The Impact of Empowerment on Job Satisfaction Levels: An Applied Research on the Employees of the Five-Star Hotels in Alexandria

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Abstract:

This study has been conducted in order to examine the impact of employees' empowerment on their job satisfaction levels. The research has been applied to a sample of 194 employees in six of the five-star hotels in Alexandria. The survey method was used to collect data, which were statistically processed across two phases. The first phase represented in calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient to examine the relationship between job satisfaction as a dependent variable and empowerment as an independent variable. The second phase was to analyze the linear regression coefficient to identify the characteristics of the relationship (if any), and then to ascertain the extent and direction of the impact of employees' empowerment on their levels of job satisfaction. Overall, the results showed a strong positive relationship between empowerment as an independent variable and job satisfaction as a dependent variable at a significant level (0.05), which resulted in accepting the research hypothesis.

Keywords: Employee Empowerment; Five Star Hotels; Job Satisfaction.

Introduction

Empowerment is a contemporary method which increases workers' control of their business. This modern managerial approach transforms subordinates from mere executors of senior management decisions to be final decision makers on their work and performance. Empowerment provides positive opportunities for working in a democratic environment through a group of staff that capable of making a series of special

decisions that related to their jobs, and thus to be responsible for those decisions (Dabo, 2018).

The idea of empowerment is based on the reduction of success opportunities in business world through individuals who have not been accustomed to innovation and development because of their presence in an administrative system that operates through the mechanism of flow of orders from the higher administrative levels to the lowest levels and without discussion (Arneson and Ekberg, 2006), as empowerment is primarily aimed at upgrading the staff of the organization by providing them with the independence that necessary to make decisions about their tasks to lead better corporate performance (Spear, 2004).

The increasing competition resulting from the globalization of activity in various fields makes intellectual capital one of the most important factors affects the organizations' strategic competition, which cannot be exploited without the opportunity for employees to participate in the conduct of business in their organizations (Degago, 2014).

Empowerment has two main dimensions: The first is the senior management willing to involve staff at the lower administrative levels in the decision-making process. The second dimension is the desire of the staff themselves at the lower managerial levels to participate in decisions. Effective empowerment will only be achieved if those two dimensions come together (Mohapatra and Sundaray, 2018).

This research provides hotel organizations with unlimited opportunities for success by encouraging them to adopt the policy of empowerment by showing the positive impact of empowerment in general and its response to job satisfaction levels of employees in particular by addressing the concept of empowerment in a comprehensive manner that supports analytically the extent and impact of the empowerment of workers on their job satisfaction levels.

BACKGROUND

EMPOWERMENT

Mohapatra and Sundaray (2018) viewed empowerment as a modern administrative approach that evolves simultaneously around the remarkable growth dependence on participatory management. Although some believe that individuals are working only for the money return of their jobs, the practical examination showed that many moral returns

(such as providing an adequate worker autonomy and providing feedback on performance outcomes) may support employee loyalty.

According to Narayan (2002), administrative empowerment refers to "broadening the scope of freedom available to workers in relation to decisions related to their functions". It is a modern management approach based on confidence in the capabilities of employees. The term "empowerment" refers to "the delegation process of authority and responsibility from higher administrative levels in the organizational hierarchy to lower levels". This approach leads to the development and improvement of the staff capabilities in the decision-making process (Arneson and Ekberg, 2006).

According to Dabo (2018), empowerment is the "power-sharing process between superiors and subordinates, which enhances the confidence of subordinates in their ability to perform jobs and their belief that they have significant contributions to the conduct of the work of their organizations". The supremacy of the democratic climate in the work environment is the first and last guarantee of the success of the empowerment. Democracy is a key pillar of empowerment. Therefore, the positive relationship between empowerment and democracy climate can't be denied (Mullins, 2007).

As Degago (2014) points out, empowerment isn't limited to ensuring that the right decisions are made by the right employees, but rather seeking to provide a mechanism under which responsibility for those decisions will be vested in individuals working through effective task forces. The main problem of empowerment absence is related to decisions that made by the higher administrative levels and issued to other levels without any discussion. This doesn't provide opportunities for optimal use of the intellectual resources available to the organization that leads to dissatisfaction feelings among workers in the middle and lower administrative levels and gives a sense of no importance of their role.

Supporting the democracy in the work environment and increasing dependence on participatory management by empowerment lead to the motivation of creative thinking among employees and the provision of consistent and objective standards for self-monitoring of performance, which positively reflects the overall performance of the organization (Mullins, 2007).

