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Empowerment—Fad or Fab? A Multilevel Review of the Past Two Decades of Research

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In this article, the authors review research that has examined psychological empowerment at various levels of analysis. Specifically, at the individual, team, and organizational levels of analysis, the authors summarize research that has examined both antecedents to psychological empowerment and the various outcomes of empowerment. Similarly, they discuss studies that have considered the multilevel relationships of psychological empowerment. In addition to reviewing the multilevel empowerment nomological network, the review examines how empowerment has been conceptualized within the literature. The authors include a discussion of how psychological empowerment has been operationalized within the literature, as well as various methodological considerations of psychological empowerment research. Throughout this review, they suggest avenues for future research, including methodological and theoretical considerations that are important to advancing our understanding of psychological empowerment across various levels of analysis.

Keywords: *empowerment; literature review; multilevel*

The concept of empowerment is far from new and can be traced back to research on employee involvement and participation conducted more than 60 years ago (e.g., Lewin, 1947) as well as Kanter's (1977) pioneering work on organizational change, affirmative action, and the quality of work life. The underlying belief of those advocating empowerment,

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whether in the 1940s, 1970s, or today, is that empowerment initiatives enhance employee performance, well-being, and positive attitudes (e.g., Hempel, Zhang, & Han, in press; Spreitzer, 2008; Wagner, 1994). As a result of these suggested benefits, approximately 70% of organizations have adopted some form of empowerment (e.g., Lawler, Mohrman, & Benson, 2001). However, despite this extensive foundational literature, history, and use within organizations, many questions still surround the antecedents and outcomes associated with empowerment.

In particular, while there is work that has heralded empowerment as advantageous to individuals, teams, and organizations (e.g., Forrester, 2000; Mathieu, Gilson, & Ruddy, 2006; Wallace, Johnson, Mathe, & Paul, 2011), others have questioned whether empowerment is truly beneficial or merely the latest in a series of "in vogue" management practices (e.g., Abrahamson, 1996; Strawn, 1994). To this end, Staw and Epstein (2000) provide evidence that while empowerment efforts may heighten the reputations of companies, they do little to benefit actual performance. Therefore, one of the primary purposes of this article is to review the research that has examined the effects of empowerment. In doing so, we hope to better understand whether empowerment is beneficial or "fab," as some suggest (e.g., Kirkman, Rosen, Tesluk, & Gibson, 2004; Seibert, Wang, & Courtright, 2011), or more appropriately viewed as merely a fad (Argyris, 1998; Forrester, 2000; Malone, 1997) that has just been around for a rather long time!

In addition to better understanding the implications of empowerment, the second goal of this review is to highlight some of the more salient antecedents to individual-, team-, and organizational-level empowerment. As this statement suggests, empowerment has been examined at various levels of analysis. In fact, empowerment has come to be viewed as an isomorphic construct (Chen, Bliese, & Mathieu, 2005; Klein & Kozlowski, 2000), or one that retains the same basic meaning across levels of analysis (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Mathieu et al., 2006). In a recent meta-analysis, Seibert et al. (2011) provided evidence that empowerment relations are homologous across individual and team levels of analysis. We extend this work by including studies of empowerment at the organizational level of analysis along with studies that have examined cross-level effects (e.g., Chen, Kirkman, Kanfer, Allen, & Rosen, 2007).

In addition to reviewing the multilevel empowerment nomological network, we start our review with a section detailing how empowerment has been conceptualized. This is salient because, as noted by Cooney, empowerment has been discussed from various perspectives "and yet for all this discussion of empowerment there is no settled idea of what it actually is" (2004: 677). Therefore, we review how the construct has been operationalized, along with the measurement techniques utilized. Furthermore, we highlight some of the relevant methodological considerations and describe ways that future research might improve from a methodological perspective. Finally, throughout this review, where possible, we leverage the meta-analytic findings of Seibert and colleagues (2011), thereby allowing us to focus more on identifying areas where there are discrepancies in the findings and detailing areas for future research, which we summarize in Table 1. Our goal in doing this is to offer a review of the work conducted to date and, more importantly, to lay out a plan for future research in this domain.

Table 1
Summary of Future Research Opportunities

Individual Level	Team Level	Organizational Level
• Examine the interactive effects of psychological empowerment dimensions.	• Examine the effects of faultlines on psychological empowerment.	• Examine the differential effects of human resource management programs and empowerment.
• Consider the interaction of work design characteristics leading to psychological empowerment.	• Consider the differential effects of surface- and deep-level diversity on psychological empowerment.	• Consider the ways in which organizational-level empowerment interventions can be sustained.
• Examine the relationship between individual dispositions (e.g., goal orientation) and psychological empowerment.	• Determine the effect of team virtuality as an antecedent of psychological empowerment.	• Determine the manner in which empowerment bundles should be rolled out for optimal effect.
• Consider the effects that other personality traits (e.g., core self-evaluation) have on psychological empowerment.	• Assess the role of multiple team membership.	• Consider psychological empowerment at the organization-level.
• Examine the impact of knowledge, skills, and abilities on psychological empowerment.	• Examine the impact of leader–member exchange on psychological empowerment.	Multilevel
• Examine the role of one's relationships with peers that lead to psychological empowerment.	• Consider the role of support provided from outside of the organization on psychological empowerment.	• Consider multiple variables from different levels and assess their relative salience.
• Consider various leadership constructs simultaneously in examining their relationships with psychological empowerment.	• Examine the role of task interdependence as both an antecedent and a moderator of psychological empowerment relationships.	• Assess whether psychological empowerment at one level impacts empowerment at another level of analysis.
• Examine the relationship between structural empowerment bundles and psychological empowerment dimensions.	• Consider the effect of task feedback and complexity on psychological empowerment.	• Examine the influence that higher level factors have on team psychological empowerment.
	• Perform additional examinations of the relationship between structural and psychological empowerment.	• Examine the role of individual and team characteristics.

Methodological Opportunities	General Opportunities
• Match operationalization (e.g., dimensions or composite measure) of psychological empowerment to research question.	• Consider temporal considerations within the empowerment nomological network by conducting longitudinal studies.
• Assess psychometric properties of the two-dimensional view of psychological empowerment.	• Examine the need for assessment of the effects of empowerment interventions.
• Examine the relative criterion-related validity of the two- and four-dimensional versions of psychological empowerment in the same study.	• Assess the role of culture (e.g., collectivistic, power distance, etc.) both as an antecedent and a contextual moderator.
	• Consider additional moderators to the antecedent–psychological empowerment and psychological empowerment–outcome relationships.

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Methodological Opportunities	General Opportunities
• Consider testing cause indicator models of empowerment. • Consider different methodological techniques—network analysis, growth modeling, etc. • Employ multilevel confirmatory factor analysis techniques to properly assess the construct validity of aggregate constructs. • Consider the need for studies with designs that support strong causal inferences about relationships involving psychological empowerment.	• Examine the possibility of curvilinear relationships. • Consider different mediators of psychological empowerment–outcome relationships. • Examine the interaction between psychological empowerment and other emergent states (e.g., collective intelligence, trust). • Assess the impact of psychological empowerment on additional affective reactions (e.g., personal development and growth, creativity, team viability).

Conceptualization of Empowerment

Early work on empowerment developed out of two motivational frameworks: the job characteristics model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) and Bandura's (1977, 1982) work on self-efficacy. These two different foundational literatures gave rise to two distinct conceptualizations of empowerment: structural and psychological (cf. Leach, Wall, & Jackson, 2003; Menon, 2001; Spreitzer, 1995). *Structural empowerment* builds upon job design and job characteristics research (Campion, Medsker, & Higgs, 1993; Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980) and, at its core, focuses on the transition of authority and responsibility from upper management to employees. Accordingly, structural empowerment is primarily concerned with organizational conditions (e.g., facets of the job, team designs, or organizational arrangements that instill situations, policies, and procedures), whereby power, decision making, and formal control over resources are shared (Kanter, 1977). In contrast, *psychological empowerment* focuses on individuals or teams perceiving that they are in control of their work (e.g., Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Psychological empowerment has ties to Bandura's (1977, 1982) work on self-efficacy; it is less concerned with the actual transition of authority and responsibility but instead focuses on employees' perceptions or cognitive states regarding empowerment. Here, the key is that individuals (or teams) need to believe that they can perform their work on their own, and as such, psychological empowerment can be defined in terms of motivational processes (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

Both conceptualizations of empowerment have generated a great deal of complementary and distinct research at multiple levels of analysis. Work by Menon (2001) recommended integrating both perspectives, and as a result a number of recent studies have positioned *structural* empowerment as a necessary, but not sufficient, antecedent to *psychological* empowerment (e.g., Mathieu et al., 2006). In this review, our focus is on *psychological empowerment*. However, we see the merit of the recent movement in the literature to distinguish psychological empowerment from structural empowerment (e.g., Alper, Tjosvold, & Law, 2000; Arnold, Arad, Rhoades, & Drasgow, 2000; Cook & Goff, 2002; Mills & Ungson, 2003; Spreitzer, 2008) and thus include research that examines how structural empowerment serves as antecedent to psychological empowerment.

Psychological Empowerment

The focus of psychological empowerment is on the state or set of conditions that allow for employees or teams to believe that they have control over their work. Conger and Kanungo (1988) defined psychological empowerment as "a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organizational practices [*structural empowerment*] and informal techniques of providing efficacy information" (1988: 474). Psychological empowerment has been conceptualized as being composed of either two or four dimensions. The *two-dimensional* view focuses on employees' perceptions concerning the delegation of authority and responsibility. For example, Hechanova-Alampay and Beehr (2001) defined empowerment as involving team members' perceived authority and responsibility for work outcomes. Hyatt and Ruddy (1997) and others (e.g., Mathieu et al., 2006) have also employed this definition and the two-dimensional view (i.e., authority and responsibility) of psychological empowerment at the team level.

However, while this two-dimensional conceptualization exists within the team psychological empowerment literature, the predominant view at both the individual and team level is that of a *four-dimensional* construct. While built upon Bandura's (1977, 1982) work on self-efficacy, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) expanded upon Conger and Kanungo's (1988) earlier definition suggesting that empowerment is akin to task motivation comprising four dimensions: *meaning, competence, self-determination,* and *choice*. This definition proposes that psychological empowerment is not an organizational intervention or a dispositional trait but rather a cognitive state achieved when individuals perceive that they are empowered. Spreitzer (1995, 1997) further refined this framework based on the extant literature and developed a multidimensional instrument to assess individual-level psychological empowerment composed of the following:

1. *Meaning* (synonymous with Hackman & Oldham's, 1980, use of the term) refers to the fit between one's work goals and beliefs or values; in other words, it is an individual's extent of caring about a task.
2. *Competence* (directly linked to Bandura's, 1982, notion of self-efficacy) is the belief individuals hold regarding their capability to skillfully perform their work activities.
3. *Self-determination* (akin to the Thomas and Velthouse's, 1990, *choice* dimension) considers one's sense of autonomy or control over immediate work behaviors and processes and reflects choice in initiating and regulating action.
4. *Impact* is the degree to which individuals view their behavior as making a difference or the extent to which they have influence on operating outcomes.

Together, these dimensions capture a dynamic state or active orientation toward work, and psychological empowerment is highest when all four dimensions are high (Spreitzer, 1995). Further, Spreitzer argued that individual-level psychological empowerment exists along a continuum, with the four dimensions being additive.

Building upon this work, Kirkman and Rosen (1999) advanced a referent-shift (see Chan, 1998; Chen, Mathieu, & Bliese, 2004) four-dimensional analogue of Spreitzer's framework to the team level. Specifically, they defined team psychological empowerment as consisting

of (1) *potency,* team members have the collective belief held that they can be effective (akin to competence); (2) *meaningfulness,* the tasks that the team works on are important, valuable, and worthwhile; (3) *autonomy,* the team has discretion over its work (akin to self-determination); and (4) *impact,* the work performed by the team is significant and advances organizational objectives. Moreover, they shifted the referents of their survey measure from "I" to "the team" or some other focal collective.

Likewise, psychological empowerment has been operationalized at the team level using an additive-aggregate approach (see Chan, 1998; Chen et al., 2004) that averages individuals' empowerment to a representative team (e.g., Jung & Sosik, 2002) or to a higher level (e.g., store; Wallace et al., 2011). Given that research in other domains has shown that such additive measures of individual-level constructs are not equivalent to referent-shift versions of the same construct (cf. Arthur, Bell, & Edwards, 2007; Gully, Incalcaterra, Joshi, & Beaubien, 2002), we caution that this practice might introduce a conceptual confound between the level of the measurement and the level of the construct.

Construct Validation and Operationalization of Psychological Empowerment

The two-dimensional version of psychological empowerment has been subjected to some tests of reliability and underlying factor structure (e.g., Guerrero & Barraud-Didier, 2004; Mathieu et al., 2006). Yet, it is fair to say that the two-dimensional view of empowerment has not gone through a systematic investigation of its construct validity. In contrast, the construct validity of the four-dimensional version has been scrutinized at both the individual and team levels of analysis. Here, Spreitzer (1995) found support for the multidimensionality of the individual-level psychological empowerment construct, with all four dimensions loading onto a single second-order factor. In other investigations, she demonstrated theoretically based relationships between psychological empowerment, various antecedents (Spreitzer, 1996), and consequences (Spreitzer, Kizilos & Nason, 1997). The consistency of the four-dimensional factor structure is impressive given that both convergent validity and discriminant validity have been found in international samples (e.g., Carless, 2004; Ergeneli, Sag, Ari, & Metin, 2007; Huang, Iun, Liu, & Gong, 2010); across different types of organizations and work contexts, including samples of nurses (e.g., Boudrias, Gaudreau, & Laschinger, 2004; Kraimer, Seibert, & Liden, 1999); and with both blue-collar (e.g., Gagne, Senecal, & Koestner, 1997; Kraimer, et al., 1999; Spreitzer, 1996) and white-collar (e.g., Spreitzer et al., 1997) employees. Finally, at the individual level, Seibert and colleagues (2011) performed a second-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and found support for a higher level latent empowerment construct made up of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. This suggests that across the individual-level psychological empowerment literature, there is no unique variance explained by the subdimensions as compared to a composite measure.

