FACTORS AFFECTING AND AFFECTED BY EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT
Employee empowerment refers to the powers assigned to an employee and makes him to take part in the decision making process in an organization. This paper talks about the both factors affecting and affected by the employee empowerment. Among the both factors influenced and influenced employee empowerment, work performance has a dual role. The Study has shown that the employee empowerment and work performance are both positively and negatively related. So, in order to avoid negative relationship, the suggestions such as proper executing of employee empowerment on deserving employees and avoid those hindrances for the employees in performing their jobs and execute their powers were provided.

Keywords: Employee Empowerment, Work Performance

INTRODUCTION
Employee empowerment is a term which refers to those degrees of freedom and independence provided by the organization. This employee enfranchisement term talks about the powers that are vested within them for performing work effectively. The main purpose of providing such freedom to the employees is to make them committed towards their job and to get the work done more efficiently.

This employee empowerment is affected by certain demographic profile of the respondents like age, experience, marital status and number of dependents. While on the other hand, the employees’ decision making powers’ was influenced by the organizational support, family support, workplace relationships, skills of the employees and on-the-job training. Whereas this variables have some impact on the outcome variables such as work performance, worklife balance, Job satisfaction and attrition.

BRIEF REVIEW OF STUDIES
Indradevi (2012) have made a research study on the effect of psychological empowerment of the employees on the work performance and in turn on the job satisfaction. The data is collected from 200 software employees in Chennai. The Study reported that there remains a higher degree of positive relationship between psychological empowerment and with that of Job satisfaction. Muhammad Saqib Nawaz et al. (2014) have studied about the impact of employee training and empowerment on the development of creative skills of the employees through employee engagement. The research had found out that the employee engagement mediates partially the relationship between employee creativity and HR practices. Rajalingam et al. (2015) had founded out that employee empowerment stimulators such as sharing of information, Power knowledge and rewards obtained from the work have a significant relationship between the employees’ performance on the job.
Kuldeep Singh (2015) have studied about the effect of worker’s participation in management (wpm) on Job satisfaction and productivity of the sugar industry employees in Haryana. The research concluded that there is a significant difference between the wpm and productivity of the employees and also found out that there is a significant difference between wpm and job satisfaction of the workers. Daljeet Singh Wadhwa (2015), have said that there is a positive relationship between employee empowerment and Job satisfaction and with that of organizational commitment. The study also reported that there is a positive and direct association between the organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

RESEARCH GAP

From the literature review it is very clear that there are many empirical investigations like those conducted by the authors namely Haznain Raza et al., (2015); Suresh D et al, (2015); Muogbo U S et al., (2013); Haleema Zia et al., (2014); and Gaudreau Meyerson et al., (2012) review papers of Linda Honold (1977) and JIJ Wagner et al. (2010) and Quantitative studies on employee empowerment such as those done by Greasely k. et al. (2005) and Hardy C. et al. (1998) all does not speaks about the factors influencing employee empowerment and factors affected by empowerment variable both on the single study. So, in order to fulfill this gap, these both factors affected and affecting employee empowerment has been studied in this paper.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study is to identify the factors affecting the employee empowerment and those components which are influenced by the empowerment factor. Along with these the effect of these factors on employee empowerment and vice versa must be founded out.

METHODOLOGY

This study is an historical research and it is qualitative in nature. Data for the study were gathered from the past studies which were done on the employee empowerment i.e., secondary sources such as newspapers, journals and magazines.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The Study has the following limitations

1. The study is based on the secondary data and no primary data is collected.

2. Since, the study is Qualitative based on past researches, there are chances of being wrong information.

APPROACHES OF EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

The employees are generally empowered by the organization through three different ways namely organizational structural, psychological and critical incident technique approaches. All these were the techniques adopted by the management in order to make the employees dedicated for their work. The above mentioned approaches were explained in detail as provided below. They are

1. Organizational structural Approach

This is a type of technique in which an organization changes its policies and practices for the principle of empowering their employees. For instance, for making participative management, the organization changes its leadership styles from authoritative to employee-favorable styles. Once the leadership style is changed, there might be many chances of empowerment of the employees.

2. Psychological Method

This results in changing the attitudes and mindset of the employees working in an organization. The thoughts of the employees can be altered by motivating and encouraging them to take up more work by adding more responsibilities to them. This is possible only through appropriate powers on the hands
of the employees. When once the employees are given more powers, they feel responsible and become much committed towards their work.

