

The Impact of Employee Empowerment on Job Satisfaction

Theoretical Study

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Abstract

In view of rapidly changing business environment, companies must devote greater effort to enhance their capabilities and it must not be forgotten that the success and competing power of the organization depend on committed, highly motivated, satisfied and innovative human resources. While discussion of employee empowerment has been prevalent in the popular literature for many years, however, this concept needs to be an ongoing study by researchers due to rapidly changing business environment.

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between employee empowerment and job satisfaction by reviewing and determining all factors which affect on this relation. For this purpose, a novel and innovative conceptual framework are used and presented. Empowerment is mainly concerned with establishing and building trust between management and employees, and motivating their participation. It is one of the modern concepts which is believed able to improve the human element in the modern organisations to achieve high levels of cooperation, team spirit, self-confidence, innovation, independent thinking and entrepreneurship.

This study is descriptive based on the collection and analysis of results of studies, reports, periodicals and books related to the topic of study in order to investigate the relationships between employee empowerment and job satisfaction

The study also reviewed advantages & disadvantage of employee empowerment, Why Employee Empowerment Fails and Empowerment practices at some modern organizations like Walt Disney Company and TOYOTA Company .

Based on descriptive study, the researcher has develop three main guideline to create effective empowerment which lead to high degree for job satisfaction General Guidelines for Empowering Managers , guidelines for delegation and guidelines for participative leadership

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Employee empowerment

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Introduction

Nowadays many firms like to concentrate on gaining a competitive advantage in the market. The advance equipments, new technology, good marketing strategic, excellent customer services and many other elements can be the factors to build up for the advantages. However, human resource is the most important assets of an enterprise and its success or failure depends on their qualifications and performance .The employees are the repository of knowledge, skills and abilities that can't be imitated by the competitors. Technologies, products and processes are easily imitated by the competitors; however, at the end of the day, employees are the most strategic resource of the company.

A new way of management is employee empowerment or participative management Involving the people responsible for the work processes-the people who know the processes best is where quality starts. Some think that employees work only for financial return. If they are incapable to be an integral part of the organization, this may be true. Allowing employees to have independence and feedback within the organization is what makes the empowerment process successful.

Employee empowerment does not mean that management abandon from its responsibility of performance or for leading the organization. Rather, in an employee empowered organization, management's responsibility comes to create and foster an environment in which it is apparent that employee input is desired and cultivated. The management must trust and communicate with employees

When employees are empowered, their confidence degree and self-reliance will increase. This extra confidence is a good thing because it creates job satisfaction and high levels of productivity. However, in some cases , confidence levels can be taken too far and end up crossing the line into arrogance. Arrogant employees are difficult to deal with, don't take direction well and can become insubordinate. Working in this type of work environment takes its toll on employees and they once again become dissatisfied with their job and productivity levels decrease.

Research problem

Researcher has found through pilot study that many of managers does not recognize about the real importance of employee empowerment and its effect on job satisfaction on the other hand some managers belief that employee empowerment will reduce their authority. Empowerment in the workplace is an often-misunderstood concept. Employee empowerment

is a term that many managers and organizations think they understand, but few actually do, and even fewer really put into practice. so we can formulate research problem . Is there a relationship between employee empowerment and Job Satisfaction?

Research objectives

By reviewing studies, reports, periodicals and books related to the topic of study, researcher can identify the main objectives of this research at the following objectives

- 1- What is the meaning of Job satisfaction?
- 2- What is the meaning of employee empowerment?
- 3- What is the relationship between Job satisfaction and employee empowerment?
- 4- How can improve the relationship between both variables?

Research Methodology

This study is descriptive based on the collection and analysis of results of studies, reports, periodicals and books related to the topic of study in order to investigate the relationships between employee empowerment and job satisfaction

Literature Review

Job satisfaction definitions: Job satisfaction has been defined as:

A pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job (1)

An affective reaction to one's job.(2)

An attitude towards one's job (3)

Weiss (2002) has argued that job satisfaction is an attitude but points out that researchers should clearly distinguish the objects of cognitive evaluation which are affect (emotion), beliefs and behaviours. .(4) This definition suggests that we form attitudes towards our jobs by taking into account our feelings, our beliefs, and our behaviors.