Likewise, the team-level four-dimensional measure has been subjected to many CFAs (e.g., Hempel et al., in press; Kirkman, Tesluk, & Rosen, 2004) and has largely been supported. While Seibert and colleagues (2011) did not have a sufficient number of studies to perform a team-level CFA, they were able to conclude that the relationships between psychological empowerment and various antecedents and outcomes were homologous (i.e., comparable) across the individual and team levels of analysis.

While considerable support abounds for the four-dimensional measure of psychological empowerment, the factor loadings have not all been uniform across dimensions or across samples. As such, we believe there is still merit in assessing the dimensions of the construct. In particular, research is needed to determine factors that may serve as antecedents to certain dimensions (and not to others), as well as the resulting influence that such dimensions may have on various outcomes. Additionally, going forward, research needs to consider the other forms of empowerment (i.e., two-dimensional and additive measure) and leverage multimethod, longitudinal, and diverse research designs to gain a deeper understanding of the impact that various measurement techniques may have on the relationships within the nomological network.

Literature Review

Many organizations have implemented empowerment initiatives based on the premise that when individual employees can participate in decision making and share responsibility for how work is conducted, outcomes such as performance and employee affect will be enhanced. However, these benefits do not always ensue (e.g., Lawler et al., 2001), and therefore, to better understand the results, we start by examining a number of antecedents or inputs that have been found to influence psychological empowerment. To best integrate the extant literature, we follow the precedent set by prior empirical and literature reviews in this domain (e.g., Seibert et al., 2011; Spreitzer, 2008) and organize our antecedents into five categories: (1) structural empowerment, (2) individual and team characteristics, (3) work design characteristics, (4) leadership, and (5) organizational support.

We use the term *structural empowerment* to refer to specific practices or bundles of initiatives intended to delegate authority and responsibility to organizational members (Emery & Trist, 1969). Next, we consider *individual and team characteristics* followed by *work design characteristics* such as task significance, autonomy, and interdependence and assess how they may impact the development of psychological empowerment. Finally, *leadership* considers the role of external leaders or management, while *organizational support* examines the context or climate within which individuals or teams perform their work.

Because a comprehensive review of all studies in each of these antecedent categories would be unwieldy, and given the recent meta-analysis, we have included under each antecedent category details on what we consider to be one or two studies that are representative of the aggregate findings provided by Seibert et al. (2011). Further, we include another one or two studies that either have extended work in this area, have found results that are different or unique, or utilize a compelling methodological approach or an interesting sample, and thus push our thinking as we move forward in this area of research. In addition to describing these exemplar studies within the review, we highlight specific details in Tables 2–5.

Following our review of antecedents, we move to the outcome side of the equation where both performance and affective reactions have received attention. However, while we are able to follow a similar framework at the individual and team levels of analysis, this was not always possible at the organizational level. While the majority of research conducted to date (and thus reviewed here) is focused on the individual and team levels, we felt it important to include organizational-level research, where the focus has been predominantly on the effects

Table 2
Individual-Level Psychological Empowerment Exemplar Studies

Study	Sample Type				Psychological Empowerment Measure					Antecedents of Psychological Empowerment					Effects of Psychological Empowerment		Source of Outcome Measures			Cross-Sectional Data	Location of Sample
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	1	2	3		
Alge, Ballinger, Tangirala, & Oakley, 2006				X	X						X	X				X	X			Yes	U.S.[a]
Aryee & Chen, 2006			X		X								X	X	X	X	X	X		Yes	China
Avey, Hughes, Norman, & Luthans, 2008	X				X							X	X			X	X			No	U.S.
Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004		X			X								X			X	X				Singapore
Carless, 2004		X			X								X	X		X	X			Yes	Australia
Erdogan & Bauer, 2009		X			X						X				X	X	X		X	Yes	Turkey
Ergeneli, Sag, Ari, & Metin, 2007		X			X						X		X			X	X			Yes	Turkey
Gagne, Senecal, & Koestner, 1997		X			X							X				X	X			Yes	Canada
Gomez & Rosen, 2001				X	X								X			N/A		N/A		Yes	U.S.
Harris, Wheeler, & Kacmar, 2009		X			X						X		X		X	X	X	X		Yes	U.S.
Hochwälder, 2008		X			X						X					X	X			X	Sweden
Hon & Rensvold, 2006				X	X					X	X	X		X		N/A		N/A		Yes	Hong Kong
Koberg, Boss, Senjem, & Goodman, 1999		X			X						X		X	X	X	X	X			Yes	U.S.
Kraimer, Seibert, & Liden, 1999		X			X							X				X	X			No	U.S.
Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, & Wilk, 2001		X			X					X						X	X			Yes	Canada
Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, & Wilk, 2004		X			X					X						X	X			No	Canada
Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000	X				X							X	X		X	X	X	X		Yes	U.S.
Logan & Ganster, 2007		X							X	X			X		X	X	X		X	No	U.S.
Martin & Bush, 2006		X			X								X	X	X		X			No	U.S.
Pieterse, van Knippenberg, Schippers, & Stam, 2010		X			X						X		X			X		X		Yes	Netherlands
Siegall & Gardner, 2000				X	X								X	X		N/A		N/A		Yes	U.S.
Sigler & Pearson, 2000			X		X						X			X	X	X	X			Yes	U.S.
Spreitzer, 1995				X	X							X			X			X		Yes	U.S.
Spreitzer, 1996				X	X						X	X	X	X		N/A		N/A		Yes	U.S.
Spreitzer, Kizilos, & Nason, 1997				X	X							N/A			X	X	X	X		Yes	U.S.
Spreitzer & Mishra, 2002			X		X						X			X		X	X			Yes	U.S.
Wang & Lee, 2009				X	X						X			X		X	X			Yes	U.S.
Wat & Shaffer, 2005		X			X								X	X		X		X		Yes	Hong Kong
Zhang & Bartol, 2010		X			X						X	X	X			X	X			Yes	China

Note: Sample Type: 1 = student team, 2 = service, 3 = manufacturing, 4 = mixed; Psychological Empowerment Measure: 1 = Spreitzer (1995) individual-level measure, 2 = two-dimensional team-level measure, 3 = four-dimensional team-level measure, 4 = Spreitzer (1995) individual-level measure aggregated to the team-level; 5 = other measure; Antecedents of Psychological Empowerment: 1 = structural empowerment, 2 = individual characteristics, 3 = work design, 4 = leadership, 5 = organizational support; Effects of Psychological Empowerment: 1 = performance, 2 = affective reactions; Source of Outcome Measures: 1 = self-rated, 2 = other rated, 3 = independent rated; Cross-Sectional Data: yes = psychological empowerment and outcome measures assessed at same point; Location of Sample = country where respondents were located.
a. Sample consisted of graduates from a college located in the United States; however, the location of respondents was not provided.

Table 3
Team-Level Psychological Empowerment Exemplar Studies

Study	Sample Type				Psychological Empowerment Measurement					Antecedents of Psychological Empowerment					Effects of Psychological Empowerment		Source of Outcome Measures			Cross-Sectional Data	Aggregation of Empowerment Justified			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	1	2	3		1	2	3	4
Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, & Ammeter, 2004		X				X					X		X		X				X	Yes[a]	X			
Akgun, Keskin, Byrne, & Imamoglu, 2007		X				X					X				X		X			Yes	X			
Chen & Klimoski, 2003				X				X			X				X			X		No	X			
Gerwin & Moffat, 1997			X			X				X			X		X	X	X	X		Yes	X			
Gibson & Vermeulen, 2003				X		X					X		X	X						Yes				X
Hechanova-Alampay & Beehr, 2001			X			X							X			X			X	Yes[b]	X			
Hempel, Zhang, & Han, in press				X			X			X	X			X	X			X		Yes				X
Hyatt & Ruddy, 1997		X				X						X	X		X	X	X		X	Yes[c]				X
Jung & Sosik, 2002		X						X					X		X		X			Yes			X	
Kirkman & Rosen, 1999				X			X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X		Yes	X			
Kirkman, Rosen, Tesluk, & Gibson, 2004		X					X				X	X			X			X	X	Yes[d]				X
Kirkman & Shapiro, 2001			X				X				X				X		X	X		Yes			X	
Kirkman, Tesluk, & Rosen, 2001				X			X								X	X	X	X		Yes				X
Kirkman, Tesluk, & Rosen, 2004				X			X				X				X		X	X		Yes	X			
Langfred, 2007	X							X				X			X			X		Yes				X
Mathieu, Gilson, & Ruddy, 2006		X				X						X	X	X	X				X	No				X

Note: Sample Type: 1 = student team, 2 = service, 3 = manufacturing, 4 = mixed; Psychological Empowerment Measure: 1 = Spreitzer (1995) individual-level measure, 2 = two-dimensional team-level measure, 3 = four-dimensional team-level measure, 4 = Spreitzer (1995) individual-level measure aggregated to the team level; 5 = other measure; Antecedents of Psychological Empowerment: 1 = structural empowerment, 2 = team characteristics, 3 = work design, 4 = leadership, 5 = organizational support; Effects of Psychological Empowerment: 1 = performance, 2 = affective reactions; Source of Outcome Measures: 1 = self-rated, 2 = other rated, 3 = independent rated; Cross-Sectional Data: yes = psychological empowerment and outcome measures assessed at same point; Aggregation Justification: 1 = no justification provided, 2 = intraclass correlation coefficient; (ICC) values reported, 3 = r_{wg} values reported, 4 = both ICCs and r_{wg} reported.

a. Outcome covered a period of time within which the survey measuring empowerment was administered.

b. Outcome measure (safety accidents) was for the 10 months leading up to the survey that measured psychological empowerment.

c. Outcome measure was from the 6 months prior to the survey that measured psychological empowerment.

d. Outcome measure was from the most recent balanced scorecard—so, while it was from the same time period as the survey, it included time outside of this specific time period.

Table 4
Organizational-Level Psychological Empowerment Exemplar Studies

	Sample Type				Study Type		Type of Empowerment Studied		Antecedents of Empowerment					Effects of Empowerment		Source of Outcome Measures			Cross-Sectional Data
Study	1	2	3	4	1	2	1	2	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	1	2	3	
Birdi et al., 2008			X			X	X				N/A			X				X	Yes[a]
Greasley, Bryman, Dainty, Price, Soetanto, & King, 2005		X			X		X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X			Yes
Guerrero & Barraud-Didier, 2004				X		X	X				X			X	X		X	X	No
Guthrie, 2001				X		X	X				N/A			X	X	X			Yes
Patterson, West, & Wall, 2004			X			X	X				X			X				X	No
Silver, Randolph, & Seibert, 2006				X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X				X	Yes
Srivastava, Bartol, & Locke, 2006		X				X		X[b]			N/A			X				X	No
Vallas, 2006			X		X		X				X		X		X		X		Yes
Wallace, Johnson, Mathe, & Paul, 2011		X				X		X				X		X				X	No

Note: Sample Type: 1 = student team, 2 = service, 3 = manufacturing, 4 = mixed; Study Type: 1= qualitative, 2 = strategic human resource management; Type of Empowerment Studied: 1 = structural, 2 = psychological; Antecedents of Empowerment: 1 = structural empowerment, 2 = individual/team characteristics, 3 = work design, 4 = leadership, 5 = organizational support; Effects of Empowerment: 1 = performance, 2 = affective reactions; Source of Outcome Measures: 1 = self-rated, 2 = other rated, 3 = independent rated; Cross-Sectional Data: yes = psychological empowerment and outcome measures assessed at same point.

a. Outcome covered a period of time within which the survey measuring empowerment was administered.

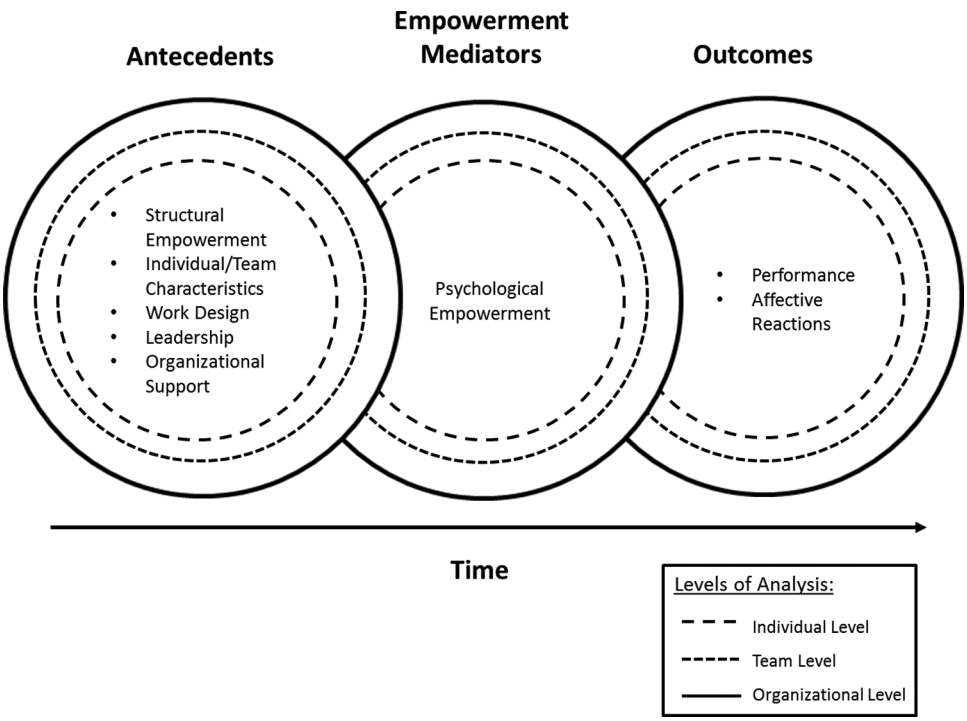
b. Type of empowerment studied was empowering leadership rather than structural or psychological.

