



Combatting the 'Great Discontent': The impact of employability culture and leadership empowerment on career growth, loyalty, and satisfaction

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Table 1
Current Occupation Category for Survey Respondents

	Frequency (n)	Percentage
Architecture/Engineering	11	2.6
Arts	9	2.1
Business Financial	40	9.4
Computer Science	18	4.2
Construction	22	5.2
Counseling/Psychology	4	.9
Education	43	10.1
Farming/Fishing/Forestry	5	1.2
Government/Public Affairs	16	3.8
Healthcare	49	11.5
Legal	3	.7
Media	9	2.1
Office/Administrative Support	41	9.6
Retail/Restaurant/Service	33	7.8
Sales	30	7.1
Transportation	15	3.5
Other	77	18.1
Total	425	100.0

Table 2
Correlations Between Workplace Variables

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Career Growth					
2. Employee Engagement	.55 ⁺				
3. Employee Loyalty	.54 ⁺	.60 ⁺			
4. Job Satisfaction	.72 ⁺	.67 ⁺	.65 ⁺		
5. Employability Culture	.59 ⁺	.43 ⁺	.60 ⁺	.62 ⁺	
6. Leader Empowerment	.55 ⁺	.39 ⁺	.58 ⁺	.57 ⁺	.74 ⁺

Note. ⁺ $p < .001$.

Table 3*Hierarchical Regression Predicting Career Growth Opportunities*

Variable	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Controls									
Age	-0.01	0.004	-.08	-0.001	0.004	-.05	-0.003	0.004	-.04
Some College	0.29	0.18	.10	0.13	0.15	.04	0.12	0.15	.04
Associates	0.36	0.19	.11	0.17	0.15	.05	0.16	0.15	.05
Bachelors	0.38	0.16	.15*	0.22	0.13	.09	0.21	0.13	.08
Graduate	0.41	0.18	.14*	0.26	0.15	.09	0.26	0.14	.09
Emp. Culture				0.80	0.05	.59 ⁺	0.57	0.08	.42 ⁺
Leader Empower.							0.26	0.06	.23 ⁺

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, + $p < .001$. Emp. = Employability, Empower. = Empowerment.

Step 1: $R^2 = .02$, $F(5,419) = 1.70$, $p = .13$. Step 2: $\Delta R^2 = .34$, $\Delta F(1,418) = 221.44$, $p < .001$. Step 3: $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $\Delta F(1,417) = 16.74$, $p < .001$.

Table 4*Hierarchical Regression Predicting Employee Engagement*

Variable	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Controls									
Age	0.01	0.003	.09	0.01	0.003	.11*	0.01	0.003	.12**
Some College	0.06	0.15	.02	-0.04	0.13	-.02	-0.04	0.13	-.02
Associates	0.16	0.15	.06	0.05	0.14	.02	0.04	0.14	.02
Bachelors	0.11	0.13	.05	0.01	0.12	.01	0.01	0.12	.003
Graduate	0.25	0.14	.11	0.16	0.13	.07	0.16	0.13	.07

Emp. Culture	0.47	0.05	.43 ⁺	0.33	0.07	.30 ⁺
Leader Empower.				0.16	0.06	.18 ^{**}

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, + $p < .001$. Emp. = Employability, Empower. = Empowerment.
Step 1: $R^2 = .02$, $F(5,419) = 1.60$, $p = .17$. Step 2: $\Delta R^2 = .19$, $\Delta F(1,418) = 96.85$, $p < .001$. Step 3: $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $\Delta F(1,417) = 7.43$, $p = .007$.

Table 5
Hierarchical Regression Predicting Employee Loyalty

Variable	Step 1			Step 2			Step		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Controls									
Age	0.01	0.004	.08	0.01	0.003	.11 [*]	0.01	0.003	.13 ⁺
Some College	0.03	0.15	.01	-0.10	0.12	-.04	-0.11	0.11	-.05
Associates	0.06	0.15	.03	-0.09	0.12	-.04	-0.10	0.12	-.04
Bachelors	0.05	0.13	.03	-0.08	0.10	-.04	-0.09	0.10	-.05
Graduate	0.06	0.14	.03	-0.07	0.11	-.03	-0.07	0.11	-.03
Emp. Culture				0.66	0.04	.61 ⁺	0.40	0.06	.37 ⁺
Leader Empower.							0.29	0.05	.33 ⁺

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, + $p < .001$. Emp. = Employability, Empower. = Empowerment.
Step 1: $R^2 = .01$, $F(5,419) = 0.68$, $p = .64$. Step 2: $\Delta R^2 = .36$, $\Delta F(1,418) = 242.50$, $p < .001$. Step 3: $\Delta R^2 = .05$, $\Delta F(1,417) = 34.54$, $p < .001$.

Table 6
Hierarchical Regression Predicting Job Satisfaction

Variable	Step 1			Step 2			Step		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Controls									

Age	0.01	0.004	.11*	0.01	0.003	.14 ⁺	0.01	0.003	.15 ⁺
Some College	0.21	0.16	.08	0.06	0.12	.02	0.05	0.12	.02
Associates	0.38	0.16	.14*	0.20	0.13	.08	0.20	0.12	.07
Bachelors	0.28	0.14	.13*	0.13	0.11	.06	0.12	0.10	.06
Graduate	0.25	0.15	.10	0.11	0.12	.05	0.11	0.12	.05
Emp. Culture				0.73	0.04	.62 ⁺	0.51	0.06	.43 ⁺
Leader Empower.							0.25	0.05	.26 ⁺

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, + $p < .001$. Emp. = Employability, Empower. = Empowerment.

Step 1: $R^2 = .03$, $F(5,419) = 2.67$, $p = .02$. Step 2: $\Delta R^2 = .38$, $\Delta F(1,418) = 269.46$, $p < .001$. Step 3: $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $\Delta F(1,417) = 22.30$, $p < .001$.

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Combatting the ‘Great Discontent’: The impact of employability culture and leadership empowerment on career growth, loyalty, and satisfaction

Abstract

Purpose - Motivated by the organizational challenge coined the Great Discontent, employees are dissatisfied with their jobs, see minimal opportunities for growth, and are actively searching for new roles. This research takes a novel approach to internal communication strategy by introducing employability culture and leadership empowerment as mechanisms for supporting employees’ career growth and additional positive workplace outcomes.