According to the dynamic organizational structures of today's business world in a highly competitive and complex work environment,

Mohapatra and Sundaray (2018) argue that depending on traditional motivational methods and only concentration of incentive systems on physical stimulation may not work with the new generation of workers. Therefore, modern business organizations need to adopt new ways to motivate workers depending on modern administrative applications such as career enrichment, participatory management, team building and administrative empowerment.

Despite fears about empowerment in a number of cases, empowering worker to make decisions remains one of the key determinants of improving the overall performance of organization (Dabo, 2018). Thus, business organizations must strive to provide their employees, especially in the middle management, with the needed tools to make decisions and to activate their role in dealing with labor problems as empowerment is critical to the process of organizational change (Zeithaml et al., 2009).

Mohapatra and Sundaray (2018) concluded some factors affecting empowerment in the followings:

- Job Enrichment: It is one of the most important factors of empowerment. Through it, the organization enhances workers, which reflects positively on level of job satisfaction and supports levels of performance.
- Performance Based Reward System: This allows the activation of individual accountability system and promotes competitiveness and continuous improvement.
- Participative Management: A modern administrative approach, replacing the traditional vertical administrative structures and proved ineffective in dealing with non-traditional labor problems. Under this administrative approach, various members of the working group can participate in organizational decision-making.
- The Employees' Suggestion System: Employee suggestion systems and programs are based on the assumption that the workers can contribute to create ideas that are very consistent with their tasks. This system can be activated through the allocation of rewards to individuals with valid proposals.
- Effective Teamwork: It is an important factor for empowering employees where the worker can get the maximum knowledge, skills and abilities by engaging in an effective team that allows the exchange of experiences helps to share ideas and learns some innovative tactics by contacting other team members.

- ▪ Leadership Style: The leadership approach plays a pivotal role in encouraging and supporting the participation of decision-makers, spreading the culture of empowerment among subordinates and motivating employees to take responsibilities for their decisions and subsequent outcomes.

Finally, according to Laschinger et al., (2004), the working environment that promotes and supports empowerment applications among workers will be acceptable compared to its competitors who don't adopt empowerment applications. Briefly, the higher level of support and adoption of empowerment applications leads the higher Job satisfaction levels among workers.

JOB SATISFACTION

Friedman (2000) defined the level of job satisfaction as "the level of positive internal feelings of achievement resulting from doing something", which is perceived as "the level of pleasure that a worker feels as a result of doing important and valuable work".

According to Rowan (2008), psychologists have found clear links between increased levels of job satisfaction among workers from one side, and clarity of goals and the ability to make decisions from the other. The findings of Dukes-Robinson and Esmail, (2014) also indicated that increasing levels of work stress in different types of work environments leads to poor levels of job satisfaction among workers.

Despite the multiplicity of factors that have a strong positive impact on job satisfaction levels among employees; where the importance of financial advantages, career development and promotion, quality of work environment and personal harmony between managers and colleagues are prominent, empowerment continues to play a leading role in raising job satisfaction among employees. According to Bari et al., (2016), empowerment absence reflected in the increasing absenteeism rates, multiple complaints, depression, high labor turnover rates and frequent delays of work.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPOWERMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION

Although the relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction can't be denied, it is necessary to conduct studies that demonstrate the existence and strength of such relationship (Eklund, 2008). By applying to a group of nurses at a number of Canadian hospitals, Sarmiento et al., (2004) have shown that increasing levels of empowerment among nurses

increases their sense of comfort with their jobs. Through study of a group of Cypriot teachers, Zembylas and Papanastasiou, (2005) showed that the level of job satisfaction of the group of teachers was related to the administrative empowerment practices applied in their schools.

In regards of five different service sectors in the Philippines, which are hotel management sector, food and beverage sector, banking sector, telecoms sector and airline sector, Hechanova et al., (2006) examined the relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction on one hand, and empowerment and worker performance on the other hand. The study found a strong positive relationship between empowerment and both job satisfaction and employee performance.

In a study conducted by Ning et al., (2009) on a group of Chinese nurses, the results showed a significant positive relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction. According to the survey conducted by Lautizi et al., (2009) in order to examine the relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction, the results revealed a positive relationship between empowerment and employee satisfaction. In another study of a group of Chinese nurses, Yang and Lee (2009) found that both empowerment and organizational commitment are positively correlated with levels of job satisfaction.