Table 5
Multilevel Psychological Empowerment Exemplar Studies

Study	Sample Type				Level of Analyses Included in Study			Psychological Empowerment Measurement					Antecedents of Psychological Empowerment					Effects of Psychological Empowerment		Source of Outcome Measures			Cross-Sectional Data	Analysis Program Used
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	1	2	3		
Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004		X			X	X		X								X			X	X			Yes	HLM
Chen, Kirkman, Kanfer, Allen, & Rosen, 2007		X			X	X		X		X					X	X		X			X		Yes	S-PLUS and R
Chen, Sharma, Edinger, Shapiro, & Farh, 2011	X				X	X		X		X						X		X	X		X		Yes	HLM
Choi, 2007			X		X	X		X		X						X	X		X		X		No	HLM
Liao, Toya, Lepak, & Hong, 2009		X			X	X		X			X			X	X		X	X			X		Yes	HLM
Seibert, Silver, & Randolph, 2004			X		X	X		X			X		X					X	X	X	X		Yes	HLM
Snape & Redman, 2010				X	X		X					X			X		X		X	X			Yes	HLM
van Mierlo, Rutte, Vermunt, Kompier, & Doorewaard, 2007		X			X	X						X	X						X		X		Yes	MLwiN

Note: Sample Type: 1 = student team, 2 = service, 3 = manufacturing, 4 = mixed; Level of Analysis: 1 = individual, 2 = team, 3 = organizational; Psychological Empowerment Measure: 1 = Spreitzer (1995) individual-level measure, 2 = two-dimensional team-level measure, 3 = four-dimensional team-level measure, 4 = Spreitzer (1995) individual-level measure aggregated to the team level; 5 = other measure; Antecedents of Psychological Empowerment: 1 = structural empowerment, 2 = individual/team characteristics, 3 = work design, 4 = leadership, 5 = organizational support; Effects of Psychological Empowerment: 1 = performance, 2 = affective reactions; Source of Outcome Measures: 1 = self-rated, 2 = other rated, 3 = independent rated; Cross-Sectional Data: yes = psychological empowerment and outcome measures assessed at same point; (ICC) values reported, 3= r_{wg} values reported, 4 = both ICCs and r_{wg} reported.

Figure 1
Multilevel Empowerment Mediational Framework



of structural empowerment and work design factors on organizational performance. Finally, given that recent work also has begun to investigate these complex relationships across levels of analysis (e.g., Chen et al., 2007), we include such studies within our review, as well as discuss what we view as opportunities for future research across these various levels. Figure 1 depicts this integrative multilevel framework and serves as the guide for the current review. As shown, psychological empowerment essentially acts as a mediating mechanism tying the antecedent conditions with work-related outcomes. The concentric circles are intended to depict the fact that these relationships may operate within and across levels of analysis in a nested fashion. Finally, our framework includes consideration of temporal factors, as we suggest that such relationships unfold over time.

Individual-Level Psychological Empowerment

Antecedents of Individual-Level Psychological Empowerment

Structural empowerment. At the individual level, structural empowerment has been positioned as one of the key predictors of psychological empowerment. The argument is that

when management transfers autonomy and responsibility to lower level employees, feelings of empowerment should ensue. In support of this, Seibert and colleagues (2011) reported a significant positive relationship between individual-level psychological empowerment and high-performance managerial practices (which include structural empowerment; mean corrected correlation = .48).

As an example of work that has examined this relationship, Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, and Wilk (2001) conducted a cross-sectional study and provided evidence that psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between structural empowerment and individual satisfaction. Building upon this study, Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, and Wilk (2004) conducted one of the few studies that has examined psychological empowerment over time, finding that the relationships between structural (measured as a composite of opportunity, information, support, resources, and both formal and informal power) and psychological empowerment and outcomes change over time. Specifically, in their study, as time unfolded the nurses in their sample reported that changes in structural empowerment influenced their feelings of psychological empowerment, but whereas structural empowerment still influenced job satisfaction, there was no indirect effect through psychological empowerment. Accordingly, it appears important for future research to further examine the relationship between structural and psychological empowerment over time.

As evidenced by these representative studies and the findings of Seibert and colleagues (2011), there is solid support indicating that delegating authority and responsibility (i.e., structural empowerment) results in increased levels of individual-level psychological empowerment. However, as detailed in Table 2, most of these studies used cross-sectional data and relied solely on individuals' self-reported assessments and, as such, may be susceptible to same-source biases (e.g., Avolio, Yammarino, & Bass, 1991). Additionally, as Laschinger and colleagues' (2001, 2004) work exemplifies, structural empowerment has been conceptualized to include various bundles of human resource (HR) practices that makes it difficult to tease apart which structural facets actually drive the associations. For example, Hon and Rensvold (2006) report that structural empowerment (measured as participation in goal setting) was positively associated with the meaningfulness and self-determination dimensions of psychological empowerment. Here, it appears that future research may benefit from a more in-depth consideration of the various facets of structural empowerment on the dimensions of psychological empowerment. One potential opportunity to conduct such analysis, while also minimizing same-source bias effects, would be to leverage organizational archival, sources of data to examine the impact of structural empowerment in shaping psychological empowerment.

In our review of the literature, we found only one randomized field experiment. Specifically, in a sample of project managers from a trucking company, half of the sample received an empowerment intervention "in conjunction with organizational changes that gave the treatment group additional access to information, decision making discretion, access to resources" (Logan & Ganster, 2007: 1531). As a result of this design, the authors were able to assess the "true" effects of an intervention that encompassed training and increased decision making, along with access to resources and information (i.e., structural empowerment), on the self-determination and impact dimensions of psychological empowerment. While there were no significant main effects, the interaction between structural empowerment and supervisory support was significant and positive, suggesting that when supervisory support

was high, structural empowerment enhanced feelings of psychological empowerment. These results highlight the need to examine how structural empowerment may interact with other variables in leading to psychological empowerment. As such, we urge researchers to assess potential interactions and to consider them over time so that we can better understand whether the intended outcomes are lasting, and if this is not the case, what can be done along the way, and when, to maintain or enhance their effectiveness.

Individual characteristics. Early work in this area emphasized that individual differences would influence perceptions of psychological empowerment (i.e., Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). To this end, Seibert and colleagues (2011) examined individual competencies (education, gender, age, tenure, and job level) and provided evidence that age (mean corrected correlation = .11), tenure (mean corrected correlation = .11), and job level (mean corrected correlation = .19) are all significantly positively related to psychological empowerment. As an example, Ergeneli and colleagues (2007) found that job status was a salient factor in an individual's perception of empowerment. In fact, their results suggest that individuals who had obtained higher managerial levels also had higher levels of psychological empowerment.

Similarly, research has also considered the role of personality on psychological empowerment. Here, Seibert et al. (2011) found that positive self-evaluation traits had a strong positive association with psychological empowerment (mean corrected correlation = .48), and Avey, Hughes, Norman, and Luthans (2008) found a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and an individual's psychological capital. In addition, Hon and Rensvold (2006) found that high levels of need for achievement (the belief that one is competent and capable) were related to all 4 dimensions of empowerment. In contrast, need for power (seeing oneself as having influence and being in control) was related only to competence. We contend that while there is a wealth of research that has explored personality dimensions (e.g., Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002; Zhao, Seibert, & Lumpkin, 2010), there is still much to be learned regarding their impact on psychological empowerment. For example, there is a growing literature considering the impact of individual core self-evaluation (e.g., Judge & Hurst, 2008; Piccolo, Judge, Takahashi, Watanabe, & Locke, 2005); however, this individual characteristic has not been considered in studies of psychological empowerment. Thus, we call for future research to examine this and other personality characteristics within the individual-level psychological empowerment nomological network. Furthermore, questions remain as to whether individual characteristics work in tandem with one another, and/or whether some characteristics are more salient than others.

While personality traits have been one of the more studied individual characteristics, researchers have also considered other types of characteristics. For example, Erdogan and Bauer (2009) examined the relationship between an individual's perceived overqualification and numerous performance outcomes and found that psychological empowerment dampened the negative effects of perceived overqualification in their study of 244 sales associates within a Turkish retail chain. This work sets the stage nicely for researchers to move beyond personality and consider other individual characteristics and their resulting influence on psychological empowerment. For example, research has yet to fully explore the role that an individual's expertise and knowledge, skills, and abilities may play in relation to

psychological empowerment. The one study that we could find that partially addresses this point suggested that the impact of a leader's empowerment behavior on his or her subordinate's individual performance was influenced by the subordinate's level of experience (e.g., Ahearne, Mathieu, & Rapp, 2005).

Additionally, while personalities represent stable traits, research also has examined individual orientations, that is, dispositions that prompt responses based on situational factors (e.g., Button, Mathieu, & Zajac, 1996). However, to date, research focused on individual psychological empowerment has yet to consider individual orientations. Accordingly, we suggest that future research in this area explore the impact that individual dispositions such as goal orientation (e.g., Dweck, 1986), team orientation (e.g., Driskell & Salas, 1992), and learning orientation (e.g., Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2003) may have in shaping individual psychological empowerment. Similarly, as detailed in Table 2, research has been conducted in various cultural settings (e.g., Wang & Lee, 2009; Wat & Shaffer, 2005; Zhang & Bartol, 2010); however, the majority of this work has drawn participants from a single culture and therefore has not been able to assess the impact of an individual's proclivity to certain cultural dimensions (e.g., collectivistic, power distance). As such, it behooves future researchers to examine these relationships.

Work design. While structural empowerment captures the extent to which subordinates are given authority and responsibility for a task, there are additional job or work design characteristics that also are likely to affect psychological empowerment. Specifically, job characteristics theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) posits that there are a number of core objective features (e.g., task significance, feedback, skill variety, and task complexity) associated with any job and that high levels (and combinations) of these characteristics will, in turn, drive psychological states such as meaning and self-determination. Spreitzer (1995) adopted the psychological states of meaningfulness and self-determination (also called autonomy) as parts of the domain of psychological empowerment, along with the competence and impact dimensions (Spreitzer, 1996). Accordingly, it is important to maintain a differentiation between features of work designs and their resulting psychological states in substantive investigations. Seibert and colleagues (2011) found a significant, positive relationship (mean corrected correlation = .58) between work design and individual-level psychological empowerment—the strongest antecedent documented in their analysis.

As an example, Liden, Wayne, and Sparrowe (2000) examined the interplay between job characteristics, social exchange, and empowerment and a number of outcomes. In their study, task identity, significance, skill variety, and feedback were assessed using a single measure, and the authors provided evidence that job characteristics were significantly positively related to all four empowerment dimensions. In contrast, other researchers (e.g., Gagne et al., 1997) have found that some work design characteristics impact certain dimensions of psychological empowerment but not others. Specifically, Kraimer and colleagues (1999) found that only the level of meaningfulness in one's job was positively related to the meaning dimension of empowerment, whereas job autonomy related to self-determination, and task feedback to both competence and impact.

The above results provide strong empirical evidence that work design characteristics either separately or as a unitary construct are positively related to psychological empowerment.

However, less is known about how the various characteristics interact to lead to psychological empowerment. Such an examination would be valuable since individuals rarely work in contexts where only a single design characteristic is present. While the majority of studies examining work design have focused on traditional task or job characteristics, Alge, Ballinger, Tangirala, and Oakley (2006) provide a departure from this line of inquiry by examining the relationship between information privacy and psychological empowerment. In fact, in their study, which included two samples, they found that information privacy positively impacted psychological empowerment, which in turn had a positive relationship with creative performance and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).

Leadership. Seibert and colleagues (2011) note that leadership (in its various forms) has been examined as an antecedent of individual psychological empowerment more than any other antecedent (e.g., Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003; Koberg, Boss, Senjem, & Goodman, 1999; Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997; Liden et al., 2000). To this end, their meta-analysis reports a significant positive association (mean corrected correlation = .53) across 51 studies. However, the extant literature has not considered leadership in a unitary fashion but instead has examined the mediating effect that psychological empowerment may have on the relationships between various outcomes and different leadership styles and behaviors.

For instance, research posits that empowering leaders create a climate where employees feel inspired and self-confident (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Edwards & Collinson, 2002). Likewise, transformational leaders empower individuals through a shared vision and in doing so, build commitment to the organization's objectives. Given the popularity of studying this type of leadership, several researchers have examined its impact on psychological empowerment, finding a consistent positive relationship (e.g., Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004; Martin & Bush, 2006). Additionally, several articles have examined the link between leader–member exchange (LMX) and psychological empowerment (e.g., Aryee & Chen, 2006; Gomez & Rosen, 2001; Liden et al., 2000). Specifically, in two distinct samples, Harris, Wheeler, and Kacmar (2009) found LMX to be significantly associated with psychological empowerment and that the interaction between LMX and psychological empowerment predicted affective, behavioral, and performance outcomes.