Design/methodology/approach - An online survey was designed and administered in the United States. The final sample size includes 425 full-time employees working in a variety of roles, industries, and work arrangements.

Findings - Findings point to the inherent need for revised internal communication strategy that goes beyond managing and disseminating information. Organizations must develop cultures and their leaders in ways that empower employees and help them understand the meaning of their work. Employability culture, or an organization’s support for developing employees’ adaptive skills as work roles change, positively predicted employees’ perceptions of their career growth opportunities at their current place of employment, employee loyalty and engagement, and job satisfaction. Leadership empowerment behaviors also positively predicted all previously listed workplace variables. These perceptions as influenced by work arrangement (onsite, hybrid, fully remote) and younger versus older generations were also analyzed.

Originality/value - Research findings offer new strategies for internal communications. Internal communication teams can partner alongside executive leadership to develop a culture that helps employees envision how their skills and expertise translates to different areas of the organization, empowering them to find meaning in their work, and be driven to support organizational growth.

Keywords: internal communication, the Great Discontent, leadership empowerment, employability culture, career growth, employee loyalty, job satisfaction

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Introduction

Employees' expectations of the U.S. workplace and their leaders has changed drastically in the last five years, resulting in a need for new internal communication practices that are responsive to new expectations. The COVID-19 pandemic spurred an increase in employees' concerns about their personal priority areas such as financial security, job stability, and work-life balance (*Pulse of the American Worker Survey*, 2022), leading to a phenomenon coined the "Great Discontent" (Hirsch, 2021) that describes a shared experience among many of today's employees: they are dissatisfied with their jobs, see minimal opportunities for growth and are actively searching for new roles. These concerns have become even more embedded as 2023 brought an onslaught of layoffs, requiring organizations to carefully communicate internally in ways that offer their employees hope and security (Spaeth, 2023). The key to employees' perceptions of job stability is their understanding that their organization and managers support their growth and development, empowering them to advance at their current place of employment.

Generation Z in particular values career development and learning opportunities. According to *Forbes*, "Gen Z wants to learn their way up the career ladder and smart companies are providing the rungs" (Perna, 2021, para. 1). In fact, 83% of Gen Z employees want to develop skills to perform better in their current roles (*Workplace Learning Report*, 2023). The same study also found that, across generations, employees' top motivation to learn is to make progress toward their career goals, suggesting that the need for skill development may not be unique to Gen Z.

Beyond skill and career development, employees also have new expectations for their leaders and managers. Employees are looking to work for company cultures with leadership that

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responds with intentional listening, creates a sense of belonging, provides flexibility, and are committed to purpose-driven work that goes beyond shareholder value and virtue signaling (Babapour Chafi, Hultberg, and Yams, 2021). Employees want to be respected by their leaders and valued for their unique contributions to organizational impact, which contributes to increased loyalty and job satisfaction (LaGree *et al.*, 2021). In fact, *Pew Research* revealed that among employees who quit their jobs in 2021, major reasons for leaving included feeling disrespected by managers and lack of opportunities for advancement (Parker and Horowitz, 2022). Leaders and managers are in unique positions to develop clear paths for leadership and a supportive workplace culture.

While the previously summarized research points to challenges within today’s organizations, it also reveals new opportunities for organizational leaders, managers, and internal communication teams to support employees in ways that will enhance their career growth, engagement, loyalty, and job satisfaction. To embrace the growing trend of employees’ needs for career growth support from their organizations, and to understand how organizations should accomplish this and its influence on the employee experience, we turned to the employability culture framework. When an organization demonstrates employability culture, it supports employees’ individual development and helps employees become more adaptive to the changing work environment through a focus on flexible and broader skills (Nauta *et al.*, 2009). However, the development and communication of this type of culture can’t be achieved without support from leaders and managers, who have immense influence on the workplace experience and are in positions to extend top-level culture to their subordinates (Boudrias *et al.*, 2009). Research on leadership empowerment behaviors proved helpful when refining our approach to assessing this influence. When employees are empowered, they have feelings of self-efficacy toward their

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work, understand the meaning of their work, and are self-determined to contribute to organizational impact (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). However, employee empowerment is not realized without the influence of the manager (Konczak, Stelly, and Trusty, 2000).

Therefore, the following literature review begins by demonstrating the need for shifting priorities of internal communication teams and follows with an outline of employability culture and leadership empowerment behaviors as mechanisms for enhancing employees' workplace experiences.

Literature Review

A Disrupted Workplace

The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically impacted all global industries. Companies were faced with unprecedented challenges to shift how business was done, and employees experienced a new work-life environment as the world was forced to shut down in March 2020. A key measure to reduce the spread of infection during the COVID-19 pandemic was social distancing, causing organizations to implement flexible hybrid and remote work scenarios for their employees (Lau *et al.*, 2020). Effective leadership during these times of transition was imperative to the success of an organization, and this has become more evident since the pandemic due to the increase of more permanent hybrid and remote work scenarios (Contreras *et al.*, 2020; Larson and DeChurch, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic occurred at the same time approximately 61 million members of Gen Z were entering the workforce (Morris, 2018) — many taking the first job they could for job security. Most workers stayed in their positions during the first wave of COVID-19 in 2020; however, as global recovery efforts ensued and the job market rebounded, voluntary turnover in the United States surged from 2.3% to 3% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). Coined the “Great

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Resignation” (Gandi and Robinson, 2021), this high voluntary turnover rate is characterized by employees choosing to leave their jobs within a short amount of time. The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically impacted people’s affective, cognitive, and behavioral processes based on work-from-home policies implemented by their employers to adhere to social distancing guidelines (Li *et al.*, 2021). The COVID-19-associated lockdowns pushed many professionals to reassess their career plans and professional identities (Dean and Hoff, 2021).

Moreover, this shift in employees’ perception of their professional identities is another phenomenon that organizations face because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The “Great Discontent” describes the increasing number of employees across industries who are disengaged and discontent with their roles after experiencing working through the COVID-19 peak (Hirsch, 2021). The “discontent” felt by many employees is evident by the 48% of U.S. Americans who are actively job searching or watching out for opportunities (Gandhi and Robison, 2021). As organizations grapple with how to improve employee loyalty and retention in the face of these workplace-altering phenomena, it is increasingly vital that communication within these organizations moves beyond the traditional and informative nature. Particularly for employees in hybrid or remote-work scenarios, managers must put in more effort to develop and communicate intra-organizational trust, which can positively impact productivity, well-being support, and smooth adaptation of flexible work practices (Panteli *et al.*, 2022).