By studying the relationship between empowerment and the various factors of job satisfaction among a group of nursing staff, Engström et al., (2010) found that six of the eight job satisfaction factors were positively related to empowerment. In the same vein, Ahmad and Oranye (2010) conducted a survey of nurses working in educational hospitals in England and Malaysia. According to their findings, Malaysian nurses feel more empowerment and therefore have greater involvement with their health institutions than British nurses. However, job satisfaction among British nurses was higher than that of Malaysian nurses. The results also showed that empowerment doesn't lead to the same results in all countries. Therefore, there is a need to take cultural differences into account in the application of empowerment practices.

Sarwar and Khalid (2011) found that empowerment positively affects employee satisfaction levels through a survey of bank employees operating in the Pakistani city of Lahore. In a study conducted by Pelit et al., (2011) on a group of five-star hotel staff in Turkey, the results showed that both psychological and behavioral empowerment had a strong positive effect on job satisfaction levels.

By examining the relationship between job satisfaction and the four dimensions of empowerment, which are independence, responsibility, information and creativity, for a group of employees worked in hotels, hospitals and educational institutions in Pakistan, Abraiz et al., (2012) found job satisfaction to be strongly positive in all four dimensions of empowerment. The study also revealed that the relationship between job satisfaction and independence is the first rank compared to the relationship of the other three dimensions of empowerment.

Bentley et al., (2013) found a strong positive relationship between empowerment on the one hand, and job satisfaction on the other. The results of empirical analysis that accomplished by Fernandez and Moldogaziev's (2015), based on data from the Federal Employee Survey (FES) for 2010, indicated that empowerment practices, which are sharing information on goals and performance, providing access to knowledge about job and skills and giving discretion to change the way of performed tasks have strong positive effects on employee satisfaction levels.

In a study of a group of university staff in northern Malaysia, Hanaysha and Tahir (2016) found that empowerment has a positive impact on employees' satisfaction levels. By examining the causal relationship between empowerment and satisfaction in a range of private and public hospitals in Malaysia, the results of Choi et al., (2016) indicated that empowerment not only increases workers' satisfaction levels, but also mediates the relationship between transitional leadership.

Depending on the previous discussion, it is clear that the study of empowerment and its relationship to job satisfaction is of paramount importance in various fields in the modern business world. Therefore, there is a growing need for such studies in business organizations like hotels especially in Egypt.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The research aims to achieve a better understanding of the mechanism by which empowerment can be directed in a manner that supports satisfaction levels among employees of business organizations by applying the research to a sample of employees in a number of 5-star hotels located in Alexandria city. The research also aims to exposure to the concept of empowerment in a comprehensive manner that supports the extent and method of empowerment impact on job satisfaction levels.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Based on previous background, the research problem could be illustrated through the following questions:

- Is there a relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction among the research sample؟
- How strong is the relationship (if any) between empowerment and job satisfaction among the research sample؟
- What is the direction of the relationship (if any) between empowerment and job satisfaction among the research sample؟

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Based on the literatures and in line with previous studies, the research formulates its scientific hypothesis as follow: H: Empowerment has a strong positive effect on job satisfaction levels among the research sample.

According to this hypothesis, the research variables can be classified into an independent variable that represented in empowerment and a dependent variable which is the job satisfaction levels. The research seeks to examine the relationship between the two variables to determine their direction and measure their range in order to accept or reject the scientific hypothesis of the research.

The
Independent
variable

Empowerment

The dependent
variable

levels of job
satisfaction
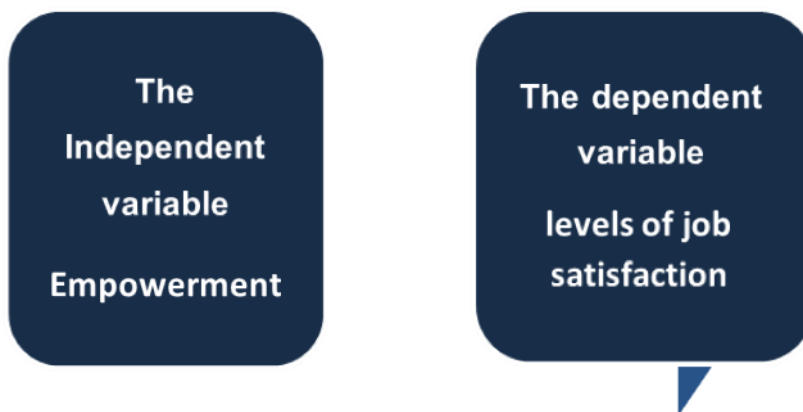
RESEARCH TOOL