In contrast to researchers who examine the behaviors exhibited by leaders, others suggest that it is the relationship between subordinates and leaders that is particularly salient in the development of psychological empowerment. This line of thinking suggests that better and more trusting relationships are associated with higher levels of psychological empowerment. For example, Siegall and Gardner (2000) found that communication with one's supervisor was positively associated with the meaning, self-determination, and impact dimensions of psychological empowerment. Likewise, in a study of bank managers, Ergeneli and colleagues (2007) examined both cognition- and affect-based trust (McAllister, 1995) and psychological empowerment. After controlling for the effects of position, cognition-based trust in one's leader was positively associated with a composite measure of psychological empowerment, but affect-based trust was not. When looking at the specific dimensions of psychological empowerment, cognition-based trust was related to both meaning and competence, while affect-based trust was related to impact. Taken together, these results suggest that trust in one's leader is an important predictor of psychological empowerment, but it appears to differ across the various empowerment dimensions.

While most of the research discussed above has examined only one type of leadership, in a study of 230 employees in a governmental agency in the Netherlands, Pieterse, van Knippenberg, Schippers, and Stam (2010) examined the role of both transformational and transactional leadership on psychological empowerment. Results here suggest that transformational leadership has a positive impact on innovative behavior but only when psychological empowerment was high. In contrast, transactional leadership is negatively associated with innovative behavior when psychological empowerment is high. Accordingly, the results of this study suggest the need for future work that examines multiple leadership-related constructs in a single study, and they highlight the need for research that examines how psychological empowerment interacts with antecedents that lead to various outcomes.

Finally, while researchers have paid particular attention to the relationship that exists between a subordinate and a leader (i.e., LMX), little attention has been given to the relationships that may exist between peers. In fact, based on our review, we found only one study that has considered peers or teammates and psychological empowerment (e.g., Liden et al., 2000). Similarly, research has yet to explore the extent to which individuals are familiar with their peers or the extent to which they have extensive experience working with their peers. Namely, the only study that included familiarity was conducted by Alge et al. (2006), and here familiarity was included as a covariate. The advances in social network analysis (e.g., Mehra, Kilduff, & Brass, 2001; Zhou, Shin, Brass, Choi, & Zhang, 2009) could be particularly valuable in this effort going forward. Such suggestions are intended not to minimize the value of the relationship with one's leader but rather to highlight that the relationship with peers also may be important.

Organizational support. In contrast to work design and structural empowerment, organizational support considers drivers that are more distant to the day-to-day functioning of any one employee and include variables such as climate and culture and levels of formalization and decentralization. Seibert and colleagues (2011) found 49 studies that considered the association between organizational support (they used the term "social-political support") and individual psychological empowerment, and this relationship was significant and positive (mean corrected correlation = .48).

For example, Sigler and Pearson (2000) found that employee psychological empowerment mediated the influence of multiple facets of perceived organizational culture on performance and organizational commitment. Furthermore, Rao (2005) reported significant correlations between employees' perceptions of organizational culture and empowerment in a private and a public organization. Finally, Hochwälder (2008) found that psychological empowerment served as a mediator to the relationship between perceived work environment features and nurses' emotional exhaustion and feelings of depersonalization. Specifically, empowerment reduced the negative impact of control on assistant nurses' depersonalization and the negative influence of control on registered nurses' emotional exhaustion.

Outcomes of Individual-Level Psychological Empowerment

There are a large number of outcomes that have been linked to implementing empowerment at various levels of analysis. While the range of outcomes considered in the literature is

quite wide, the outcomes do appear to coalesce around two broad categories—performance and affective reactions (e.g., Hackman & Morris, 1975; Mathieu & Gilson, in press).

Performance. Spreitzer was a pioneer in considering the impact of psychological empowerment on individual performance. In particular, in her 1995 study Spreitzer reported that psychological empowerment was related to managerial effectiveness, while in a 1997 study she and her colleagues found a positive association with employee effectiveness. Not surprisingly, competence and impact are the dimensions that have been found to most strongly drive performance (Spreitzer et al., 1997). When examined as a composite measure, individual psychological empowerment appears to have a positive relationship with both individual performance and OCB. In support of this, Seibert and colleagues (2011) noted that these two relationships were significant and positive (mean corrected correlations of .36 and .38, respectively) across the 34 and 17 studies captured in their meta-analysis.

Thus, there is strong support for the contention that individual-level psychological empowerment is consistently beneficial for individual performance. These results help rule out the argument that empowerment is merely a "fad." However, there have been a few studies that have found contradictory results. In particular, Ahearne et al. (2005) show that leaders' empowerment behaviors benefited highly experienced salespersons but, conversely, negatively impacted the performance of inexperienced salespersons. This work suggests that performance benefits, or detriments, may be enhanced or dampened based upon an employee's position within the organization. Accordingly, more work is needed to understand the situations and contextual factors that may moderate the empowerment–performance relationship. Going forward, we call on researchers to consider whether there are, in fact, factors that may contribute to a "dark side" of empowerment.

Affective reactions. Interestingly at the individual level of analysis, as summarized in Table 2, there has been much more attention to the influence of empowerment on affective rather than performance outcomes. Here, Seibert and colleagues (2011) were able to include 53 studies in their analysis and found that while all were significant in the expected directions, the association with job satisfaction (mean corrected correlation = .64) was stronger than that for organizational commitment, strain, or turnover intentions.

Spreitzer and colleagues (1997) examined the relationship between each of the four dimensions of psychological empowerment with work satisfaction, strain, and stress. Across two samples, they found that each empowerment dimension was related to at least one outcome but that no one dimension was related to all outcomes. More specifically, meaning was positively related to satisfaction in both samples. However, self-determination was associated only with satisfaction, and both meaning and competence were associated with strain in the midlevel manager sample. In the secondary sample of lower level managers, competence was positively associated with satisfaction and negatively related to stress. Overall, the results suggest that employees benefit from psychological empowerment, but when considering the four dimensions independently, a complex pattern of relationships emerges.

Of all the affective reactions examined to date, job satisfaction has received the most attention (e.g., Carless, 2004; Harris et al., 2009; Liden et al., 2000; Seibert, Silver, & Randoph, 2004). Here, research has examined the relationship between job satisfaction and psychological empowerment, using both a composite measure of empowerment as well as

the subdimensions. When considered independently, the dimension of meaning has the strongest association (Liden et al., 2000), followed by competence (Spreitzer, 1997). As an example, Liden and colleagues (2000) found that meaning and competence both were positively related to job satisfaction and that meaning partially mediated the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction. As suggested by Figure 1, this idea of psychological empowerment serving as a mediator between various antecedents and affective reactions (in particular, job satisfaction) has been supported in numerous studies. In fact, using a sample of mainly female customer service employees, Carless (2004) found that after controlling for negative affect, meaning and competence mediated the relationship between psychological climate (a measure of professional growth, interaction, and role clarity) and job satisfaction.

Another affective reaction that has garnered a substantial amount of attention is organizational commitment. Seibert and colleagues (2011) noted a significant, positive relationship based on 31 studies (mean corrected correlation = .63). As an example, Avolio et al. (2004) found that psychological empowerment was associated with higher levels of organizational commitment. Additionally, Kraimer and colleagues (1999) found a direct positive relationship between the impact dimension of empowerment and organizational commitment but an indirect association for self-determination via its relationship with impact. Commitment also has been argued to play a critical role in explaining the effect of individual-level psychological empowerment in reducing intention to leave either an organization or career (e.g., Sparrowe, 1994).

Consistently, higher levels of psychological empowerment have been found to be associated with lower intentions to leave or quit (Avey et al., 2008; Harris et al., 2009). For turnover intentions, Seibert and colleagues (2011) examined 17 studies and found a significant, negative relationship (mean corrected correlation = –.36). Avey and colleagues (2008) found that empowerment not only reduced intentions to quit but also mediated the relationships between transformational leadership, psychological capital, and intentions to quit. Related to career intentions, Kraimer and colleagues (1999) found that both the meaning and competence dimensions were related to the length of time an employee expected to stay in his or her career. Interestingly, however, competence was negatively related to career intentions, suggesting that employees who were more competent would perhaps seek out more challenging careers.

As noted, there has been a great deal of research on psychological empowerment and various affective reactions. Additionally, the vast majority of said research has noted strong positive and negative relationships with each reaction considered. Thus, moving forward, research may want to incorporate additional mediators and moderators such as cultural factors. For example, Seibert and colleagues (2011) provide evidence that the link between psychological empowerment and individual performance is stronger in Asian samples than in those from North America. Does such a finding relate to affective outcomes as well? As detailed in Table 2, psychological empowerment has been examined across numerous national and cultural boundaries, and we encourage future research to continue this precedent and to start to include these facets in the study design so as to consider the impact they may have in shaping relationships.

Finally, there are other affective reactions that have not been adequately considered. As an example, individual-level innovation/creativity has received only minimal research attention

(e.g., Seibert et al., 2011). Further, while research has considered the relationship between empowerment and organizational commitment (e.g., Avolio et al., 2004), commitment researchers have broadened their focus to include commitment to one's group or team, department, and career (e.g., Bishop, Scott, & Burroughs, 2000). Accordingly, future research could examine how psychological empowerment may impact these various conceptualizations of commitment.

Additional Opportunities for Future Individual-Level Psychological Empowerment Research

We have highlighted directions for future research throughout this section (see also Table 1). However, we want to close by giving more detail on a couple of these suggestions. In particular, while there is solid evidence of the multidimensional nature of psychological empowerment (e.g., Seibert et al., 2011), we would argue that all too often researchers collapse the dimensions into a composite measure. Our review highlights numerous instances in which the relationships between the dimensions, antecedents, and outcomes are varied. Therefore, it is beneficial for researchers to match the operationalization of empowerment to the research question of interest.

Furthermore, whether the dimensions of individual psychological empowerment interact with one another remains an area where limited research has been conducted. However, there is evidence in the literature suggesting the need to consider how these dimensions interact. Specifically, Wang and Lee (2009) provide support for an interesting three-way interaction among choice, competence, and impact that leads to job satisfaction. While this might be a single finding, we posit that additional work on such interactive effects on additional outcome variables could be a potentially rich area for future research.

In closing our review at the individual level, we note that as depicted in Figure 1, the vast majority of research in this arena has considered psychological empowerment as a mediator. However, there are also examples of empowerment serving as a moderator to the relationships between antecedents and outcomes. For example, Erdogan and Bauer (2009) provided evidence of psychological empowerment moderating the relationship between perceived overqualification and various individual-level outcomes in their study of employees from a major retail clothing chain in Turkey. Unfortunately, there are not enough studies that have considered individual-level psychological empowerment in this manner, and as such, we urge future researchers to further consider these issues.

Team-Level Psychological Empowerment

At the same time that the individual-level psychological empowerment literature was taking off, researchers and practitioners were recognizing the benefits of teams (e.g., Denton, 1992; Dumaine, 1990). Not surprisingly, questions arose regarding how teams could impact individual feelings of empowerment (e.g., McCrimmon, 1995; Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997; Robbins & Fredendall, 1995) and whether teams themselves could be empowered (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999). Burpitt and Bigoness (1997) were one of the first to examine empowerment

at the team level when they considered the relationship between leader-empowering behaviors and innovation, noting a significant, positive relationship in their study of architectural teams. While research on team empowerment remains somewhat new, it is rapidly growing. Accordingly, as detailed in Table 3, we next review factors that give rise to team-level psychological empowerment and its subsequent effect on various team outcomes.

Antecedents of Team-Level Psychological Empowerment

Team psychological empowerment is often viewed as an emergent state. Emergent states are "typically dynamic in nature and [varies] as a function of team context, inputs, processes and outcomes" (Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001: 357). In other words, team psychological empowerment exists not simply because teams have control, by design, over their work (i.e., *structural empowerment*) but rather because members actually believe that they possess said authority and responsibility. In keeping with the individual-level review, structural empowerment is regarded here as an antecedent to team psychological empowerment. Additionally, similar to the framework we employed above, we consider team characteristics, work design characteristics, leadership, and organizational support as antecedents.

Structural empowerment. While team research has considered structural empowerment, the psychological approach is more prevalent and often has failed to integrate the structural view. In response, advocates have called for integration (e.g., Menon, 2001), arguing that structural empowerment may serve as an antecedent to team members' shared belief that they are empowered. However, even with such calls, Seibert and colleagues (2011) noted only seven studies in their meta-analysis that examined this relationship. However, their meta-analysis suggests that the relationship was significant and positive (mean corrected correlation = .52).

For example, when Gerwin and Moffat (1997) studied engineering teams they found that when structural empowerment was withdrawn, psychological empowerment was reduced. Additionally, Douglas (1994) found that among teams of customer service engineers, psychological empowerment was significantly, positively related to the extent of delegation (i.e., structural empowerment). Therefore, while there is some evidence that structural empowerment serves as an antecedent to psychological empowerment at the team level, we echo Menon's (2001) suggestion that research should continue to try to integrate the two approaches more fully.

Team characteristics. Variables such as team tenure, organizational tenure, team size, and member diversity based upon age, gender, and ethnicity have an extensive history in the organizational team literature (see Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Gilson, 2008, for reviews) but have not received much attention in research focused on psychological empowerment. In fact, only team size had enough studies to be included in Seibert et al.'s (2011) meta-analysis. However, while team size has received the most attention to date, its relationship with team psychological empowerment has been mixed. Specifically, team size has evidenced both a negative (e.g., Kirkman, Rosen, et al., 2004; Kirkman, Tesluk, et al., 2004) and a positive (Chen & Klimoski, 2003) relationship. Given

these mixed findings, it is not surprising that Seibert and colleagues (2011) found (based on six studies) that, although negative (mean corrected correlation = –.12), the direct relationship between team size and team empowerment was not statistically significant.