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Shifts in Employee Expectations

Moving past the pandemic, Gen Z early-career professionals are focused more on the quality of their career experience, which includes having access to mentors and the tools necessary to create a forward-moving career trajectory (Bizouati-Kennedy, 2021). In addition to Gen Zs, Millennials are also reflecting an increased focus on their overall work experience,

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including how their employers reflect certain values and social responsibility. According to The Deloitte Global 2022 Gen Z and Millennial Survey, the top reasons Millennials and Gen Zs left their employers in 2020-2022 included low pay, poor mental health, and increasing burnout (Deloitte, 2022, p. 13). Conversely, the top two reasons both Gen Zs and Millennials chose to work for their current employer were a good work/life balance and learning/development opportunities. Survey respondents cited expected technological shifts — such as the increased use of artificial intelligence — as a motivation to look for employers who provided continuing education and professional development opportunities. Furthermore, Gen Zs and Millennials are more likely to stay in a job for more than five years if the organization is committed to societal and environmental impact. This is evident in nearly half (46%) of Gen Zs and Millennials in senior positions who reported turning down a job and/or assignment because it didn't align with their personal ethics or values. These challenges present company leaders with the critical task of communicating such opportunities and values in an engaging and transparent manner (Deloitte, 2022):

Empowering people across an organization helps foster a more inclusive environment. Of the 52% of Gen Zs and Millennials who feel empowered to drive change within their organizations, 89% of Gen Zs and 90% of Millennials say they feel a sense of belonging. When people feel their voices are heard, they tend to feel more connected and loyal to their organizations. (p. 15)

Understanding the makeup of their employee base and providing support based on those individual employees' wants and needs is critical as organizations battle increasing turnover and decreasing engagement. For Gen Zs and Millennials, organizations should be proactive about providing access to leaders at all levels to create opportunities for mentorship and effective role

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modeling. Consistent access to experienced managers leads to an increase in confidence, adaptability, and proactivity among early-career professionals (Olsen and LaGree, 2023). By communicating these opportunities effectively to employees, companies increase employee loyalty and overall retention within Gen Zs and Millennials — a significant challenge faced by many in the wake of the Great Discontent.

Internal Communication as a Critical Function to Create Positive Employee Experiences

Internal communication involves “managing interdependence and building mutually-beneficial relationships between the organization and its employees” (Men and Bowen, 2016, p. 12). Previous literature on internal communications has focused on its crucial role in an organization, especially in terms of promoting job satisfaction, organizational trust, employee attitudes, and relationship-building (Berger, 2008; Kim and Rhee, 2011; Men, 2014). According to Men and Yue (2019), internal communications shapes and influences organizational culture through strategic messaging, consistency, and authentic connections and engagement with employees. As a public relations function, internal communication is an essential tool to build, maintain, and enhance the quality of long-term relationships with an organizations’ employees (Lee, 2022; Men and Stacks, 2014).

The role and influence of internal communication has increased in importance over the past three years. Historically, it has consisted of disseminating information from leadership levels to employees through a variety of methods such as emails, newsletter, Intranet, town halls, and partnering with human resources (Ingelmo Palomares *et al.*, 2018). More than a decade ago, organizations began focusing on internal communications strategy around culture changes, employee engagement, and overall company performance.

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Internal communication strategy has also adapted because of the changing nature of work arrangements. In pre-pandemic times, approximately 5% of U.S. employees worked from home. Remote or hybrid working conditions were not the norm and oftentimes frowned upon (Babapour Chafi, Hultberg, and Yams, 2021). Leaders now manage remote teams scattered around the globe, employees are coping with new ways of working and collaborating, and business leaders are seeking new ways to build trust in the workplace (Neill and Bowen, 2021; Aced Toledano *et. al*, 2022).

Internal Communication Opportunity: Building Employability Culture

As previously discussed, a primary role of internal communication teams is working with leaders to shape and build organizational culture (Men and Hiang, 2016; Men and Yue, 2019). Before culture can be shaped, it must be defined from a strategic standpoint that aligns with organizational goals and executive leaders' expectations of culture outcomes (Baumgartner, 2009).

Employability culture is arguably more important in today's ever-changing workplace landscape than ever before because it emphasizes the need for organizations to invest in the development of the whole employee, allowing them to adapt their skills to changing organizational demands. Today's employees are more committed to organizations that not only leverage their skills and expertise, but also proactively support the development of new skillsets (Nauta *et al.*, 2009; Perna, 2021, para. 1). Career psychology researchers have deemed this the New Psychological Contract between employees and their employers (Dries *et al.*, 2014), which gives both the employee and the organization a competitive advantage; the employee is more promotable and proficient, and the organization is more adaptable and equipped to retain employees during times of change. Such moments of change and uncertainty, such as during

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times of crisis, require employees to be adaptable to their new circumstances and leverage their professional development skills (Aguinis and Kraiger, 2009; Arthur *et al.*, 2003).

The concept of employability culture stems from Heijde and Van der Heijden’s (2006) conceptualization of employability: “the continuous fulfilling, acquiring, or creating work through the optimal use of one’s competences” (p. 453). It involves the alignment of capabilities and strengths at the individual employee level with core needs and performance expectations at the organizational level (Rothwell and Lindholm, 1999). Employability is an especially positive, tangible resource for employees during times of recession, when those who possess greater cross-functional skills and expertise can be leveraged in other areas of organizations instead of staying in limited roles that may be terminated (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1996).

While the previously summarized research focused on employability at the individual level, Nauta *et al.* ’s (2009) work extended employability to the organizational context to understand the ways in which organizations can develop a culture that supports employee development while retaining them at the same time. Specifically, Nauta and colleagues’ (2009) goal was to understand how organizations encourage employees to be open and adaptive to the changing nature of work by helping them develop flexible skills and a readiness to change tasks and roles (Van Dam, 2004). They found that an organization’s employability culture positively predicted employees’ openness and readiness to take on new tasks and broaden their skills; employability culture was also negatively associated with turnover intention (De Cuyper and De Witte, 2011).

