Unleashing Employees’ Power to Innovate: Cross-level Effects of Employment Relationships and Job Complexity

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ABSTRACT

This study develops a multilevel conceptual model linking employment relationships and psychological empowerment with individual innovation. To test this model, we use survey data on 82 job functions and 934 employees from a large Flemish service organization. The results highlight the role of variables at the job-level. The first job-level context variable concerns employment relationships. The findings show that employment relationships with high job requirements and/or offered inducements affect psychological empowerment, which in turn is related to individual innovation. The second job-level context variable concerns job complexity. The findings show that job complexity operates as a cross-level moderator of the link between psychological empowerment and individual innovation. These findings underscore recent claims that multilevel linkages and the job-level context matter in explaining individual innovation in service organizations.

KEYWORDS

Employment relationship, psychological empowerment, job complexity, individual innovation, multilevel study