While team size was the only team characteristic included in the recent meta-analysis, in this review we note several studies that have considered various types of team characteristics as potential antecedents to team psychological empowerment. For example, in a study of teams drawn from two textile manufacturers, a high-technology manufacturer, and an insurance company, Kirkman, Tesluk, et al. (2004) found that team member race heterogeneity negatively impacted team psychological empowerment. However, the fit between the team and its leader in terms of race and organizational tenure ultimately had a positive effect on empowerment. Additionally, while not the focus of their study, Akgun, Keskin, Byrne, and Imamoglu's (2007) study of 53 software development teams suggests that team experience may be positively associated with psychological empowerment.

Given the prominence of team composition in team effectiveness frameworks, research that focuses on these relationships and psychological empowerment is clearly needed. As an example, future research might consider the unique effects of surface- and deep-level attributes (Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998). Prior team research finds that surface-level diversity is more salient early in a team's functioning, whereas the effects of deep-level diversity take time to emerge. How does this play out for empowered teams? Here, longitudinal research is needed to assess whether these same temporal dynamics hold in terms of their impact on empowerment. Additionally, faultlines (i.e., hypothetical dividing lines that create subgroups within a team) often have detrimental effects on team processes (e.g., Polzer, Crisp, Jarvenpaa, & Kim, 2006), emergent states (e.g., Molleman, 2005), and performance (e.g., Rico, Molleman, Sanchez-Manzanares, & Van der Vegt, 2007). Is the same true for empowerment, and do these findings hold up in empowered teams? While there is a robust literature on faultlines (a review is included in this issue of the *Journal of Management*), we noted only one study that examines them in conjunction with empowerment. Namely, Gibson and Vermeulen (2003) found that team psychological empowerment enhanced team learning behavior only when teams had moderate levels of subgroups (faultlines). In contrast, when teams had low as well as high levels of subgroups, empowerment negatively affected learning. Future consideration of the effect of faultlines will further our understanding of how they may shape the relationships between psychological empowerment and various team outcomes.

In addition to the more "traditional" team composition variables, there are also some new compositional factors that may be interesting for empowerment researchers to consider. For example, while it has recently been acknowledged that all teams are to some extent virtual (Kirkman & Mathieu, 2005; Martins, Gilson, & Maynard, 2004), we were able to find only one study that considered virtuality and empowerment. Here, Kirkman, Rosen, and colleagues (2004) found that psychological empowerment was a stronger predictor of effectiveness when teams were not able to meet face-to-face (i.e., higher team virtuality). Similarly, while researchers have started to acknowledge that individual team members now often work on multiple teams simultaneously (e.g., Mathieu et al., 2008; O'Leary, Mortensen, & Woolley, 2011), only a handful of empirical studies (Engwall & Jerbrant, 2003; Mortensen, Woolley, & O'Leary, 2007; Zika-Viktorsson, Sundström, & Engwall, 2006) have examined the impact of multiple team membership (MTM) on performance, and none of these

have considered the role of psychological empowerment. We advocate that future research continue to explore this phenomenon by examining direct and indirect relationships between virtuality, MTM, empowerment, and performance.

Work design. Task complexity, feedback, and workload, as well as how a team structures its task, all have been examined to assess their impact on psychological empowerment. In fact, using a relatively narrow definition of work or task design, Seibert and colleagues (2011) found that "work design characteristics" demonstrate a significant, positive relationship with team psychological empowerment (mean corrected correlation = .49) across six studies. As an example of representative research in this area, Hyatt and Ruddy (1997) found a positive relationship between the extent to which the group has structured its work activities and shared perceptions of authority and responsibility. Similarly, Mathieu et al. (2006) obtained a significant correlation between empowering team structural features (i.e., work design) and psychological empowerment. Likewise, Kirkman and Rosen (1999) found support for a positive relationship between "production/service responsibilities" and psychological empowerment.

Given the relatively small number of studies that have examined this relationship, as demonstrated by the recent meta-analysis, there are obviously many unanswered questions. For instance, even though task interdependence has been conceptualized as a defining characteristic of teams (e.g., Ilgen, Hollenbeck, Johnson, & Jundt, 2005; Kozlowski & Bell, 2003), we could find only two studies that have considered it in conjunction with psychological empowerment. First, Kirkman, Rosen, and colleagues (2004) examined the direct effect and provide evidence of a positive (although nonsignificant) relationship. In addition to being considered as an input in traditional input-process-output models of team effectiveness, task interdependence also has been tested as a moderator. Following this line of thinking, Chen et al. (2007) found that the relationship between leadership climate and psychological empowerment was moderated by task interdependence such that the relationship between leadership climate and empowerment was more pronounced in highly interdependent teams. Given its relevance to team dynamics and the fact that it has not been examined extensively within the empowerment literature, it seems apparent that future research needs to consider the role of task interdependence as both an antecedent to team psychological empowerment and a potential moderator. Similarly, we notice a lack of research examining the effects of task complexity and task feedback. In fact, in our review, we were not able to find a single study that considered either of these variables at the team level of analysis. Therefore, task feedback and complexity are additional directions for future research focused on team psychological empowerment.

Leadership. Given that many have questioned whether external leadership is necessary after a team has been empowered (e.g., Hechanova-Alampay & Beehr, 2001), and because organizations often implement empowerment initiatives to eliminate layers of management (e.g., Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, & Ammeter, 2004), managers tend to feel threatened by empowerment (e.g., Katz & Allen, 1985). As a result of this potential friction, the topic of leadership and its effect on team psychological empowerment has been one of the more researched antecedents (e.g., Arnold et al., 2000; Aryee & Chen, 2006; Burpitt & Bigoness, 1997; Keller & Dansereau, 1995). Seibert and colleagues (2011) meta-analyzed

11 studies that included a link between leadership and team psychological empowerment and evidenced a significant, positive relationship (mean corrected correlation = .61).

With regard to leadership, research suggests that when a team becomes empowered, external leaders take on a very different role. For example, Jung and Sosik (2002) provided evidence that leaders need to take a transformational approach in order to facilitate empowerment. Similarly, Dvir, Eden, Avolio, and Shamir (2002) studied military leaders within the Israel Defense Forces and found that those who took a transformational approach were better able to develop certain components (i.e., self-efficacy and a critical-independent approach) of psychological empowerment. Ahearn and colleagues share the sentiment that leaders' roles must adapt, suggesting that within such teams, the leader's role centers on "eliminating barriers, including the removal of structural impediments" (2004: 310). Taken together, our review suggests that external managers remain essential for empowered team effectiveness (e.g., Druskat & Wheeler, 2003; Manz & Sims, 1987; Sims & Manz, 1984). However, in order for a psychological empowerment state to develop, certain leadership styles (e.g., transformational and "coaching") appear to be more suitable.

While it appears that the role of leaders changes when teams become more empowered, a number of questions remain regarding the linkages to existing and newer leadership theories. For instance, how does LMX theory apply at the team level when teams are empowered? As detailed previously, while LMX has been included in numerous studies at the individual level, do the effects of leader–subordinate relationships hold in team contexts? Additionally, new work on leadership has started to consider areas like complexity theory (e.g., Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007), but given that empowerment researchers have yet to consider such developments, it remains an unanswered question as to what this means for empowerment. We close this section by simply stating that there is still much we do not know about leading empowered teams. Here a longitudinal lens is needed, as questions abound regarding whether the same leadership characteristics that help foster psychological empowerment are those best suited to help a team remain empowered over time.

Organizational support. Our final antecedent category, organizational support, is a broad construct that can include actual resources that the team may be able to obtain from other entities within an organization, communication and coordination with other teams, and the overall organizational climate. Specifically, Spreitzer (1996) suggested that when teams have access to resources from other teams or departments within the organization (as well as from outside the organization), team psychological empowerment is enhanced. In support of this, Seibert and colleagues (2011) note that "socio-political support" (their label for organizational support) exhibited a positive, significant relationship with team psychological empowerment (mean corrected correlation = .56).

As an example of specific research in this area, Mathieu and colleagues (2006) found that multiteam cooperation had a positive, significant relationship with team psychological empowerment. Similarly, Kirkman and Rosen (1999) provided evidence that when teams possess sociopolitical support within the organization and are able to coordinate with other teams, they experience greater empowerment. Finally, Hempel and colleagues (in press) found support for psychological empowerment as an intervening variable linking organizational formalization and decentralization with team performance.

Based on our review of the literature, it appears that organizational support is a salient predictor of team-level psychological empowerment. However, almost all of the research in this area has placed the boundary of such support within the organization. Yet, as noted by Spreitzer (1996), such support also can come from outside the organization. This fact is key because more and more teams are charged with interacting with individuals and teams outside of their own organizational boundaries. Accordingly, it may be an important next step to consider how the support provided to a team from entities outside of the organization influences its psychological empowerment.

Outcomes of Team-Level Psychological Empowerment

Consistent with our individual-level review, we next assess the relationship that team-level psychological empowerment has with two broad categories of outcomes—performance and affective reactions (e.g., Hackman & Morris, 1975; Mathieu & Gilson, in press).

Performance. Performance has been the focus of the majority of studies investigating team psychological empowerment (see Table 3). Seibert and colleagues' (2011) work suggests that team psychological empowerment exhibits a positive, significant relationship with performance (mean corrected correlation = .51). However, it needs to be noted that in the meta-analysis this category consists of team effectiveness, productivity, customer satisfaction, innovation, and decision making. That said, regardless of the performance measure used, there appears to be overwhelming support for the positive effects of empowerment (e.g., Chen et al., 2007; Kirkman, Tesluk, & Rosen, 2001; Seibert et al., 2004). For instance, Spreitzer, Noble, Mishra, and Cooke (1999) found a significant, positive relationship between psychological empowerment and team process improvement, as well as a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and overall performance. Similarly, Mathieu et al. (2006) report a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and two measures of performance in their study of service technician teams. Finally, Kirkman and colleagues (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Kirkman, Rosen, et al., 2004) found that psychological empowerment had a positive impact on performance in both face-to-face and virtual contexts.

While there is substantial evidence to support a positive relationship between team empowerment and performance, some have contended that team empowerment is merely a fad and does not provide the promised positive outcomes (e.g., Malone, 1997). However, when one looks at the empirical evidence, the "faddish" contention does not seem to have all that much support. In fact, we could only find a couple of studies that suggest a negative relationship between team empowerment and performance. In particular, Chen and colleagues (2007) found that empowerment was negatively associated with performance for low-, but not high-, interdependence teams. Additionally, Chen and Klimoski (2003) considered whether this relationship was reciprocal in their study of information technology project teams and found that initial performance can be negatively associated with subsequent levels of empowerment.

Beyond these two published articles, the only evidence of a negative relationship was found in an unpublished dissertation where the results suggest that the competence dimension of empowerment was negatively associated with the team's adherence to schedule and delivery targets (e.g., Silver, 2000). While there are a few studies that contradict the positive relationship between psychological empowerment and performance, the vast majority of empirical evidence suggests that empowerment is in fact a salient "lever" that can be utilized to increase overall team performance.

Similar to our recommendations at the individual level, future researchers may want to explore in more detail the contextual features that may be causing some of the negative findings. Further, as mentioned in the introduction to this section, there are a number of different ways that team effectiveness can be considered (Mathieu & Gilson, in press), and here, research should start to separate out performance, customer satisfaction, and other components. Furthermore, while team creativity has become an increasingly popular outcome, there have not been many studies that have considered the relationship between team empowerment and creativity. Additionally, research conducted to date has almost universally considered the relationship between team-level psychological empowerment and performance based upon "snapshots," or data from a single point in time. Reviews of the organizational team literature have called for more longitudinal research (Mathieu et al., 2008) and the utilization of analysis techniques such as growth modeling (e.g., Mathieu & Rapp, 2009), which would aid us in better addressing questions as to whether the impact of psychological empowerment on performance strengthens or diminishes over time. Further, research to date has been focused primarily on assessing the linear relationships between psychological empowerment and various performance outcomes. However, it may be interesting to consider the possibility of other patterns of relationships (i.e., curvilinear).

Affective reactions. While research has increasingly focused on the relationship between psychological empowerment and overall performance, there is a robust literature suggesting the need to consider members' affective reactions (e.g., Mathieu et al., 2008). However, while we will review a couple of studies that have examined this relationship, research addressing this link is much less prevalent. Because of an insufficient number of studies, Seibert and colleagues (2011) were not able to include these relationships in their team-level meta-analytic review.

As an example of such work, Hyatt and Ruddy (1997) demonstrated that psychological empowerment is positively associated with team morale, as well as with members' shared understanding of how their behaviors influence the organization. Furthermore, Spreitzer and colleagues (1999) found that psychological empowerment had a positive impact on team involvement (i.e., the extent to which team members work to improve performance). Similarly, Kirkman and Rosen (1999) demonstrated a positive relationship with team proactivity, satisfaction, and commitment. Finally, Seibert and colleagues (2004) provide support for a positive relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction. In fact, such a relationship has been documented by several researchers within the team empowerment literature (e.g., Gerstner, 1998; Kirkman & Rosen, 1999).

Given the scarcity of research here, there is substantial opportunity for future work to explore the effects of team-level psychological empowerment on team affective outcomes. In particular, there are certain affective reactions that have not been considered sufficiently to date. Additionally, it would be interesting to understand how team-level psychological empowerment impacts members' perceptions regarding their personal development and growth along with liking others on the team. For example, after members have worked together for a period of time in an empowered manner, do they still like one another?