Having a strong employability culture such as one that can “substantially improve employee well-being” (Freeman and Kleiner, 2000, p. 219) means investing in employees’ professional development for current and future roles (Aguinis and Kraiger, 2009). Although similar to a

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learning organization culture, a company's employability culture focuses more on the extent to which the company is involved in offering their employees professional development training and opportunities for career growth (Aguinis and Kraiger, 2009). Meanwhile, a learning organization culture supports not only the individual, but also the overall organization to improve continuously and become competitive in an evolving marketplace (Hussein *et al.*, 2016; Watkins and Marsick, 1993).

Research on the role of employability culture in organizations also suggests that it is related to a variety of positive organizational and individual career outcomes. Those who perceive their organization as having an employability culture tend to experience greater self-fulfillment in their career development because they feel as if their talents and competencies are being effectively utilized by their organization (De Vos *et al.*, 2011; Wong *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, employability culture was found to positively predict workplace well-being and perceptions of internal employability (P M, Zakkariya, and Philip, 2023). Organizations that invest in their employees by supporting the breadth of their development are likely to see it pay off in the form of employee satisfaction, ultimately increasing their loyalty to the organization (Renee Barnett and Bradley, 2007). These findings underscore what employees seek from organizations today: the need for job security in a turbulent workforce. Employees who experience an employability culture at their organizations may very well understand that their opportunities to grow in their current place of employment are strong. Therefore, the following hypotheses were posited to test the relationship between employability culture and positive workplace outcomes.

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H1 a-d: Perceived employability culture positively predicts (a) employees’ perceptions of their career growth opportunities, (b) employee engagement, (c) employee loyalty and (d) job satisfaction.

Leadership Empowerment Behaviors

While organization-wide culture development is certainly at the forefront of internal communication strategy, the role of leaders and direct supervisors in creating a supportive culture (Konczak *et al.*, 2000; Meng and Neill, 2021; Meng and Neill, 2022) and employees’ perceptions of promotion and career growth opportunities shouldn’t be ignored (Litano and Major, 2016; Men, 2014). In their study on what influences women in public relations to feel empowered, Meng and Neill (2021) found that inclusive leadership positively predicts employees’ feelings of empowerment, which in turn increased their perceptions of career growth opportunities in their current roles. Mentorship opportunities can also help employees feel empowered because of the wisdom and perspective offered from individuals with more career experience. Mentorship helps women, in particular, understand how to navigate family and work tensions and advocate for themselves as they do this (Meng and Neill, 2022) which could, in turn, lead to feelings of empowerment and a heightened confidence when facing work-life conflict. With that in mind, we turned to past research on leadership empowerment behaviors to contextualize the concept of empowerment within the leadership framework and understand its relationship with variables that constitute a positive workplace experience.

Companies that want to be more flexible and adaptable have moved away from hierarchical leadership structures; “duties that were once performed by managers, such as directing and controlling work, are now performed by empowered teams” (Arnold *et al.*, 2000, pp. 249-250) which requires leaders to adopt new skills and practices to effectively empower

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their teams. Empowered teams and employees experience empowerment through meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. More specifically: (1) they find meaning in their work role, (2) they believe they have the knowledge and expertise to perform their work, (3) they are internally motivated and determined to achieve expected results, and (4) they believe they have tangible impact on organizational outcomes (Spreitzer, 1995). However, employees may not achieve an empowerment mindset if the proper workplace conditions, which includes the leadership style of managers and supervisors, aren't in place (Boudrias *et al.*, 2009).

Additionally, empowerment is a process that occurs when a manager shares power with subordinates (Conger and Kanungo, 1988). Therefore, we can assume that employee empowerment cannot be realized unless leaders understand the skillsets necessary to instill a sense of empowerment among organizational teams, a worthy area of study to inform internal communication strategy.

According to the Full Range of Leadership Model (Avolio and Bass, 1995), there are several types of leadership practices ranging from a behavioral to a cognitive approach in the form of transactional and transformational leadership styles. For example, in a contingent reward scenario (a form of transactional leadership), employees are controlled and monitored by management and rewarded or punished based on their performance (Doci *et al.*, 2015). Overall, transactional leadership tends to be more reactionary and focused on providing an extrinsic exchange (e.g., higher salary, promotion, bonus), which treats employees more like a short-term expense than a long-term investment. On the opposite end of the spectrum is a transformational leadership style, which focuses more heavily on a cognitive approach that draws on leadership inspiration, intellectual stimulation, co-creation, and intrinsic motivation (Arenas *et al.*, 2018). For example, in an intellectual stimulation scenario (a form of transformational leadership),

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employees are encouraged to take risks, think outside the box, and are not punished for disagreeing with their leaders (Doci *et al.*, 2015). Transformational leaders “motivate their followers to accomplish more than they originally intended, realizing their fullest potential” (Arenas *et al.*, 2018, p. 23), which is a form of leadership empowerment.

Leadership empowerment, as conceived by Konczak, Stelly and Trusty (2000), is summarized as follows: Leaders that possess empowerment behaviors engage in six core activities among their subordinates including (1) delegation of authority, (2) emphasis on accountability for outcomes, (3) encouragement of self-directed decision-making, (4) information sharing, (5) skill development, and (6) coaching for innovative performance. The same study by Konczak and colleagues (2000) found that all dimensions of leadership empowerment behaviors were positively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Therefore, the following hypotheses were posited to test the relationship between perceived leadership empowerment and positive workplace outcomes.

H2 a-d: Perceived leadership empowerment positively predict (a) employees’ perceptions of their career growth opportunities, (b) employee engagement, (c) employee loyalty, and (d) job satisfaction.

Work Arrangement and Generational Differences

Isolation requirements due to COVID-19 spurred an onslaught of new work arrangements, including work-from-home. Once companies transitioned back to in-office work post-COVID, employee demand was high for continued work-from-home options, resulting in the largely hybrid workforce many are familiar with today, where employees spend part of the work week in-office and part of the work week working remotely from home. McKinsey's American Opportunity Survey (2022) reported that when people have the chance to work

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flexibly (in-office and remote options), 85% of them take it. While hybrid work arrangements improve employees' work-life balance and productivity, challenges of hybrid work include difficulty coordinating resources, inefficient communication among teams, and disconnection from organizational culture (Wigert and White, 2022). It is evident that workplace experiences differ depending on the type of work arrangement. Therefore, to understand how employability culture and leader empowerment behaviors are perceived in a variety of workplace contexts, the first research question was posed:

RQ 1: Are there differences in perceptions of employability culture and leadership empowerment behaviors among onsite employees, hybrid employees, and fully remote employees?

