

The Impact of Psychological Empowerment on the Effectiveness of Performance: A Field Study on Three Higher Education Institutions in Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the concept of psychological empowerment and clarify its various dimensions and their impact on the effectiveness of performance in the higher education sector. The study has been applied to a sample of 185 staff members working at 3 universities in Saudi Arabia. This study found that the degree of practice of staff members to the dimensions of psychological empowerment exceeds the middle degree, while the level of performance in these universities was high, it showed the existence of a significant effect of the dimensions of psychological empowerment (competence, impact) on the effectiveness in performance. This is while the other two dimensions (self-determination, meaning) do not significantly affect the effectiveness of performance. The study also pointed to the existence of significant differences between the practice of faculty members to psychological empowerment according to the variables (experience, scientific rank, college), and also indicates there are significant differences in the levels of effectiveness performance, according to the variables (marital status, college).

KEYWORDS

Effectiveness, Empowerment, Higher Education, Performance, Psychological, Saudi Arabia, Universities

INTRODUCTION

In the light of the rapid changes in the higher education environment and the pressures associated with global competition many universities have focused their attention on the human element to achieve excellence and success. Whether this element is responsible for the failure or success of an institution has resulted in attention being paid to the human element and it is more managed, directed and motivated than other matters relating to money, technical and organizational structures. It has emerged among the topics on the dimensions of the human subject of empowerment, as one of the concepts of modern management in the third millennium. Psychological empowerment is a process which has given faculty members the powers, authorities and responsibilities and enabled them to participate in information, training development, the planning and control tasks of their performance in order to reach positive results in their jobs, and achieve individual and institutional goals. The introduction of

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psychological empowerment is one of the effective ways to improve service quality, achieve labour sectors satisfaction, increased performance and the job satisfaction of faculty members. Such staff member empowerment cannot be undertaken without the faith of the leaders of its importance. Its benefits are often needed to develop individuals' and raise their skills to solve problems and confront situations, and give them the opportunity to accept the challenge.

Individuals within institutions are the primary factor for survival in an environment that is highly competitive and also a major part in the productivity of the institution. Though within most institutions, personnel have reported feeling undervalued, isolated, exploited and dehumanized. With regard to these factors, one of the relevant techniques to improve the efficiency of faculty members and the best use of capabilities and capacities of groups and individuals in line with institutional goals is empowerment. Human resource empowerment is the new boost for a booming and growing workplace. The productivity of creativity and human capital energy are an institution's most relevant resource. In order to be successful in the current competitive environment, organizations require creativity, energy, knowledge and ideas of every human resource, directly from front line personnel up to the high-ranking position among the executive (Ambad, 2012).

Performance inside any institutions could be affected by situational factors, such as the characteristics of the job, the organization and co-workers and by dispositional factors. Dispositional variables can be described as personality characteristics, needs, attitudes, preferences and motives that result in a tendency to react to situations in a predetermined (predisposed) manner. Job performance is influenced by aptitude, need for achievement, self-regard, locus of control, affective temperament and the interaction between these constructs (Rothman & Coetzer, 2003).

The results of research of (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012) indicated that perceived organizational support and psychological empowerment both positively affected organizational citizenship behavior. Perceived organizational support did not positively influence job performance. Psychological empowerment and organizational citizenship behavior positively influenced job performance. Organizational behavior acted as a partial mediator between perceived organizational support and job performance, as well as between psychological empowerment and job performance. A number of suggestions on theory and managerial implementation were proposed.

Many researchers note that psychological empowerment and its measurements relate essentially with job performance (Fong & Snape, 2015). The results of the research of (Liden et al., 2000) found a relationship between psychological empowerment and positive job performance. Also (Seibert et al., 2004) found that there is a relationship between psychological empowerment, job performance and work satisfaction.

Empirical research varies in the definition of empowerment (Spreitzer, Kizilos, & Nason, 1997). Conger and Kanungo (1988) mentioned that the increase in attention on the topic of empowerment is necessary due to the limited understanding of the empowerment construct and its underlying processes. Conger and Kanungo (1988) also conducted a study which provides an analytical treatment of the empowerment construct and they define empowerment as a process of increasing employee feelings of self-efficacy within an organization.

Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) study on cognitive elements of empowerment was an interpretive model of intrinsic task motivation. In their research, they identified four cognitions or task assessments as the basis for empowerment. The four cognitions are impact, competence, meaningfulness and choice. The combination of the four cognitions reflects an active orientation to a work role which indicates how an individual wishes to shape his or her work role or context.

Spreitzer (1995a) make some improvement on the psychological empowerment construct model by extending and operationalizing the model of four empowerment components previously developed by Thomas and Velthouse (1990). Spreitzer (1995a) renamed the meaningfulness dimension as "meaning" and the choice dimension as "self-determination". Furthermore, the study also defines empowerment as reflecting a personal sense of control in workplace, as manifested in four beliefs about the person work environment relationship in four cognitions, namely meaning, competence,

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