Depending on Likert scale, a field research questionnaire was designed and developed for the collection of data from the sample representing the research population. Based on the statistical analysis of the relative weight of questionnaire points, the coefficient of validity of the questionnaire was 92%, which means that the scale is valid. According to

the analysis of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire stability, the results showed that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of empowerment scale points' stability was 0.92, while the value of the Kronbach Alpha coefficient for the job satisfaction scale was 0.90, which strongly indicates the stability of the questionnaire.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The field research was applied to a sample of employees in six of the five-star hotels in Alexandria. While 250 questionnaires were distributed (See table: 1), 209 questionnaires were returned during a period of 23 days from 5th till 28th of August, 2018 (See table: 2). By checking such received questionnaires, only 194 questionnaires were completed and valid to analysis which composed the research sample (See Table: 3). The collected data were analyzed by using PASW statistics version 18. Statistical techniques of descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficient and linear regression correlation coefficient tests were used to achieve the research objective.

Table 1: The total number of distributed questionnaires

Statement	Hotel (1)	Hotel (2)	Hotel (3)	Hotel (4)	Hotel (5)	Hotel (6)	Total
Distributed	56	51	46	39	31	27	250
%	22.4	20.4	18.4	15.6	12.4	10.8	100

Table 2: The total number of returned questionnaires

Statement	Hotel (1)	Hotel (2)	Hotel (3)	Hotel (4)	Hotel (5)	Hotel (6)	Total
Returned	50	42	37	33	28	19	209
%	33.9	20	17.7	15.7	13.4	9	100

Table 3: The total number of research sample

Statement	Hotel (1)	Hotel (2)	Hotel (3)	Hotel (4)	Hotel (5)	Hotel (6)	Total
Research Sample	47	40	35	29	25	18	194
%	24.2	20.6	18	14.9	12.8	9.2	100

RESEARCH RESULTS

EMPOWERMENT RELATIONSHIP TO JOB SATISFACTION

The study used correlation statistical analysis to determine the correlation between the independent variable (empowerment) and the dependent variable (job satisfaction levels). The data in Table (4) show Pearson Correlation Coefficient for the research's variables.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Coefficient Values for the Research Variables

Research Variables	Empowerment	Job Satisfaction	Pearson correlation coefficient Sig.
The Independent Variable (Empowerment)	1.000	-----	0.02
The Dependent Variable (Levels of Job Satisfaction)	0.86	1.000	

According to the data in Table (4), a strong correlation was found between the independent variable of the study (empowerment) and the dependent variable (job satisfaction levels) at a significant level of 0.05, as the results of Pearson correlation analysis showed that the level of correlation between the two variables is 0.02.The results in the same table also indicated the strength of the relationship as Pearson's correlation coefficient was statistically estimated at 0.86, which indicates a strong correlation between the two variables.

TEST OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Statistically, the study depends on regression analysis to determine the acceptance or rejection of the research hypothesis. The analysis indicates that there is an effect of empowerment on the job satisfaction levels among the research sample (See table 5). The analysis of Pearson correlation coefficient monitored the relationship between the 2 variables of the research, but didn't specify the characteristics of such relationship. Therefore, the linear regression coefficient analysis was used to identify the characteristics of the relationship between the two variables and to

verify the extent to which the empowerment affects the satisfaction levels among the research sample (see table 5).

Table 5: Linear Regression Correlation Coefficients of variables

Regression Model	Non-standard coefficients		Standard coefficients	t-Value	Sig.
	Non-Standard Regression Coefficient	Standard error	Standard regression coefficient		
Constant	1.245	0.169	-------	7.366	0.000
Variable part of the model	0.732	0.045	0.856	16.415	0.000
*Correlation coefficient (R) = 0.86 *The coefficient of determination (R^2) = 0.73					

According to the data presented in Table (5), the level of variance in the research sample responses differs according to the level of employee satisfaction resulting from empowerment. In this regard, the coefficient of determination (R2) of variance in the research sample responses is 0.73, which due to the satisfaction resulting from empowerment, as the any increase in the empowerment level by one unit increased the level of job satisfaction of the same employee by 0.732 units, which indicates the acceptance of the research hypothesis.

