

Chapter 7

Explaining Empowering Employees by Grounded Theory Methodology: In Particular for Health Services

ABSTRACT

This chapter initially studies the concept of empowerment. Then, it moves on to a review of empowerment approaches, strategies, and processes. It also provides an overview of the application of the grounded theory in employee empowerment, and empowerment in nursing and the health services in particular. It is concluded that empowerment as a dynamic process results from the interrelationship between personal, culture, and organizational factors. To put it in other words, it is required in the process of empowerment that both the structure of the organization and the employees' perception of themselves and their roles undergo changes. This chapter provides discussion on factors influencing employee empowerment, such as supportive manager, employee resistance to challenge managers, communication without dialogue to recognize employees' viewpoints, manager's lack of visibility and employees' inability to interact with the manager, as well as organizational contexts such as budget, education, increasing authority and self-confidence, and participative decision-making.

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INTRODUCTION

Most developing countries, regarding the problems of investing in the human resources, have now realized that their backwardness is not only due to a lack of physical capital, but also lack of human capital such as technical and professional skills, and lack of sufficient attention to sustainable growth. It is associated with the way of industrialization and development of these countries. Since the shortage or weakness of human resources leads to a reduction in the productive capacity of the economy and as a result, the economy will not be able to make full and proper use of the available physical capital. For this reason, many economists believe that concentrating and enhancing the vigor of human capital is a more important factor than concentrating on the physical capital during the economic development of developing countries. In fact, economic and social progress is impossible without reforming and improving the quality of human resources. Studies show that investing in this area is one of the most important factors that guarantees the growth of developed countries.

According to economists, investment in education or human capital is an important source of economic growth. Output, over the past 40 years, has been increased about 3.5 percent a year. The labor productivity growth, which is considered to be the major driver of increases in wages and standards of living, has measured about 2.4 percent per year. Education contributed to this growth, as estimated in different countries, between 13 and 30 percent of the total increase. Regardless of the extent of the contribution of education to growth in the past, the investment in other forms of capital may result in increased investment in human capital, due to the emergence of a post-industrial, knowledge-based economy (Sawhill et al., 2006). As economists asserted, physical capital in each country is regarded as the most important constituent of productive wealth. However, in the mid 1990's, the World Bank's assessment indicated that physical capital on average accounts only for 16% of total wealth, natural wealth for 20% and more importantly human capital for 64% and the potential investment on human capital is duly recognized. Based on this large scale recognition of the significance of human capital, the Governments are naturally forced to pay more attention and give due importance for education as an essential component of human development (Sethunath, 2009).

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