The satisfaction or utility that a worker receives from employment. Job satisfaction might result from the working environment (friendly co-workers, supportive boss) or from the type of work performed (playing sports, creating artwork, accomplishing goals). Satisfaction generated by a job is part of the "total compensation" an employee receives, meaning workers with more job satisfaction are often willing to accept a lower monetary wage payment.

Job satisfaction describes how content an individual is with his or her job. A person's general attitude towards their job. the feelings or 'affective response' someone experiences in a job role.

The definitions of empowerment itself vary widely across scholars. The concept of empowerment has received increasing attention by academics and practitioners interested in the question of human resources. Employee empowerment is creating a working environment

where an employee is allowed to make his own decisions in specific work-related situations. The decisions can be big or small, and the size and effect of the decision is up to the employer. The logic behind employee empowerment is to increase the employee's responsibility, to build employee morale and to improve the quality of your employee's work life. Ideally, when an employee feels vested in an organization, he will be more productive, loyal and more confident.” (5)

Empowerment has become an important issue within Contemporary organizations .There is real supports and encouragement to give the freedom to get a job done and the authority to achieve organizational goals . Recently, the usefulness of empowerment has started to become recognized in the different environment of Project Management (6). Rutland discusses its importance both between companies, leading towards an increase in structures such as partnering (which implies a level of trust between the companies), and, more relevantly to this paper, for individuals within a firm: he discusses the importance of employee motivation as a differentiating factor between companies (7).

When employees are fully engaged, they become absorbed in what they are doing. They are mentally and physically stimulated by work challenges.

Researcher can summarize Empowerment at the following points

- Empowerment encompass on enlargement of an employee’s job duties by giving them the Independence and authority of decision making about their own job without approval of his immediate supervisor.
- Empowerment is the level of responsibility and authority given to an employee.
- By empowerment, the employees are motivated and enthusiast to utilize their skills, abilities and creativity by accepting accountability for their work.
- Empowerment occurs when employees are well trained , provided with all the appropriate and relevant information and the best possible tools, fully involved in key decisions, and are fairly rewarded.
- Empowerment involve managers and employees working together to create specific goals and expectations within agreed-upon boundaries.

Elements of Empowerment and job satisfaction (8)

There are three essential elements for empowering which lead to job satisfaction:

Accuracy and Clarity. The first step in empowering employees is to clarify objectives and expectations. People can only achieve the progress at work if they have a complete picture of what results they are expected to deliver. With empowerment the role of a manager shifts from closely supervising what people are doing to holding them accountable for results. This means that managers need to clearly define expected outcomes and communicate them frequently so that everyone understands their responsibilities.

Encourage and support. The second step in empowering others is to support them by supplying the aids and resources they need to progress and removing any obstacles that may hinder progress. Managers empower their people by serving their needs. This requires not

only providing the time, resources, and encouragement necessary for attaining goals, but also actively working to minimize barriers to success.

Autonomy and freedom is considered a last point , empowering people means giving them the complete autonomy they need to do their job . Once employees know what they are expected to do and have the support they need to do it, the best thing a manager can do is to get out of their way. Trusting employees to get their work done however they choose is fundamental for creating positive work environments.

Advantages & disadvantage of employee empowerment

Many organizations seek to unleash staff potential by empowering their employees. However there are some of disadvantage when it comes to empowering employees stands for increased participation and when there are many people involved in decision making, the process certainly slows down. Inputs and feedback starts pouring from each side. It takes time to verify the accuracy of measurements which means that decision making will be slowed down. Empowerment bring many positive result for the company like, quicker response to customer, communication and teamwork, employees participate in creating their own goals; increased employee contribution; increased respect among employees secondary to teamwork; increased power equals lower absenteeism and better productivity; employees have more satisfying work; an increased depth of competence among employees secondary to cross-training; less conflict with administration and managers; fewer middle management positions means decreased cost to the company. Employees are more likely to agree with changes if they participate in decision making.