Perceptions of work-from-home also differ among generations, as digital natives from younger generations have more experience navigating newer technologies and online work than older generations. However, a nationwide survey of more than 2,300 U.S.-based workers revealed that younger workers (Millennials and Gen Zs) reported more distractions and difficulty maintaining work-life balance when working from home compared to Gen Xers and Baby Boomers (Gensler Research Institute, 2020). With this information in mind, the final hypothesis was posited:

H3: Employees from younger generations (Gen Zs and Millennials) perceive work-from-home as less constructive to a) company support, b) work-life balance, and c) productivity compared to older employees (Generation Xers and Baby Boomers).

Research method

After the survey instrument and data collection process received approval from the Institutional Review Board and ethical, password-protected data storage was arranged, an online,

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cross-sectional survey was administered to a public panel through Qualtrics in March 2023. Participants had to be ages 18-65 and currently working as full-time U.S. employees (40 hours per week) to be eligible participants.

Qualtrics ensured data quality by screening participants to meet study qualifications and eliminating incomplete responses. The final sample ($N = 425$) had an average age of 40 ($SD = 12.6$), and was 64.2% female ($n = 273$), 34.4% male ($n = 146$), and 1.4% nonbinary ($n = 6$). White respondents made up 68.2% of the sample ($n = 290$), Black or African American respondents were 11.3% ($n = 48$), Hispanic or Latino respondents were 9.4% ($n = 40$), and Asian respondents were 5.6% ($n = 24$), Native American respondents were 1.2% ($n = 5$), and 4.2% of respondents identified as other races ($n = 18$). By generation, the sample was 13.6% Gen Z ($n = 58$), 43.3% Millennial ($n = 184$), 31.1% Generation X ($n = 132$), and 12% Baby Boomer ($n = 51$).

Regarding education and professional involvement, 29.6% of respondents had a bachelor's degree ($n = 126$), 19.1% had graduate degrees ($n = 81$), and 32.5% of respondents had some college or an associate degree ($n = 138$). Professionally, the largest categories of identified employment sectors were education (10.1%, $n = 43$) and healthcare (11.5%, $n = 49$). Table 1 lists the respondents' current occupation category frequencies. More than half of the sample (52%, $n = 221$) could work from home, with 42.1% engaged in a hybrid work-from-home activity ($n = 93$), 36.7% working exclusively from home ($n = 81$), and 21.3% working from home only when necessary ($n = 47$).

Measures

All items included in multi-item variable measures are included in the appendix.

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Workplace Variables. Variables related to employability culture, leadership, and satisfaction were measured using scales consisting of items measured on 5-point, Likert scales ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”

Perceived employability culture was measured using six items drawn from Nauta *et al.* (2009). The scale ($M = 3.61$, $SD = .82$) was reliable, $\alpha = .81$.

Perceived leader empowerment was measured using 11 items (Arnold *et al.*, 2000; Konczak *et al.*, 2000). Two items, “My leader/supervisor helps me understand how my work contributes to company impact,” and, “My leader/supervisor helps me understand how my work is making a difference in the company,” were original items. The scale ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.00$) was reliable, $\alpha = .95$.

Career growth opportunities were measured using two items drawn from Bedeian *et al.* (1999). The scale ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.13$) was reliable, $\alpha = .87$. *Employee engagement* was measured using five items for cognitive and emotional engagement (Rich *et al.*, 2010). The scale ($M = 4.02$, $SD = .90$) was reliable, $\alpha = .87$. *Employee loyalty and retention* was measured using five items adapted from Matzler and Renzl (2006). The scale ($M = 3.60$, $SD = .90$) was reliable, $\alpha = .76$. Finally, *job satisfaction* was measured using three items drawn from Hackman and Oldham (1975). The scale ($M = 3.90$, $SD = .97$) was reliable, $\alpha = .88$.

Work-from-Home

Respondents were asked if they currently had the opportunity to work from home, and if so, to identify if their work-from-home status was hybrid, 100% at home, or work-from-home only when necessary. Respondents who indicated that they had the opportunity to work from home were asked to indicate their attitudes toward work-from-home using measures from Chu *et al.* (2022). All items were measured on 5-point, Likert scales ranging from “strongly disagree” to

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“strongly agree.” *Company support* was measured using three items. The scale ($M = 4.14$, $SD = .84$) was reliable, $\alpha = .80$. *Work-life balance* was measured using two items. The scale ($M = 4.30$, $SD = .82$) was reliable, $\alpha = .77$. Finally, *work productivity* was measured with two items. The scale ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 1.06$) was reliable, $\alpha = .90$.

Demographics

Demographic measures included age, gender, ethnic origin, education level (high school graduate, some college, associate degree, bachelor’s degree, and graduate or professional degree), and current occupation category (see Table 1). To define respondent’s generation categories, the Pew Research Center’s definitions (Dimock, 2019) were applied with respondents categorized by age based on the following timeframes: the Silent Generation (born 1928-1945), Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Generation X (born 1965-1980), Millennials (born 1981-1996), and Gen Z (born 1997-2012).

Results

Employability Culture and Leader Empowerment

To address hypotheses one and two, a series of hierarchical regressions predicting career growth, employee engagement, employee loyalty, and job satisfaction were employed. Table 2 presents the correlations between variables included in each regression. Tables 3-6 present the results of each regression. No tolerance was below 0.2, and no variance inflation factor exceeded 4.0 for any variable in any of the regressions, suggesting a lack of multicollinearity. In addition, the sample ($N = 425$) exceeded best practices for adequate sample size for regressions with seven predictor variables (VanVoorhis and Morgan, 2007).

As age is a variable of interest in the current study, it was entered as a control variable in each regression. In addition, education level was entered as a control in each regression

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considering its contribution to positive employment outcomes, such as job satisfaction through increased workplace autonomy and task opportunities (Ross and Reskin, 1992), and individual career growth (Hitka *et al.*, 2021). Education level was dummy coded for some college, associate degree, bachelor's degree, and graduate degree, with high school graduate as the reference. Controls were entered in step one of each regression, the employability culture variable was entered in step two of each regression, and the leader empowerment behavior variable was entered in step three.

