisation B	Line manager	Number of team members participating
	1	4
	2	2
	3	4
	4	4
Total	4	14

Table four – participant's anonymity notation approach

Organisation	Line manager	Team member
A or B	1,2,3 or 4	W, X,Y or Z

Example: A1W – organisation A, line manager 1, team member W.