There needs to be a balance between empowerment and traditional management. The manager of the department needs to be sensitive to the employees' needs and the company's needs and to know how to use a management style that will work best to achieve desired outcomes.

Researcher can summarize advantages & disadvantage of employee empowerment at the following points

General advantages of empowerment and involvement:

- Increased job satisfaction
- Effective Team work
- Increased employee participation
- Reduces Turnover rates.
- Increases trust in the organization
- Lower absenteeism degree
- Better productivity and profitability
- Less conflict as employees will more likely agree with changes if they can get involved in the decision making process

Disadvantages of empowerment:

- Misuse of the newly acquired power by the employees

- Managers may not want to divide power with someone they look down upon
- Managers afraid from losing their own jobs and special privileges in the system. empowerment is for team workers - employees that do not value team success or choose to focus only on individual success are likely to be disinterested or even to resist
- Some employees may not be knowledgeable enough to make good business decisions
- Too much responsibility on some employees
- Increased time in groups or committees can be distracting and take time away from regular job

Why Employee Empowerment Fails (9)

There are a variety of possible reasons for the lack of greater empowerment in companies and the relatively low level of success.

- Empowerment represents a significant change in most organizations. managers think that they are able to look at bigger picture goals and determine what of the many demands on their time they will make a priority. Good empowerment requires that managers give up some of their control to employees. Managers may be afraid to delegate responsibility and power. Manager may be afraid that if subordinates fail to do work properly, the manager's performance will suffer. Some managers are threatened by programs that would reduce their power and exalted status as heroic leaders (and their claim to a disproportionate share of the profits). Managers need organizational support and training in empowering leadership behaviours in order to make empowerment efforts succeed.
- Employees Empowerment consume time and effort, it may take considerable time to shift from a command and control culture to employee empowerment concept. If an organization has not be actively create employee empowerment culture, it may consume time and effort before employees start to respond. Often the first efforts and communications are met with employee derision and mockery. To be successful, empowerment must be seen as a long-term program of employee participation and involvement.
- Employees may resist empowerment. Decision making and influence are part of the political power system in organizations. Employees may have been accustomed over the years to follow orders, not participate with management. they fear the increased levels of responsibility and accountability so Managers might assume that employees already have the required skills to start a good empowerment program

How to apply empowerment to increase job satisfaction and productivity among employee

In order to empower employees, four different factors are Important. Those different factor work as an element to empower employee, which will give the employees space to act more independently in accomplishing their jobs those are: information, knowledge, power and rewards. (10)

- **Information:** In any organizations where the employees are fully empowered, no information about the company is held secret for employee. That's why employees must receive every information about the performance of the company.
- **Knowledge:** Before and after empowering employees every company need to give training for increasing knowledge and skills of employee. Which build up their problem solving decision-making capability. As by having power of knowledge and skills, an employee can be able to contribute to the goals of the company.
- **Power:** To make substantial decisions, employees must have the power by giving up some of the power traditionally held by management, which means managers also must take on new roles, knowledge and responsibilities.
- **Rewarding:** The employees need to get bonus on the basis their performances and company's performance. The employees can be more committed towards the company by having good appreciation ,engagement with growth, recognition and trust

Comments: Job satisfaction will increase definitely by taking in the consideration the importance of above factors.