H1

The first hypothesis (H1) posited that perceived employability culture would positively predict (a) employees' perceptions of their career growth opportunities, (b) employee engagement, (c) employee loyalty, and (d) job satisfaction. Employability culture was a significant, positive predictor for a) career growth ($B = 0.57$, $SD = 0.08$, $p < .001$), b) employee engagement ($B = 0.33$, $SD = 0.07$, $p < .001$), c) employee loyalty ($B = 0.40$, $SD = 0.06$, $p < .001$), and d) job satisfaction ($B = 0.51$, $SD = 0.06$, $p < .001$) in the final step of each regression. Furthermore, the entrance of the employability culture variable in step two of each regression explained the most variance in each model: career growth, $R^2 = .34$; employee engagement, $R^2 = .19$; employee loyalty, $R^2 = .36$; and job satisfaction, $R^2 = .38$. As such, this hypothesis was supported.

H2

The second hypothesis (H2) suggested perceived leader empowerment would positively predict (a) employees' perceptions of their career growth opportunities, (b) employee engagement, (c) employee loyalty, and (d) job satisfaction. Leader empowerment was a significant, positive predictor for a) career growth ($B = 0.26$, $SD = 0.06$, $p < .001$), b) employee

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engagement ($B = 0.16$, $SD = 0.06$, $p = .007$), c) employee loyalty ($B = 0.29$, $SD = 0.05$, $p < .001$), and d) job satisfaction ($B = 0.25$, $SD = 0.05$, $p < .001$) in the final step of each regression. As such, the hypothesis was supported.

Age and Work Arrangement Differences

RQ1

The first research question (RQ1) asked if there were differences in perceptions of employability culture and leader empowerment behaviors among onsite employees, hybrid employees, and fully remote employees. To address this question, two ANOVAs were performed with employment work-from-home arrangement predicting employability culture and leader empowerment. Cell sizes for each variable were adequate based on best practices (VanVoorhis and Morgan, 2007).

There was a significant effect of work-from-home arrangement on employability culture, $F(3,421) = 2.81$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Post hoc comparisons using the LSD test indicated that hybrid employees ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.70$) perceived a statistically significant more favorable employability culture than onsite employees ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.86$), $p = .01$. However, there was no difference between hybrid employees and always-at-home employees ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.83$), $p = .63$, nor employees who worked from home only when necessary ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 0.84$), $p = .07$. In addition, there were no significant differences between onsite and always-at-home employees, $p = .07$, nor onsite and work-from-home only when necessary, $p = .96$, and there was no significant difference between always at home and work-from-home only when necessary, $p = .17$. The second ANOVA compared the effects of work-from-home arrangement on leader empowerment perceptions. The result of the ANOVA was not significant, $F(3,421) = 1.71$, $p = .17$, $\eta^2 = .01$.

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To address RQ1, hybrid employees perceived employability culture more positively than onsite employees; however, there was no difference for always work-from-home employees. There were no differences for hybrid or work-from-home employees and onsite employees in their perception of leader empowerment.

H3

The final hypotheses suggested that employees from younger generations (Gen Zs and Millennials) perceive work-from-home as less favorable in terms of a) company support, b) work-life balance, and c) productivity when compared to older employees (Generation Xers and Baby Boomers). To address this hypothesis, a series of ANOVAS were employed with generation predicting perceived company support, work-life balance, and productivity. Cell sizes for each variable were adequate based on best practices (VanVoorhis and Morgan, 2007). There was no statistically significant effect of generation on company support, $F(3,217) = 0.33, p = .80, \eta^2 = .01$; work-life balance, $F(3,217) = 0.25, p = .86, \eta^2 = .003$; nor productivity, $F(3,217) = 1.03, p = .38, \eta^2 = .01$. The hypothesis was not supported.

Discussion and implications

This study provides new internal communication strategies to combat the ‘Great Discontent’ in a post-pandemic age and provides theoretical and practical implications to positively impact the employer-employee organizational relationship.

This study made several important contributions. First, employability culture on the organizational level (Nauta *et al.*, 2009) provided a relevant theoretical framework to investigate workplace outcomes and was found to be an important contributor to employees’ perceptions of career growth opportunities, engagement, loyalty, and job satisfaction. This is consistent with

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prior research on employability (Arnold *et al.*, 2000; Boudrias *et al.*, 2009; De Vos *et al.*, 2011; Dries *et al.*, 2014; Meng and Neill, 2021), which focuses on an individual’s career ownership and perceived organizational support through employee well-being and flexibility (Baran, Shanock, and Miller, 2012).

Second, this study revealed that leadership empowerment behaviors were crucial contributors to employees’ perceptions of career growth opportunities, engagement, loyalty, and job satisfaction. This is consistent with prior research citing the role of leaders and managers in creating inclusive and supportive work environments that enable employees to feel valued and empowered (Boudrias *et al.*, 2009; Konczak *et al.*, 2000; Meng and Neill, 2021). One way to do this is by providing instrumental support, such as sponsorship or mentorship programs that provide career growth (Meng and Neill, 2022). In fact, workplace mentoring can “facilitate career advancement by focusing on instrumental support, such as providing instruction and feedback and/or psychosocial support, such as role modeling and encouragement” (Martinelli and Erzikova, 2017, p. 1064).

A third contribution was related to differences in perceptions of employability culture and leadership empowerment behaviors among onsite, hybrid, and completely remote employees. While there were no reported differences in perceived leadership empowerment between work-from-home and onsite employees, hybrid workers perceived employability culture more favorably than onsite workers. This supports prior literature on the benefits of providing increased flexibility in the workplace that enables autonomy, sense of purpose, and ownership over one’s career path and development (Babapour Chafi *et al.*, 2022).

And the last contribution revealed there were no generational differences in the perception of work-from-home arrangement in terms of company support received, work-life

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balance, and productivity. Due to the pandemic, remote and hybrid work arrangements required more screen time for employees across all generations. This was especially taxing for younger generations, such as Gen Zs, who felt disconnected from company culture by missing face-to-face connections, potential mentorship, and career development opportunities (Poswolsky, 2022). Additionally, leaders may have assumed that younger generations are more equipped to embrace work-from-home technologies and lifestyles. However, younger workers (Millennials and Gen Zs) reported more distractions and difficulty maintaining work-life balance when working from home compared to Gen Xers and Baby Boomers (Gensler Research Institute, 2020). Conversely, the older generations have experienced a growth in tech-savviness which may result in similar technological proficiency as Millennials and Gen Zs. With advancements in user-friendly technology and increased familiarity with digital tools, employees from different age groups might be more comfortable with remote work technologies, leading to similar perceptions of hybrid work situations. Moreover, the shared experience of the pandemic may have influenced employees to approach remote work with a similar mindset and resilience despite generational differences. These similar coping mechanisms, along with similar support and resources provided to those working from home, could contribute to the absence of generational differences in the perception of work-from-home arrangements. Therefore, it's important for managers and leaders to resist making generational stereotypes when creating employee engagement environments.