Additional Opportunities for Future Team Psychological Empowerment Research

While we have identified several directions for future research throughout this section and in Table 1, given that team psychological empowerment research is still relatively new, there remain many avenues that future research can explore. First, while the majority of research suggests that the overarching mediational framework depicted in Figure 1 holds for psychological empowerment, more attention is needed to understand some of the specific associations. For instance, while we have a general sense of the positive relationship that exists between psychological empowerment and team performance, research is still needed to ascertain the nature of the relationships with various team affective reactions. Second, while research has examined several constructs within each of the five antecedent categories, there are many "newer" aspects of team functioning that have yet to be considered. For example, future research is needed to explore the effects of team virtuality, faultlines, task characteristics, and support derived from outside of the organization on team psychological empowerment.

While a more detailed consideration of such team-level antecedents is likely to be fruitful, we also suggest that future research expand upon the mediational framework that we present here (Figure 1). In particular, little is known regarding what factors may serve as moderators to both the links between the various antecedents and empowerment, as well as the relationship between empowerment and outcomes. Furthermore, there has been limited research attention given to what might mediate the relationships noted within the empowerment nomological network. As an example of work that has considered mediators at the team level, Mathieu and colleagues (2006) demonstrated that team processes mediated the link between team empowerment and various performance outcomes.

In particular, we call for future research to investigate the role that other emergent states may play when examined in conjunction with team psychological empowerment. Research in other domains is just starting to consider how multiple emergent states interact with one another and/or how they serve as mediators for one another (e.g., Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Mangos, 2010). Possible questions include, Is the relationship between empowerment and various outcomes mediated by team cognition, team identity, or commitment? Related to this, it would be interesting to test potential interactions between empowerment and other emergent states such as trust and cohesion. For example, researchers could consider whether empowerment is more or less salient when teams are more cohesive or trusting.

Organizational-Level Empowerment

Conceptualization

Whereas work at the individual and team levels has adopted fairly uniform research methodologies, measuring empowerment and related variables using survey or interview techniques, work envisioning empowerment at the organizational level is less consistent, both in terms of the conceptualization and the ways in which it has been studied. As for the conceptualization of empowerment, virtually all organizational-level studies we reviewed focused on structural empowerment. In these works, the facets included are often variables that are thought to drive psychological empowerment. Therefore, it is interesting to note that the distinction between structural and psychological empowerment that has been acute at the individual- and team-level investigations chronicled above is far less clear at the organizational level. In our review we found only one study that indexed organizational-level empowerment in terms of the four-dimensional psychological approach (Wallace et al., 2011). Accordingly, the overall theme of research at this level is how organizational-level features provide a motivating environment that leads to mediating states that thereby impact organizational outcomes.

Methodologically, organizational-level empowerment research typically has adopted one of two approaches. First, several notable works have utilized qualitative case study techniques. These typically have focused on structural changes and provide rich insights regarding factors that enhance and detract from their effectiveness. Second, investigations from the strategic human resource management (SHRM) literature have examined the influence of empowerment as a facet of multidimensional high-performance work systems (HPWSs). Below we review the literature in terms of the antecedent and outcome categories previously used and again highlight exemplar studies. Table 4 contains a more detailed summary of organizational-level empowerment research.

Antecedents of Organizational-Level Empowerment

Structural empowerment. In an interview study conducted at four major construction sites, Greasley, Bryman, Dainty, Price, Soetanto, and King (2005) differentiated structural empowerment features (e.g., delegation of authority and responsibility to employees) from psychological reactions (e.g., feelings of competence). They identified common barriers to empowerment, including the fact that many such initiatives are bundled with other SHRM practices such as total quality management (TQM) and business process reengineering (BPR), and the critical role that managers and supervisors play in facilitating or undermining the process. In this work, employees were able to clearly distinguish between being given trust and authority versus being abandoned. Additionally, using a cross-industry sample of French firms, Guerrero and Barraud-Didier (2004) examined the influence of structural empowerment and other work practices on both social (i.e., affective reactions such as work climate) and organizational (i.e., productivity, quality of products and services) performance. Their findings

supported structural empowerment as a direct influence on the social and performance outcomes, which in turn were both significantly related to organizational profitability.

Researchers from the SHRM heritage have adopted the structural view of empowerment, noting that it "entails the passing of considerable responsibility for operational management to individuals or teams, rather than keeping such decision making in the hands of line management" (Birdi et al., 2008: 471). For example, Guthrie (2001) found that high-involvement systems (featuring structural empowerment facets) significantly predicted organizational performance. He also found that high-involvement systems interacted with employee retention rates, such that high-involvement practices related more positively to performance when retention rates were relatively high but not when they were relatively low. There is an emerging consensus that empowerment is an important component of HPWSs, along with other factors such as team designs, skill-based hiring, rewards, internal promotion, and feedback systems (Combs, Liu, Hall, & Ketchen, 2006). In sum, organizational-level research has focused on the impact of structural elements and has concluded that empowerment is beneficial for a variety of organizational outcomes but is perhaps best considered in concert with other organizational features.

Organizational member characteristics. At the organizational level, member characteristics are generally considered in terms of human capital. For example, in their qualitative investigation, Greasley et al. (2005) found that if employees were confident in their abilities and believed they were qualified, they were best positioned to make day-to-day decisions about their work processes while also recognizing that there should be limits to their authority. Levers for successful empowerment interventions in both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations were addressed by Silver, Randolph, and Seibert (2006), who highlighted the importance of enabling mechanisms, such as ensuring that employees are trained on the new behaviors that are expected of them. Similarly, Wright and Boswell (2002), among others, discussed the importance of strategic HR "bundles." The logic here is that certain organizational designs will be synergistic with certain HR programs, whereas other combinations may fail to realize their potential. For example, more traditional rewards and punishment systems should work well with a relatively low-skill workforce operating in a fairly stable environment. In contrast, operating in an intensive complex environment demands greater human capital, and consequently the benefits to the organization will be best realized if employees are empowered.

Work design. Following the arguments regarding the need for an alignment of empowerment and human capital, advanced above, Greasley et al. (2005) suggested that work designs also must be complementary. They submitted that empowerment initiatives are often undermined when they were bundled with other SHRM practices that change work designs such as TQM and BPR. Their position here is that TQM and BPR practices are antithetical to the underlying philosophy of empowerment, as the former promote standardized work processes to optimize efficiencies. In contrast, empowerment initiatives assume that employees should be free to adopt different practices as they see fit. Consequently, pairing empowerment efforts with either TQM or BPR may counteract the presumed benefits of each. Finally, on the work design front, Silver et al. (2006) emphasized the key role of establishing baseline

measures and indices of success, ensuring the alignment of empowerment with broader strategic emphases, and involving employees by routinely meeting with them and soliciting their input and feedback. Their recommendations also suggest a gestalt type of approach where empowerment initiatives will only be effective if paired with complementary synergistic practices.

Leadership. As with the individual and team levels of analysis, leadership has been found to play a critical role at the organizaitonal level. Specifically, Wallace and colleagues (2011) index organizational-level empowerment in terms of the four-dimensional psychological approach. Specifically, they found support for a positive influence of empowering leadership on collective psychological empowerment among service restaurants. In turn, collective empowerment related significantly to store sales, especially if employees felt a shared accountability for results. In a similar vein, Srivastava, Bartol, and Locke (2006) demonstrate support for a positive relationship between empowering leadership and hotel property performance that was mediated by management team knowledge sharing and efficacy. However, empowerment as a mediator per se was not assessed.

Greasley et al. (2005) emphasized the critical role that managers and supervisors play in facilitating or undermining the empowerment initiatives. They especially underscored the importance of first-line supervisors, particularly in instances when senior managers were removed from the work operations. Similarly, Silver et al. (2006) suggest that empowerment interventions should start at the top and involve senior managers to articulate the purpose and importance of the initiative. Work in this area is clear in that the importance of management is deemed vital. Moreover, supportive leadership needs to span the vertical hierarchy and have buy-in and emphasis at the strategic apex; further, that enthusiasm must transcend through the ranks to the lowest levels of supervision if empowerment efforts are to succeed.

Organizational support. While it is hard to tease apart organizational support from organizational-level work on empowerment, Silver et al. (2006) did specifically emphasize the importance of aligning organizational culture, recognition, and reward systems with the desired new practices. In this work, the authors further recommended alignment with the organization's and industry's cultures, and bundling with compatible human resource management (HRM) practices. Finally, Silver and colleagues (2006) suggested that external process consultants or coaches facilitate transitions from old to new practices, but there would be a need for periodic reviews, refreshers, and rejuvenation efforts.

Outcomes of Organizational-Level Empowerment

Several outcomes of empowerment efforts were noted in the studies reviewed above because, unlike research at the individual and team levels, there is no organizational-level work directly examining psychological empowerment with outcomes (Wallace et al., 2011, is the notable exception). However, below we chronicle research that has examined and summarized the relationships between empowerment arrangements and organizational outcomes.

Performance. Beyond the findings noted above, there are two meta-analyses that highlight the impact of organizational-level empowerment initiatives. Combs and colleagues (2006) examined various HPWS relationships with organizational performance. Here, the data suggest that HPWS facets believed to foster empowerment (e.g., participation, skill enhancement) evidenced significant positive relationships with financial outcomes. Combs et al. (2006) also concluded that multifaceted HPWS systems—or "bundles" (cf. Wright & Boswell, 2002)—better predicted performance outcomes than did individual components.

Following up on the notion of HPWS bundles, Subramony (2009) used meta-analyses to contrast the relationships between empowerment-enhancing (e.g., involvement, job enrichment, self-management, participation), motivation-enhancing (i.e., organizational supports such as performance appraisal, incentives, career enhancement), and skill-enhancing (i.e., individual characteristics such as high-quality recruiting, selection, and training) systems and organizational outcomes. He found that empowerment-enhancing bundles exhibited the highest estimated population effect sizes ($\rho = .26$), followed closely by the motivating-enhancing ($\rho = .24$) and skill-enhancing ($\rho = .17$) bundles. Here again, these findings reveal that the bundle of empowerment-enhancing practices evidenced higher correlations with outcomes than did the individual components.

Affective reactions. At the organizational level, research suggests that employees reacted quite positively to true empowerment efforts but resented initiatives when they felt abandoned. Perhaps most importantly, "Employees at all levels can tell the difference between real commitment to empowerment that goes beyond mere words and [a sham] empowerment strategy that is little more than rhetoric" (Greasley et al., 2005: 366), and they respond accordingly. Greasley et al. further noted the emotional reactions associated with empowerment interventions, stating,

> If empowered, the employees felt that they could take full pride in their work and not only had they influenced how they did their work but they also felt it enabled them to conduct their work to the best of their ability without any impediments from others. (2005: 364)

Similarly, work by Guerrero and Barraud-Didier (2004) found a positive relationship between organizational-level structural empowerment and employees' work-related attitudes. Although rarely tested per se, there is general consensus among scholars that empowerment efforts, if well aligned, can generate a wide variety of positive affective reactions. If not aligned, however, they may breed employee backlash and resentment.

Summary and Opportunities for Future Organizational-Level Empowerment Research

Work focused on organizational-level empowerment, no matter how it has been conducted, converges on a number of themes. First, the organizational-level work has focused far more on structural rather than psychological empowerment. Second, organizational-level research has typically viewed empowerment as a key feature in multifaceted initiatives or

interventions. Rarely have empowerment efforts been done in isolation. Often these initiatives include task design changes and organizational supports. Third, the important role of upper management or leadership also has been evident. Fourth, the fact that empowerment efforts have been introduced often as part of a larger initiative has sometimes generated backlash from employees. Whereas the empirical research has touted the enhanced predictive power of empowerment HRM bundles with synergistic mutually reinforcing characteristics (e.g., employee development, team designs, and increased responsibilities), Delery (1998) warned about potential "deadly combinations" of HRM practicies. For example, the qualitative insights from Vallas (2006) suggests that if empowerment is introduced along with TQM or BPR, employees may perceive them as actually undermining their control and work status. Similarly, Greasely et al. (2005) warned that employees will see right through sham empowerment efforts and react quite negatively when they perceive these efforts as manipulative.

To summarize, work conducted at the organizational level of analysis has primarily considered the impact that structural empowerment has on various organizational outcomes. Additionally, research has considered how such relationships are impacted by other antecedents such as organizational member characteristics, work design, leadership, and organizational support. However, to date, less consideration has been given to the role of psychological empowerment serving as a mediator within a framework as suggested by Figure 1. As a result, organizational-level empowerment research is not as well developed as that conducted at the individual and team levels of analysis. Accordingly, research that leverages the mediational framework employed at lower levels to organizational empowerment could be valuable.

In part, this value is attributable to the fact that interventions introduced at the organizational level are likely to have the largest overall impact on employees throughout the system. Accordingly, we recommend two primary directions for future research, beyond translating the mediational framework presented here to the organizational level of analysis. First, organizational-level empowerment efforts are often commingled with other initiatives. For example, empowerment is typically bundled with other programs such as job enrichment, involvement, and teams (Subramony, 2009). This strategy represents a two-edged sword. On one edge, lessons are clear that empowerment efforts are not likely to flourish if attempted in a vacuum without other complementary changes in the overall system. This position advocates the bundling approach and careful consideration of how empowerment fits into the overall organizational HR system. Stated differently, empowerment cannot be introduced as a stand-alone fad but must be part of a larger overall strategy. On the other edge, however, when empowerment is integrated into a larger bundle, it becomes difficult—if not impossible—to discern its unique effects. Moreover, empowerment interventions have not been seen as synergistic with integrated manufacturing programs such as Advanced Manufacturing Technology (AMT), TQM, and Just-In-Time Manufacturing (JIT; Patterson, West, & Wall, 2004). In fact, Greasely et al.'s (2005) and Vallas's (2006) qualitative investigations suggest that introducing empowerment along with TQM style initiatives may well constitute one of those "deadly combinations" that SHRM scholars have warned against. Therefore, future research should drill down and explore the impact of particular combinations of empowerment and other HRM programs, not only as influences on organizational outcomes but also as context within which lower level processes operate (cf. Mathieu & Tesluk, 2010).