Empowerment Strategies

These are some of the main strategies which can be benefited in employee empowerment:
(11)

Changing nature of work definition: The content of the work (to increase activities the required of work) or authorization by widening the meaning and framework (determining new jobs which suitable for vision and mission of organization); by enrichment method, to increase authority of employee and meaning of job. By enlargement the span of control, to facilitate authority transition from managers to subordinates

By increasing the ability of the managers (with effective training programmes, recruitment system), to facilitate and encourage authority sharing managers with their subordinates because the concept of empowerment depends upon power that can expand

Empowerment practices at some organizations

• TOYOTA COMPANY

Toyota Motor Company considered as a good example for Employee Empowerment. It empowers some of its employees to identify and solve obstacles occurring during product assembly. An automobile coming off Toyota's assembly line with a paint defect is seen as an

opportunity to delve into the root cause of the defect, as opposed to merely fixing the defect and passing it onto distributors for resale (12)

Toyota's company and Employee Empowerment concept

- Toyota organized their workers by forming teams and gave them the responsibility and training to do many specialized tasks. Teams are also given responsibility for housekeeping and minor equipment repair. Each team has a leader who also works as one of them on the line.
- To eliminate product defects: they must be discovered and corrected as soon as possible. Since workers are in the best position to discover a defect and to immediately fix it, they are assigned this responsibility. If a defect cannot be readily fixed, any worker can halt the entire line by pulling a cord
- Toyota operators are assigned primary responsibility for basic equipment maintenance since they are in the best position to detect signs of malfunctions. Maintenance specialists diagnose and fix only complex problems, improve the performance of equipment, and train workers in maintenance

Results of Employee Satisfaction Survey at Toyota's company

Toyota believes that the greatest assets a company has are its people and that customer satisfaction cannot be achieved without employee satisfaction. The employee satisfaction survey conducted in FY2010 on administrative and engineering employees (as shown in fig:1) revealed an affirmative response rate of over 70% regarding "satisfaction with company life" and "feeling that one's job is rewarding." (13)

Comments

I believe that Toyota's company emphasizing that primary goal of employee empowerment is to give workers a greater voice in decisions about work-related matters.

• WALT DISNEY COMPANY

The Walt Disney Company has invested amounts of time to learn their workers on the Disney Company's mission and values. Employees are empowered when working at Walt Disney Company due to many different educational options delivered to employees. Disney fosters an employee-learning environment to empower employees by making use of Disney Dimensions, an executive progression program and Disney Way, a showcase explaining the different Disney business designs offered to supervisors, management, or leadership development. This employee training helps develop computer skills and talents utilized at Disney. According to the president of the Walt Disney Internet Group, Disney drives individuals to increase focus and concentrate more on ways to succeed within the organization. (14)

Comments

Disney provides many numerous extras and benefits to its employees which will affect definitely of employee satisfaction.