Practical implications

The study's findings suggest that organizations should focus on promoting a positive employability culture, as well as investing in leadership empowerment development given the positive workplace outcomes associated with both. Of note, hybrid workplace contexts seem to

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be particularly effective at fostering a strong employability culture, likely through the flexibility afforded through environments. This indicates that flexible work arrangements can be successful in providing employees with a positive sense of employability and job security. It is important to highlight that the hybrid work model is relatively new, and its dynamics will continue to evolve. Organizations should regularly assess the impact of their hybrid work policies on employee perceptions, engagement and overall performance. By collecting feedback from employees, leaders can identify areas of improvement and make necessary adjustments to maintain a positive work culture.

Furthermore, positive leadership empowerment is possible regardless of workplace context. As such, organizations would be wise to consider the advantages of encouraging hybrid workplace settings for their employees, confident that the availability of communication tools and technologies can facilitate an encouraging workplace culture. The use of digital communication and collaboration tools currently available should be enough to foster effective relational outcomes and positive workplace productivity in hybrid environments while also encouraging healthy work-life balances (Rich *et al.*, 2010). Leaders should be transparent about professional development opportunities available to all employees, regardless of workplace arrangement, in order to promote a positive employability culture. By utilizing transparent communication, organizations are creating a culture that fosters a motivated, committed, and satisfied workforce.

In addition, given the lack of generational differences in perceived positive outcomes of work-from-home contexts, it is safe to assume that the current workforce is capable of adapting to these environments regardless of age. During significant global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, employees of all ages likely faced similar challenges and experiences related to

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remote work due to the sudden shift in remote workplace arrangements for most organizations.

Additionally, the lack of generational differences in the perception of work-from-home arrangements presents an opportunity for organizations to implement equitable policies and benefits that cater to all employees' needs. By prioritizing support, flexibility and communication in these initiatives, organizations can create a positive hybrid work culture that focuses on engagement and job satisfaction across all age groups.

Limitations & recommendations for future research

One of the largest occupational categories identified by respondents was "Other;" however, the survey employed did not allow respondents to self-identify their employment category. This is a limitation. Another limitation is that specific internal communication strategies were not explored as part of this study. Future research should look at the specific connection between internal communication practices and strategic direction on building leadership empowerment behaviors. Future research should also explore differences in employability culture and leadership empowerment, as well as differences in work-from-home expectations, across industries. While this study provided valuable insights from U.S. American workers representing a wide range of industries and roles, future studies should examine cross-cultural differences in employability culture and leader empowerment behaviors as companies continue to expand globally and employ individuals representing a wide range of nationalities and ethnic cultures. As companies increasingly place a greater emphasis on the importance of DEI in the workplace, this line of research could also benefit from qualitative research by conducting interviews with employees from underrepresented groups to better understand their unique workplace challenges, relationship with employers, access to instrumental support, and their coping mechanisms over

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time and how they may differ. These qualitative interviews could also shed light on the nuances and unique challenges faced by different generations while working remotely.

This research data also revealed a strong argument for internal communication teams to adopt employability culture-building and leader empowerment behavior training as core strategies. Future research should explore the specific mechanisms and tactics used by internal communicators to implement these strategies. Additionally, our literature review emphasized the connection between leadership empowerment behaviors and mentorship practices, as the two are undoubtedly related. Past research on mentorship and role modeling in the workplace has demonstrated its positive effect on women, in particular, as they navigate workplace norms and develop their confidence (LaGree and Olsen, 2022; Meng & Neill, 2022). However, the increasing presence of remote work could have detrimental effects on the formation of mentor networks for young workers. Future research should explore the effects of remote and hybrid work on mentorship networks and how organizations might respond to any negative ramifications as a result.

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Table 1

Current Occupation Category for Survey Respondents

	Frequency (n)	Percentage
Architecture/Engineering	11	2.6
Arts	9	2.1
Business Financial	40	9.4
Computer Science	18	4.2
Construction	22	5.2
Counseling/Psychology	4	.9
Education	43	10.1
Farming/Fishing/Forestry	5	1.2
Government/Public Affairs	16	3.8
Healthcare	49	11.5
Legal	3	.7
Media	9	2.1
Office/Administrative Support	41	9.6
Retail/Restaurant/Service	33	7.8
Sales	30	7.1
Transportation	15	3.5
Other	77	18.1
Total	425	100.0

Table 2

Correlations Between Workplace Variables

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Career Growth					
2. Employee Engagement	.55 ⁺				
3. Employee Loyalty	.54 ⁺	.60 ⁺			
4. Job Satisfaction	.72 ⁺	.67 ⁺	.65 ⁺		
5. Employability Culture	.59 ⁺	.43 ⁺	.60 ⁺	.62 ⁺	
6. Leader Empowerment	.55 ⁺	.39 ⁺	.58 ⁺	.57 ⁺	.74 ⁺

Note. ⁺ $p < .001$.

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Table 3*Hierarchical Regression Predicting Career Growth Opportunities*

Variable	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Controls									
Age	-0.01	0.004	-.08	-0.001	0.004	-.05	-0.003	0.004	-.04
Some College	0.29	0.18	.10	0.13	0.15	.04	0.12	0.15	.04
Associates	0.36	0.19	.11	0.17	0.15	.05	0.16	0.15	.05
Bachelors	0.38	0.16	.15*	0.22	0.13	.09	0.21	0.13	.08
Graduate	0.41	0.18	.14*	0.26	0.15	.09	0.26	0.14	.09
Emp. Culture				0.80	0.05	.59 ⁺	0.57	0.08	.42 ⁺
Leader Empower.							0.26	0.06	.23 ⁺

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, + $p < .001$. Emp. = Employability, Empower. = Empowerment.