The second direction for future organizational-level research is to better incorporate the temporal dynamics suggested in Figure 1. Whereas this is also a consideration for the lower levels of analysis, timing issues are particularly germane for organizational interventions. For example, Birdi et al. (2008) modeled the temporal effects of empowerment interventions and illustrated that they remained effective for approximately six to seven years after their introduction but then waned. The fact that the effects faded over time suggests that we need to understand far more about the empowerment process and its long-term effects than has been the focus of previous investigations. For example, if empowerment is part of a bundle of initiatives, is it advantageous to introduce it before or after other parts of the package? Do skill-based selection and training need to be in place so that employees have the requisite knowledge, skills, abilities, and willingness to take on additional duties and responsibilities? Or, does implementing an empowerment initiative signal to employees that the time is ripe for adopting other changes? Perhaps if employees possess the proper competencies (via skill-enhancing efforts), and they have been provided with more self-determination and meaningful work (via empowerment-enhancing efforts), they would be less threatened by, and more willing to, accept integrated manufacturing techniques designed to enhance their impact on organizational outcomes (e.g., TQM, BPR, JIT, AMT). In other words, not only do we need to better understand the combinations of programs that are synergistic, but we also need to discern the optimal sequence in which they are introduced to maximize their overall benefit for organizations and employees alike.

Other temporal questions surround the change efforts themselves. For instance, we know very little about how long it takes to shift from any given organizational form to an empowered design. Can such changes happen over a weekend, similar to a new technology cutover? Likely not. But do they require years to implement? We really do not know. And finally, how sustainable are empowerment effects? Are they really faddish such that their effects will wane after the excitement associated with their introduction dissapates? Or, do they grow stronger as people acclimate to the new ways of doing work and become second nature to future generations of employees? Silver et al. (2006) touted the importance of having process consultants available during empowerment interventions. What foundation work should precede such interventions? How long should the consultants remain engaged before attempting to hand off the program? When might they be best reintroduced to rejuvenate the program? Very little developmental research along those lines exists in the extant literature, and this represents a fruitful area for future work.

Multilevel Empowerment Investigations

The work chronicled thus far has been level specific, presenting the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of empowerment at the individual, team, or organizational levels of analysis. However, multilevel theories, designs, and analyses have become more prominent in recent years (cf. Hitt, Beamish, Jackson, & Mathieu, 2007; Mathieu & Chen, 2011), and empowerment has been examined in such a manner (see Table 5). Some studies specifically consider how the empowerment construct operates across levels, whereas others have employed cross-level designs to investigate how empowerment is simultaneously influenced by factors that reside at different levels of analysis. Exemplar studies of both types are

reviewed below and again organized on the basis of the primary predictor variable (or variables) from the prior categories.

Antecedents of Multilevel Empowerment

Structural empowerment. Seibert and colleagues (2004) first brought attention to the potential cross-level effects of empowerment. They measured both work unit empowerment climate and individuals' psychological empowerment among members of 50 high-technology teams. In this sense, their measure of work unit empowerment climate is more akin to structural empowerment, whereas their individual-level measure was of psychological empowerment. They found a significant cross-level mediation effect whereby work unit empowerment climate related significantly to individuals' perceived psychological empowerment and thereby indirectly enhanced their job satisfaction and performance. Similarly, van Mierlo, Rutte, Vermunt, Kompier, and Doorewaard (2007) examined a cross-level mediation model involving structural empowerment (they labeled it "autonomy") within 76 health care teams. Specifically, they found that team-level structural empowerment led to enhanced levels of individual learning behavior and reduced individual emotional exhaustion, as mediated by individual-level structural empowerment.

Individual and team characteristics. As detailed in Table 5, there has not been a great deal of consideration of individual and team characteristics within the empowerment multilevel studies. As such, this is likely to be a potentially viable area for future research to explore. However, there is one study that we noted that included a consideration of individual and team characteristics. Specifically, Liao, Toya, Lepak, and Hong (2009) examined the cross-level impact of team-level structural empowerment on individual-level structural and psychological empowerment in a study of 91 bank branches. In addition to the various forms of empowerment, their study examined the role of team member age, gender, and employee human capital (e.g., knowledge, skills, and abilities) on individual-level psychological empowerment and ultimately individual service performance. Again, given the relationships that various individual and team characteristics have shown to exhibit with empowerment within their respective levels of analysis, it is surprising that these same constructs have not been examined in multilevel empowerment studies. In response, we call on future research to include consideration of individual and team characteristics.

Leadership. In a study of leadership, empowerment, and performance among teams that varied in terms of interdependence, Chen et al. (2007) measured everything at both the team and individual levels of analysis. Their results indicated that for highly interdependent teams empowerment partially mediated leadership influences on performance at both levels. As for the cross-level relations, individual empowerment partially mediated the effects of team-level leadership climate and empowerment as well as individual perceptions of LMX on individual performance. Team and individual empowerment also interacted such that individual performance was enhanced by the presence of either individual or team empower-

ment, but there was limited added benefits if both types of empowerment were high. The observed relationships were weaker or nonsignificant for the less interdependent teams.

Work unit leadership influences on individual-level empowerment relationships have also been investigated. For example, Avolio and colleagues (2004) tested the influence of transformational leadership behaviors on nurses' individual-level organizational commitment, as mediated by their individual psychological empowerment. Moreover, the authors indexed the transformation leadership of nurses' direct supervisors along with that of their higher level counterparts. In other words, leadership was indexed at two higher levels and related to individual-level empowerment–commitment levels. Their findings supported the transformational leadership → psychological empowerment → organizational commitment–mediated relationships, and unexpectedly, the effects of the leaders' behaviors were stronger when emanating from higher level supervisors as compared with nurses' direct supervisors. Finally, Chen, Sharma, Edinger, Shapiro, and Farh (2011) conducted both a laboratory and a field investigation of the cross-level effects of (higher level) empowering leadership on individuals' psychological empowerment, affective commitment, teamwork-oriented behaviors, and intentions to remain. In both studies, individuals' psychological empowerment served to mediate the positive cross-level influences of empowering leadership on individuals' behaviors and intentions.

Work design and organizational support. Using a sample of health care teams, the cross-level influence of team autonomy on individuals' psychological well-being was found to be mediated by perceptions of the extent to which individuals' jobs exhibited empowerment features (e.g., autonomy, variety; van Mierlo et al., 2007). Furthermore, in this study it was found that team autonomy had cross-level relationships with greater individual autonomy and variety and with lower individual job demands. In turn, individual-level perceptions were significantly associated with members' psychological well-being.

Choi (2007) investigated team empowerment as a mediator of work environment characteristics and individuals' OCBs. He found that unit vision and an innovative climate both related to OCBs and were fully mediated by team psychological empowerment. Snape and Redman (2010) examined the cross-level influences of HRM practices (task design and organizational supports) on individuals' OCBs, as mediated by their perceptions of job influence/discretion. Here, organization-level HRM practices were found to be significantly related to individual perceptions of empowerment (i.e., job influence/discretion), which in turn were related to the compliance and altruism aspects of OCB.

In a study that considered the effects of HPWS, task design, and organizational support from employees and managers at various bank branches, Liao and colleagues (2009) found that employees' rated unit-level HPWS related significantly to members' individual ratings of HPWS and thereby to their perceived empowerment, which in turn was related significantly to their financial service performance. Interestingly, the cross-level effects were not evident when managers' ratings were used to index branch HPWSs. Thus, the source of measurement or differences in perspectives between managers and employees regarding HPWS played an important role in their apparent influences.

Summary and Opportunities for Future Multilevel Empowerment Research

Taken together, the multilevel investigations we reviewed all portray a clear pattern in that employees' perceptions of team- and individual-level empowerment are influenced significantly by higher level factors associated with the larger organizational context (e.g., structural empowerment, HPWSs), work unit task design, leader behaviors, and various other forms of support. Individuals' psychological empowerment is simultaneously influenced by their perceptions of these higher level factors in conjunction with individual-level antecedents such as job conditions and individual differences such as competencies. In turn, individual psychological empowerment has been shown to be a potent mediator of the confluence of such effects and a wide variety of individual attitudes, reactions, and behaviors. As such, work examining empowerment across levels is in keeping with the mediational framework presented here (Figure 1).

However, future research should extend this framework by advancing theories as to the relative salience of variables from different levels of analysis and introduce more integrated models of the combined and interactive influences (Mathieu & Chen, 2011). Additionally, with a few exceptions (e.g., Chen et al., 2007), little work has considered the multilevel nature of empowerment itself and whether being empowered at one level enhances, complements, neutralizes, or compensates for empowerment effects at other levels. Moreover, how these multilevel phenomena evolve over time still remains a largely unexplored territory. Finally, given the challenges of conducting multilevel investigations, to date the majority of this work has been anchored at the individual level. Clearly there is a need to explore the impact of organizational features (e.g., HPWS, structure, etc.) on team empowerment-related processes (see Choi, 2007).

Methodological Features and Empowerment Research

Research on employee empowerment exhibits many of the strengths and weaknesses associated with other management topics. Further, these issues appear to be applicable across levels of analysis. As we detail below, in some instances the empowerment literature is methodically advanced as compared to the literature of other domains, whereas in other aspects it has not developed as much as have other topical areas.

Empowerment as a Multidimensional Construct

Evidence has accumulated that a four-factor multi-indicator CFA model fits Spreitzer's (1995) empowerment measure at the individual levels of analysis. Using second-order CFA, Spreitzer found an "excellent fit" with one sample and a "modest fit" with another (1995: 1453). Elsewhere, both Carless (2004) and Huang et al. (2010) found acceptable fit for a four-factor latent model. Finally, Ergeneli et al. (2007) convened a panel of group experts who supported the face and content validity of the instruments included in their study (one of which was psychological empowerment).

In terms of discriminant validity, Kraimer and colleagues (1999) found that the four-dimensional psychological empowerment measure was distinct from Hackman and Oldham's (1975) Job Diagnostics Survey. Additionally, Carless (2004) obtained evidence supporting the discriminant validity of the empowerment dimensions from negative affectivity, psychological climate, and job satisfaction. Finally, Huang et al. (2010) illustrated the discriminant validity of psychological empowerment from participative leadership, trust in supervisor, task performance, and organizationally focused OCB.

While the CFA evidence has been encouraging, it should be noted that the tests conducted to date have treated the psychological empowerment construct as a multidimensional latent construct. Edwards (2001) differentiated superordinate multidimensional constructs from aggregate multidimensional constructs. Specifically, a *superordinate latent construct* is believed to give rise to first-order constructs or indicators of the latent variable. In this sense, the underlying causal direction is from the superordinate latent variable (i.e., psychological empowerment) to the first-order indicators (i.e., meaning, self-determination, competence, impact). In contrast, the underlying causal direction in *aggregate multidimensional constructs* is from the first-order variables to the higher order latent. In other words, the presence of the four dimensions would be seen as giving rise to, or creating, a state of empowerment. This describes a formative measurement paradigm that requires different evidential basis than does an indicator model (cf. Edwards, 2001). We believe that the theoretical foundation advanced to date for empowerment is better aligned with an aggregate model than with a superordinate model. Therefore, we suggest that future researchers consider testing cause indicator models of empowerment (Bollen, 1989; Edwards, 2001).

Compared with work at the individual level, there has been very limited CFA work done at the team level of analysis. No doubt this fact follows from the difficulty associated with sampling a sufficiently large number of teams to conduct such analyses. Although some researchers have fit CFA models to Kirkman and Rosen's (1999) measure, they have done so at the individual level of analysis. This creates a disconnect between the level of analysis and the level of theory (Chen et al., 2004). Given this, we urge researchers to employ multilevel CFA techniques to properly assess the construct validity of aggregate constructs (Dyer, Hanges, & Hall, 2005), where the focal sample size for the analysis is the number of teams.

Finally, there has been very little evaluation of the psychometric properties of the two-dimensional view of empowerment. Mathieu et al. (2006) did provide evidence of both the convergent and discriminant validity of perceptions of team authority and responsibility as indicators of empowerment in the context of a multi–latent variable CFA. However, there is a paucity of research along these lines. In a related vein, we are not aware of any research that has considered the relative criterion-related validities of the two- and four-dimensional versions of psychological empowerment in the same study. Here, future research could consider whether there are substantive differences between the two measures, how the different versions relate to antecedents and outcomes, and whether the various conceptualizations hold up over time and across cultures. We believe that these considerations represent interesting and important issues for future research.

Mono-Method Issues

The dominant research paradigm for empowerment research at the individual and team levels is to have employees answer survey items about antecedents, correlates, and outcomes of empowerment. When predictors and criteria are collected using the same methods, observed relationships between them are subject to inflation by any common measurement or percept–percept biases (e.g., Crampton & Wagner, 1994). Such biases are particularly pronounced if both variables are assessed concurrently.

As shown in Table 2, 64% of the individual-level studies employed self-reported criterion measures, whereas 12% used a separate source, and another 24% used both self-reported and other sources of criterion measures. In contrast, Table 3 depicts that at the team level of analysis, only 13% of studies used self-reported outcomes, whereas 40% used some other source, and 47% employed both self-reported and other sources of criterion. Therefore, individual-level empowerment–outcome relationships are likely to be more susceptible to mono-method bias, and thereby inflated correlations, than are team-level relationships. Consistent with this conclusion, Seibert et al. (2011) found higher correlations between individual-level empowerment and both task performance and OCBs when the outcomes were measured using self-reports than when they were assessed using other sources.