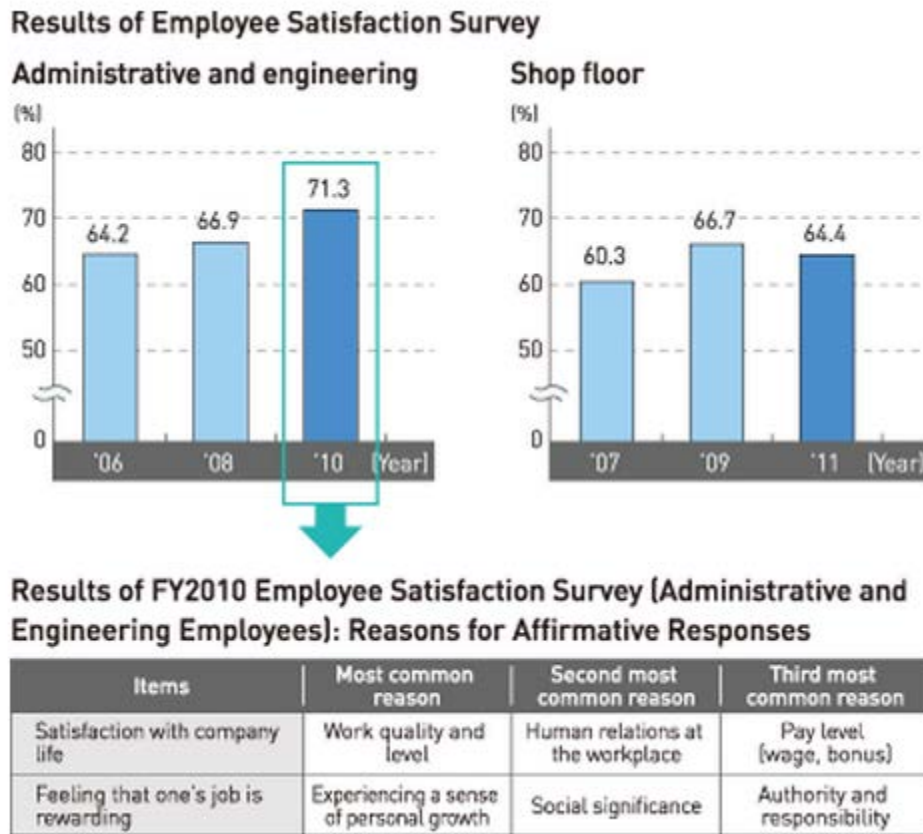


Figure 1: Results of Employee satisfaction Survey

Researcher Views

Researcher simply will summarize empowerment at the following points:

Human resource is considered a most valuable asset for any organization. The employees are the source of knowledge, skills and abilities that can't be imitated by the competitors. Technologies, products and processes are easily imitated by the competitors; however, at the end of the day, employees are the most strategic resource of the company.

Many managers feel that by empowering employees, they will lose their responsibility to manage and control the organization. This is not the case. Empowerment is actually a culmination of many of the ideas and tenets of employee satisfaction that are discussed and analyzed frequently in a variety of books and periodicals focused on the subject

Employee empowerment is a two sided coin. For employees to be empowered the management leadership must want and believe that employee empowerment makes good

business sense and employees must act. Let us be clear about one thing immediately, employee empowerment does not mean that management no longer has the responsibility to lead the organization and is not responsible for performance. If anything the opposite is true. Stronger leadership and accountability is demanded in an organization that seeks to empower employees. This starts with the executive leadership, through all management levels and includes front line supervisors. It is only when the entire organization is willing to work as a team that the real benefits of employee empowerment are realized.

For any company in order to enjoy the returns from employee empowerment the leadership must resolutely work to create the work environment where it is obvious to all that employee empowerment is desired, wanted and cultivated. Management's responsibility is to create the environment for employee empowerment which lead to job satisfaction

Empowering employees leads to positive results for employees, their managers, and their organizations also lead to organizational encouragement of entrepreneurial traits and prompts employees to make good decisions, take action, and foster their belief that they can take control of their own destinies. This belief leads to self-motivation and a sense of independence that is translated into greater loyalty and extra effort for the organization. Empowered employees come to believe that they control their own success through their efforts and hard work, which in turn benefits the success of the entire institution.

To sum up, if an employer needs a highly motivated, innovative, productive human resource, the importance of job satisfaction and organizational commitment should not be forgotten. It is obvious that high job satisfaction and organizational commitment will avoid turnover. Every employee has different kinds of needs and expectations and it is impossible to satisfy every need and expectation of the employees. Both employee and employer should try to generate a working condition that they will work in a happy, motivated and productive atmosphere to reach the certain goals.

Researcher proposal

By reviewing studies, reports, periodicals and books related to the topic of study researcher has develop Three main guideline to create effective empowerment which lead to high degree for job satisfaction

General Guidelines for Empowering Managers

- Involve people in decisions that affect them
- Clarify goals and objectives and explain how the work is related
- Delegate responsibility and authority for important work activities
- Take into consideration individual differences in ability and motivation
- Provide access to relevant information
- Provide the resources needed for new work responsibilities
- Realign management systems consistent with empowerment principles
- Remove bureaucratic constraints and unnecessary controls
- Express confidence and trust in people
- Provide coaching and advice on a timely basis
- Encourage and support initiative and problem solving
- Recognize important contributions and achievements

- Ensure that rewards are commensurate with new responsibilities
- Ensure accountability for the ethical use of power