The Independent variable Empowerment	0.732 →	The dependent variable levels of job satisfaction

The statistical data in Table (6) reflects the acceptability of the research hypothesis because the statistical value for the R2 is 0.73, the non-standard regression coefficient (beta) is 0.732, and the P-Value equal 0.000, which demonstrate strongly the acceptance of the research hypothesis.

Table 6: The test of the research hypothesis

R^2	Non-Standard Regression Coefficient (beta)	P-Value	Acceptance or rejection of the research hypothesis
H: Empowerment has a strong positive effect on job satisfaction levels among the research sample.			
0.73	0.732	0.000	Accepted

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Results showed a strong correlation between empowerment and job satisfaction levels among research sample. This result is matching with results of Sarmiento et al., (2004), Zembylas and Papanastasiou, (2005), Hechanova et al., (2006), Ning et al., (2009), Yang and Lee (2009), Engström et al., (2010), Ahmad and Oranye (2010) Sarwar and Khalid (2011) and Abraiz et al., (2012) who found that the increasing the level of empowerment lead to the increasing level of the job satisfaction among employees. While the extent and strength of such a correlation wasn't examined through the majority of previous researches and studies, this research interested in determining the extent and strength of the correlation between two variables and gives a great evidence of not only the existence of such a correlation, but also of the strength of this correlation that differentiate this research compared to the majority of previous research efforts.

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Research results showed the importance of empowerment in raising levels of satisfaction among employees in hotel industry. Based on research findings, the research recommends the followings:

- To urge the senior managers of hotels to consolidate the concept of empowerment, because of its strong impact on job satisfaction levels and encourage heads of departments and their subordinates to accept the concept of empowerment.
- To support the empowerment of hotel workers and encourage them to express opinions and participate in the drafting of decisions with special attention to train them and support their contribution.
- To re-draw human resource policies in hotels in a way that supports empowerment and its applications.

- To disseminate of the culture and concept of empowerment in hotels, creating a work environment that achieves stability and job security for employees and consider human resources as elements of high importance in achieving the objectives of the hotel organization.
- To provide employees with confidence and independence in the work to encourage the acceptance of empowerment idea, change working methods, develop work procedures and facilitate the implementation of new managerial approaches in order to raise the level of organizational performance.

The research also suggests that researchers should conduct a series of studies to examine the relationship of empowerment to other variables like employment turnover rates, work pressure, employee performance levels, levels of productivity, extent of commitment and organizational citizenship behavior.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The study was applied to a sample of staff from six 5-star hotels in Alexandria city. This means that the re-application of the research on other hotel categories in Alexandria or on the same categories in another city in Egypt would lead to different results. In addition, the application of the research to a representative sample of only 194 employees makes the generalization of the results impossible, as re-application of the research on a larger sample size may lead to different results.

CONCLUSION

The research aimed at verifying the existence of a statistically significant relationship between both empowerment and job satisfaction among the determined sample as a first phase, then at determining the extent and nature of such relationship (if any) as a later phase. The results of the study showed that there is a strong positive relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction among the research sample. According to the research findings, empowerment among employees has a strong positive impact on job satisfaction levels, which means that workers with high job satisfaction levels contribute positively to the success of their work.

Based on the results of the research, the application of empowerment methods will lead to a growing sense of the importance of employees' role and give employees more freedom to perform their tasks, thus act more independently in the performance of tasks and supporting their

participation in making decisions related to their work on the one hand, and in the overall decisions affecting the performance of their organizations on the other hand. Therefore, the top management of hospitality organizations should provide an acceptable level of empowerment for employees that allowing for the success of business and raising job satisfaction levels among them.

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Appendix
The Research Questionnaire

Variables	Statements	Choices				
		Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
Empowerment	Employees in my department are given a great deal of freedom in organizing their work (for example, schedules).					
	Staff in my department has a great deal of autonomy with regard to the management of their assigned functions.					
	In a department, employees enjoy a great deal of freedom in running their business.					
	Staff in my department is heavily involved in the recruitment process of new individuals.					
	Employees in my department are regularly consulted in decisions regarding the direction of technological investments.					
Job Satisfaction	In general, I feel good about my job.					
	I like doing the things that I do at my work.					
	In general, I love working in my hotel.					
	Most days, I feel excited about my work.					