Step 1: $R^2 = .02$, $F(5,419) = 1.70$, $p = .13$. Step 2: $\Delta R^2 = .34$, $\Delta F(1,418) = 221.44$, $p < .001$. Step 3: $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $\Delta F(1,417) = 16.74$, $p < .001$.

Table 4*Hierarchical Regression Predicting Employee Engagement*

Variable	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Controls									
Age	0.01	0.003	.09	0.01	0.003	.11*	0.01	0.003	.12**
Some College	0.06	0.15	.02	-0.04	0.13	-.02	-0.04	0.13	-.02
Associates	0.16	0.15	.06	0.05	0.14	.02	0.04	0.14	.02
Bachelors	0.11	0.13	.05	0.01	0.12	.01	0.01	0.12	.003

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Graduate	0.25	0.14	.11	0.16	0.13	.07	0.16	0.13	.07
Emp. Culture				0.47	0.05	.43 ⁺	0.33	0.07	.30 ⁺
Leader Empower.							0.16	0.06	.18 ^{**}

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, + $p < .001$. Emp. = Employability, Empower. = Empowerment.
Step 1: $R^2 = .02$, $F(5,419) = 1.60$, $p = .17$. Step 2: $\Delta R^2 = .19$, $\Delta F(1,418) = 96.85$, $p < .001$. Step 3: $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $\Delta F(1,417) = 7.43$, $p = .007$.

Table 5
Hierarchical Regression Predicting Employee Loyalty

Variable	Step 1			Step 2			Step		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Controls									
Age	0.01	0.004	.08	0.01	0.003	.11 [*]	0.01	0.003	.13 ⁺
Some College	0.03	0.15	.01	-0.10	0.12	-.04	-0.11	0.11	-.05
Associates	0.06	0.15	.03	-0.09	0.12	-.04	-0.10	0.12	-.04
Bachelors	0.05	0.13	.03	-0.08	0.10	-.04	-0.09	0.10	-.05
Graduate	0.06	0.14	.03	-0.07	0.11	-.03	-0.07	0.11	-.03
Emp. Culture				0.66	0.04	.61 ⁺	0.40	0.06	.37 ⁺
Leader Empower.							0.29	0.05	.33 ⁺

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, + $p < .001$. Emp. = Employability, Empower. = Empowerment.
Step 1: $R^2 = .01$, $F(5,419) = 0.68$, $p = .64$. Step 2: $\Delta R^2 = .36$, $\Delta F(1,418) = 242.50$, $p < .001$. Step 3: $\Delta R^2 = .05$, $\Delta F(1,417) = 34.54$, $p < .001$.

Table 6
Hierarchical Regression Predicting Job Satisfaction

	Step 1			Step 2			Step		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β

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Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Controls									
Age	0.01	0.004	.11*	0.01	0.003	.14 ⁺	0.01	0.003	.15 ⁺
Some College	0.21	0.16	.08	0.06	0.12	.02	0.05	0.12	.02
Associates	0.38	0.16	.14*	0.20	0.13	.08	0.20	0.12	.07
Bachelors	0.28	0.14	.13*	0.13	0.11	.06	0.12	0.10	.06
Graduate	0.25	0.15	.10	0.11	0.12	.05	0.11	0.12	.05
Emp. Culture				0.73	0.04	.62 ⁺	0.51	0.06	.43 ⁺
Leader Empower.							0.25	0.05	.26 ⁺

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, + $p < .001$. Emp. = Employability, Empower. = Empowerment.

Step 1: $R^2 = .03$, $F(5,419) = 2.67$, $p = .02$. Step 2: $\Delta R^2 = .38$, $\Delta F(1,418) = 269.46$, $p < .001$. Step 3: $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $\Delta F(1,417) = 22.30$, $p < .001$.

Appendix

Survey Variable Items

Perceived employability culture (Nauta *et al.*, 2009)

1. My organization encourages people to explore new roles and opportunities within this organization
2. My organization wants employees to be adaptable to changing circumstances
3. My organization encourages employees to broaden their skills
4. Experimentation or trying out new things is supported in this organization
5. The many rules and regulations in this organization prevent people from trying out new things [R]
6. My organization gives people the opportunity to perform very different activities

Perceived leader empowerment (Arnold *et al.*, 2000; Konczak *et al.*, 2000)

My leader/supervisor...

1. ...encourages me to use problem-solving methods
2. ...provides me with frequent opportunities to try new skills
3. ...ensures that continuous learning and skill development are priorities in our department
4. ...encourages me to try out new ideas even if there is a chance they may not succeed.
5. ...focuses on corrective action rather than placing blame when I make a mistake.
6. ...helps me understand company goals

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- 7. ...helps me understand how my work contributes to company impact
- 8. ...helps me understand how my work is making a difference in the company
- 9. ...explains how my work group fits into the company
- 10. ...explains the purpose of the company's policies to my work group
- 11. ...explains his/her decisions and actions to my work group

Career growth opportunities (Bedeian *et al.*, 1999)

- 1. I feel that my present job will lead to future attainment of my career goals
- 2. I feel that my present job is relevant to the growth and development of my career

Employee engagement (Rich *et al.*, 2010)

- 1. I am excited about my job
- 2. I am proud of my job
- 3. I feel positive about my job
- 4. While working, my mind is focused on my job
- 5. While working, I pay a lot of attention to my job

Employee loyalty and retention (Matzler and Renzl, 2006)

- 1. I speak positively about this organization when talking to friends and family
- 2. I would like to stay with this organization in the future
- 3. I would immediately change to another organization if I got a job offer [R]
- 4. I would only change to another company if offered my “dream job”
- 5. I feel a great sense of loyalty to this company

Job satisfaction (Hackman and Oldham, 1975)

- 1. Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with my job
- 2. I am generally satisfied with the feeling of worthwhile accomplishment I get from doing this job
- 3. I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job

Work-from-home (Chu *et al.*, 2022).

Company support

- 1. My company provides me with clear guidelines on working from home
- 2. My company keeps me well informed of the work from home arrangement
- 3. My company made every effort (including technological support) to ensure that work from home runs smoothly

Work-life balance

- 1. Working from home can provide me a better balance between personal and work life than when I work at the office
- 2. Working from home makes it possible for me to manage time for both personal matters and work

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Work productivity

1. I notice my productivity is higher when working from home than when working at the office
2. I notice my efficiency is higher when working from home than when working at the office