Guidelines for Delegation

- What to delegate
 - Tasks that can be done better by a subordinate
 - Tasks that are urgent but not high priority
 - Tasks that are relevant to a subordinate's career
 - Tasks of appropriate difficulty
 - Both pleasant and unpleasant tasks
 - Tasks that are not central to the manager's role
- How to delegate
 - Specify responsibilities clearly
 - Provide adequate authority and specify limits of discretion
 - Specify reporting requirements
 - Ensure subordinate acceptance of responsibility
 - Inform others who need to know
 - Monitor progress in appropriate ways
 - Arrange for the subordinate to receive necessary information
 - Provide support and assistance, but avoid reverse delegation
 - Make mistakes a learning experience

Guidelines for Participative Leadership

- How to diagnose decision situations
 - Evaluate how important the decision is
 - Identify people with relevant knowledge or expertise
 - Evaluate likely cooperation by participants
 - Evaluate likely acceptance without participation
 - Evaluate whether it is feasible to hold a meeting
 - How to encourage participation
 - Encourage people to express their concerns
 - Describe a proposal as tentative
 - Record ideas and suggestions
 - Look for ways to build on ideas and suggestions
 - Be tactful in expressing concerns about a suggestion
 - Listen to dissenting views without getting defensive
 - Try to utilize suggestions and deal with concerns
 - Show appreciation for suggestions

Facilitating Conditions for Empowerment

- **Organizational structure:** Decentralized and low formalization;
- customized, highly differentiated product or service

- **Organizational culture:** Flexibility, learning, and participation; fair, constructive judgment of ideas; reward and recognition; mechanisms for developing new ideas; an active flow of ideas; and shared vision
- **Job design:** non routine and challenging tasks; flexible technology; repeated customer interactions in a continuing relationship
- **Autonomy:** Employees have freedom in deciding what work to do and how to do it; employees have a sense of control over work.

Conclusion

This study focused on employee empowerment and how empowerment is related to job satisfaction. The aim of empowerment to create a culture where employee have freedom to express themselves and have the liberty to make decisions about how they work.

Empowerment or participative management is one of the most effective ways of helping employees to utilize their creative abilities to improve their performance within the organization they work for. In order to create effective Empowering employees it is require clear communication channels . This will require management to invest in increased amounts of time communicating to employees and allowing for feedback. In addition, it will require that management honestly evaluate the communication styles and methods that are being used in the institution to ensure the most efficient processes possible.

Employees empowerment play an important role in increasing the company's performance. Researchers suggest different points of view on the problem of democratizing the working environment. Some of them state that it is very important to create a democratic environment in the company and follow principles of employee involvement. They emphasize that as long as people in the company are motivated to think creatively, influence their own schedule, provide the monitoring of their own performance and participate in the activities of the company, they have much higher performance. They argue that it is very important to empower employees.

However, there are different points of view on the employee involvement in companies. Some researchers mark that the policy of empowering employees is not very beneficial for companies because it has many disadvantages. Besides, many specialists have come to a conclusion that employee involvement is nothing more than a myth. In reality, no employees are involved in decision-making in the company.

Investigations have led us to the conclusion that employee involvement in companies is always aimed at the increase of the company's performance. Companies practice any kind of employee involvement in the process of decision making in order to enable the employees to get a full view of the company's operations and participate in different important activities. As employees get more informed about the activities of the company and get tasks with great responsibility, they are going to perform at a higher level. Due to the increase of the employees' performance, the performance of the company will also increase.

Managers of different companies apply some of the concepts of employee involvement. However, they do not involve employees in the decision-making process in order to increase

the satisfaction of employees from the job which they are doing. This might be the consequence of the actions taken by the management though. Nevertheless, managers are going to deny employees of all of the decision-making power if it is going to contradict with the successful performance of the company. Since the major goal of the management of the company is the increase of shareholders' wealth, they are going to involve employees in the decision-making process only as long as it helps the organization to reach the highest level of performance.

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