Mediational Inferences and Research Designs

As noted at the onset and shown in Figure 1, psychological empowerment is generally viewed as a mediator linking features of individuals and settings with outcomes, regardless of the substantive level of analysis. The validity of mediational influences hinges on a number of factors but most prominently on the veracity of the presumed causal sequence linking antecedents with empowerment and thereby to outcomes (cf. Mathieu & Taylor, 2006; Stone-Romero & Rosopa, 2008). As chronicled in Tables 2 and 3, 81% of the individual-level studies and 88% of the team-level studies employed cross-sectional designs, respectively. Even in studies with temporally lagged outcomes, presumed antecedents of empowerment were typically assessed concurrently. This tendency represents what Cole and Maxwell (2003) referred to as "half longitudinal designs"—which, while preferable to pure cross-sectional designs, are still susceptible to a wide variety of threats to the validity of mediational inferences. In short, despite the abundance of research to date, there are very few studies that provide the basis for strong causal inferences about the antecedents and consequences of empowerment at any level of analysis.

Multilevel Measurement and Analysis Issues

Empowerment has been referred to as an isomorphic referent-shift style construct (see Chen et al., 2007; Mathieu et al., 2006; Seibert et al., 2011). By *isomorphic,* we mean that the underlying dimensions and their presumed relationships with the higher order latent empowerment construct are consistent across levels of analysis. By *referent shift,* we mean that

rather than averaging lower level variables (e.g., individuals' empowerment) to represent a higher level construct (e.g., team empowerment), the referent or focal level of measures should change to be aligned with the intended level of analysis (i.e., the team's level of empowerment versus individuals' levels of empowerment). Work in other domains, such as efficacy (see Gully et al., 2002; Klein, Conn, Smith, & Sorra, 2001), has shown that aggregated individual-focused measures do not necessarily adequately represent the parallel collective phenomenon. Some researchers have employed consensus-based measures of collective empowerment as represented by averaging individuals' empowerment (e.g., Chen & Klimoski, 2003; Jung & Sosik, 2002; Wallace et al., 2011). Clearly, a question for future research, therefore, is to test the implication of indexing collective empowerment in the different manners. Our belief is that team-level or higher level empowerment should be assessed using measures that are aligned with their substantive levels of analysis.

Kirkman et al. (2001) demonstrated that team psychological empowerment was positively related to OCB regardless of whether empowerment was operationalized as an aggregate referent-shift construct or was based upon a direct team-level score derived through team members' conversations and consensus. Other measurement techniques should be considered as well. For example, virtual teams often leave digital traces of their interactions via e-mails, discussion threads, or video-stream recordings. Short and Palmer (2008) have demonstrated how software-enabled text analysis can be employed to perform content analysis of such exchanges and index substantive variables of interest. In brief, we endorse the use of innovative nonintrusive measurement techniques of this sort for future research.

Related to the issues of multilevel empowerment assessment is the extent to which measures are isomorphic across levels. In other words, is the relative importance or weighting of the four dimensions of psychological empowerment comparable across levels of analysis? To our knowledge, no one has considered this question. If we are to consider the relative substantive relations between empowerment and its antecedents and outcomes across levels of analysis (i.e., homology), one first needs to establish that empowerment has been indexed in a comparable fashion across levels (Chen et al., 2005). Techniques for evaluating the isomorphism of consensus-style measures have been developed (e.g., Zyphur, Kaplan, & Christian, 2008), and multilevel CFA techniques (e.g., Dyer et al., 2005) can be adapted to assess the comparability of factor structures of lower level versus higher level referent-shift measures.

Overarching Themes for Future Research to Consider

In this review we have sought to discuss and integrate the extant literature that has assessed empowerment within the individual, team, and organizational levels of analysis. Throughout the article we have highlighted studies that we believe are illustrative of the research in a particular area as well as those we believe are pushing the boundaries or breaking new ground. Additionally, at each level of analysis, we detailed areas for future research (see Table 1). Among the various directions for future research, there are four themes that seem especially salient as the empowerment literature continues to evolve.

Measurement of Psychological Empowerment

As detailed at each level of analysis, there are various ways in which empowerment has been operationalized in the literature. Specifically, at both the individual and team levels of analysis, the two-dimensional, four-dimensional, and aggregated individual-level views of psychological empowerment are each represented in the literature. However, research has yet to consider the impact that these various measurement approaches may have on the resulting relationships noted within such studies. Accordingly, we feel that an important focus for future research in this area is to consider how the measurement approach impacts such relationships.

Composite or Dimensional Focus

Similar to the idea of needing to consider the measurement techniques employed, it is important for future empowerment research to match the operationalization of psychological empowerment to the focus of the given research project. To be more precise, the literature focused on individual-level psychological empowerment includes both work that addresses the relationship between composite measures of psychological empowerment and various antecedent and outcome constructs (e.g., Laschinger et al., 2001). In contrast, other researchers have examined how different antecedent and outcome variables relate to the individual dimensions of psychological empowerment (e.g., Spreitzer, 1995). However, when one looks at research at the team level of analysis, the overwhelming majority of research has leveraged a composite measure of performance.

As such, we call on future research to align the operationalization of psychological empowerment to the focal research question. Additionally, given that our review has demonstrated that certain relationships are altered when considered using a composite measure compared to investigating the relationships with particular empowerment dimensions, we call on future research to "drill down" into relationships that have been considered only using a composite measure; this will help to better understand whether such relationships hold across the various dimensions or whether certain dimensions are more salient in terms of their relationships with various antecedent and outcome constructs.

Temporal Considerations

As with other literature streams, empowerment research would benefit from a more robust examination of longitudinal effects. For example, Gerwin (1999) suggested that managers might empower teams at different phases of the life cycle. In fact, Gerwin (1999) provided a framework for how this ebb and flow of empowerment might occur and the underlying reasons for such dynamics. Additionally, Spreitzer (2008) raised the point that while most research has considered the impact that structural empowerment has on psychological empowerment, the directionality of this relationship may also be reciprocal. These types of

questions can be answered only by studying empowerment over time. Longitudinal and developmental investigations are needed to provide such insights and to advance our understanding of empowerment.

Mediator and Moderator Examinations

A final theme that seems to hold across the various levels of analysis within which psychological empowerment has been studied is the need for additional work examining how direct effects are mediated and/or examining factors that may moderate such direct effects. Stated another way, similar to the framework utilized herein, the majority of research examining psychological empowerment to date has been concerned with factors that serve as antecedents to empowerment, as well as outcomes that are impacted by psychological empowerment. Accordingly, across the various levels of analysis, research has demonstrated fairly consistent direct effects between psychological empowerment and the various antecedents reviewed here, as well as between psychological empowerment and numerous outcome measures.

In contrast, there is a lack of research that has determined whether such relationships are mediated by other constructs. As an example, Mathieu et al. (2006) demonstrated that team processes mediate the relationship between team psychological empowerment and effectiveness. However, there are numerous other potential mediators that have yet to be examined. Similarly, there are only a handful of studies across the various levels of analysis that have examined how certain links within the psychological empowerment nomological network may interact with other potential moderators. As an example of one of these few studies, Chen et al. (2007) found that the relationship between team leadership and psychological empowerment was moderated by task interdependence. Accordingly, we feel that the time is right for those interested in psychological empowerment to consider a deeper understanding of factors that play mediational and moderating relationships involving psychological empowerment.

Concluding Thoughts

As detailed throughout this review, there is a robust literature that has considered empowerment in various contexts and at various levels of analysis over the past couple of decades. However, as the themes detailed above and the research directions highlighted in Table 1 suggest, there is still more work to be done. In particular, while research at these various levels has typically leveraged a mediational framework (Figure 1), or at least portions of it, the context within which empowerment initiatives actually occur is likely more complex than this picture suggests, and this complexity needs to be further unpacked as we move forward.

For example, research focused on individual-level empowerment has considered the impact that a leader can have on employee psychological empowerment. However, as matrix organizational structures (e.g., Ford & Randolph, 1992) continue to be introduced, it becomes more likely that employees report to several leaders simultaneously (e.g., Yukl, 2008).

Accordingly, this raises the question: What does this mean for empowerment and more specifically the role of leadership in facilitating psychological empowerment?

Likewise, as detailed by Mathieu and colleagues (2008), teams are often more complex than typically considered within the academic literature. Namely, teams often rely on technology to communicate, are composed of individuals who are on multiple teams simultaneously, or have a dynamic membership whereby individuals join and leave over the course of the team's life cycle. To date, research in the broader organizational team and in the team empowerment literatures has not fully considered this reality and how such complexities may either enhance or impair perceptions of psychological empowerment.

Similarly, given the difficulty of gathering extensive organizational-level data, there are a myriad of research questions that remain unanswered at this higher level of analysis—many of which we have elicited above. As another direction for research in this area, industry effects have not been considered. Namely, while research at the organizational level has predominantly focused on factors internal to the organization, there are likely external factors that might influence empowerment initiatives. For instance, how do factors such as industry complexity, dynamism, and munificence (e.g., Dess, Ireland, & Hill, 1990; Lepak, Takeuchi, & Snell, 2003) affect or interact with structural and psychological empowerment?

Additionally, this suggestion to consider industry effects raises the point that more complex multilevel considerations can now be analyzed given the development of multilevel analysis techniques. For example, while our review detailed the handful of studies that have considered how higher level constructs shape lower level empowerment, there is a growing movement for research to consider how lower level constructs may have a bottom-up influence on higher level constructs (e.g., Hitt et al., 2007). Accordingly, in addition to our earlier calls for research to examine cross-level effects, we also encourage future researchers to consider how individual-level factors impact both team and organizational empowerment.

The research conducted to date within the empowerment literature has been solid and has provided a strong foundation for future research in this area. Namely, regardless of the level of analysis, there is abundant support in the literature that empowerment initiatives are beneficial to individuals, teams, and organizations. We hasten to add, however, that we doubt unsuccessful empowerment efforts are equally likely to be featured in the literature. In support of this, there is sufficient anecdotal evidence to conclude that empowerment initiatives are not universal panaceas—and blindly adopting them is no guarantee of success. Moreover, poorly implemented and nonsupported empowerment initiatives not only are a recipe for failure but may well generate a backlash and employee resentment.

Empowerment—The Fad That Doesn't Disappear; Instead, It Transforms Over Time

To close, we return to our initial question: Is empowerment a *fad* or is it *fab*? While empowerment has historical roots dating as far back as the 1940s and 1950s, as recently as in the past 20th century some researchers have referred to empowerment as a fad that would quickly fade (Abrahamson, 1996; Malone, 1997). As demonstrated by our review and very recent work in this area (e.g., Baird & Wang, 2010; Jarrar & Zairi, 2010), clearly it hasn't.

Organizational designs that incorporate empowerment, perhaps as part of a larger bundle of HRM activities, have proven to be competitively advantageous—especially when paired with a highly skilled and motivated workforce operating in dynamic environments. With modern-day work becoming more knowledge based such that people interact with and through technology, work in nontraditional arrangements, and operate in dynamic and fast-paced environments, empowerment represents a way to align employees' talents and motivations with work demands. In that sense, empowerment is truly fab.

Much of our review has centered on detailing how to best establish and leverage employee psychological empowerment to garner the positive benefits that can emerge from such initiatives. Given that the literature has provided strong evidence for a positive relationship between empowerment and various outcomes across levels of analysis, some have concluded that empowerment designs have become so pervasive that the topic has achieved "old-school" status (e.g., Wageman, Gardner, & Mortensen, 2012). However, we believe that position is overstated, as there are numerous directions that future research focused on empowerment has yet to address. In particular, empowerment is about the distribution of power in organizations (Hardy & Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1998). Driving authority and responsibility down to employee levels where they can best be deployed enables organizations to be lean and adaptable in volatile environments. However, people do not necessarily give up power and control easily.

We worked with numerous *Fortune* 500 companies in recent years that are still struggling to implement empowerment and other employee-centered designs. In part, this difficulty emerges from fierce management resistance to such initiatives. Similarly, certain occupations and industries seem to struggle more with how best to implement empowerment principles—in part because of the power dynamics at play within those professions (e.g., nursing and the medical industry; see Kramer et al., 2008). Likewise, cultural differences seem to play a role in this power and control distribution. As a result, while empowerment may be becoming well rooted in the United States, it is naïve to believe that empowerment means the same thing or has the same results in every organization, industry, or context around the globe. The prevalence of empowerment-focused research is only growing around the world, from Russia (Barton & Barton, 2011), to Mexico, and to Peru (Parnella, 2010), to name just a few. As this research continues to grow, we will learn more about the intricacies that must be considered when rolling out an empowerment initiative.

From a larger perspective, the economic downturn sparked in 2008 has rekindled fundamental control and power arguments. Recently there have been orchestrated political efforts to dismantle employee unions and undermine other formal mechanisms designed to protect employee rights. Social forces, from the Tea Party and the Occupy Movement in the United States to similar protests and unrest throughout Europe and elsewhere, drive right to the heart of whether employees and citizens should be empowered (Drury & Reicher, 2010). It is against this larger, ever-evolving context that questions such as whether and how to best empower employees will continue to be raised. Regardless of whether world events drive organizational empowerment practices or if organizational empowerment levels contribute to societal conditions, clearly the factors are related (Spreitzer, 2007). So is empowerment a fad? Perhaps, if one is only examining it at a given point in time (Godard, 2010). However, when considered from a larger perspective, we suggest that empowerment is instead fab, as

it speaks to the fundamental question of how organizations should be designed and how they should operate to maximize their effectiveness for all constituencies in an ever-changing world. Accordingly, we anticipate that it will remain a very salient issue for many years to come, and we look forward to seeing how the literature continues to develop.

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Erratum

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In Table 2, line 11 of the column "Cross-Sectional Data" should read "No" instead of "X."