3. Critical incident process

Critical incident is a system in which the human resources of the organization were given with very real time industrial scenario for improving their decision making skills. In such way, based on their reactions for the incidents, the powers will be provided to the employees.

FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

The common factors affecting the employee empowerment were demographic profile of the respondents namely age, experience, marital status and family dependents, other factors that influences the employee empowerment includes organizational policies and support, family support, workplace relationships, rewards and recognition, workload, health of the employees and his family members, work performance, employees’ skillset, on-the-job training and career aspirations.

1. Demographic Profile

The study about population is known as demography. Demographic factor presents information with regard to the personal information of the respondents starting from age to income of the entire population. As per the current study, the factors like age, experience, marital status and family dependents influences the employee empowerment factor.

Higher the age of the employees, more will be the probabilities of the employees to be empowered is a general myth prevailing among the employees in an organization. But the real fact is that based on the responsibilities of the employees working, the employees are empowered irrespective of their age. Similarly, more experienced staffs of a business entity are empowered highly in an organization. Hence it could be said that there remains a positive relationship with age and employee empowerment.

Along with this we could also project that there is an affirmative association between experience and employee empowerment.

Marital status has a polarizing affiliation with the employee empowerment as both married and unmarried employees are being empowered with necessary powers. So, in order to find out the association within marital statuses and employee empowerment experimental investigations has to be done. Family dependents have an inverse association with the concept of empowerment since, more number of dependents results in chances of being less empowered in an organization.

2. Organizational policies and support

Powers are assigned to the employees based on the concerned organization’s policies. If the policies of the management are not allowing any kind of allocation of any powers to the employees other than their ordinary course of job, then there will be no possibility for empowering the employees. On the other side, the organization allows their employees to take part in the decision making which is designed as per the boundaries of the policies. Therefore, it could be said that the organization policies has a constructive alliance with the workers’ empowerment.

Though the organizational policies allow the employees being empowered by the management, it is the supportive role of the business that determines the empowerment of the employees. If the organization is not encouraging with regard to the laying powers to the employees, then the employees will find difficulties in executing the additional powers laid down to them. So, along with the business policies, organizational support is necessary for the effective implementation of the employee empowerment in the real time business activities.

3. Family support

Family plays an equal role as similar to that the organization does. Every working professional has two domains namely work and family which interferes with each other, so it is vital to have the family support for effective execution of powers by the employees. When there are issues on the family, it
will reflect on the employees’ empowerment negatively. Thus, we can conclude that family support and employee empowerment are significantly correlated.

4. Workplace relationships
Generally, the workplace relationships talks about the associations that exists between the employees and their co-workers, peers, superiors and subordinates in an organization. When the workers are having proper interactions among them, then the employees could be empowered very easily.

5. Rewards and recognition
Rewards and recognition on this context refers to the income and appreciation for the work done by an employee. Income and fame plays a crucial part on deciding the level of empowerment for the employees. Generally, the employees will be assigned necessary powers only when their talents are recognized and rewarded. So, we can say that there is an indirect connection between rewards and employee empowerment. On the other side, there is a direct impact of recognition on this enfranchisement of the workers.

6. Workload and responsibilities
Employees’ workload has a strong effect on the employee’s empowerment. Practically speaking, with more workload comes greater responsibilities and these tough tasks could be allotted only to the dedicated employees in an organization. Higher the workload more would be the likelihood of being empowered among the workers.

7. Health of the employees and their family members
Employees’ health has a direct impact on the execution of their allotted powers because they as per the practical industrial situation an employee can execute his extra powers and share his opinion only when he is fit enough both mentally and physically. While on the other hand, the family dependents’ health has an indirect rapport with employee empowerment. For looking after their family members’ health, the employees spends time and they lack concentration on the job which results on the empowerment of the workers. So, it could be said that there is a positive relationship between employees’ health and their family’s health with that of the employee empowerment.

8. Work Performance
Based on the performance of the employees on their job, their empowerment level would be decided. If the employees execute his job as per the fulfillment of the expectations of their management, then there will be more power allotted to the employees. While, on the other hand the workers who were performing very low could not be empowered. So, this work performance has a significant association with the employee engagement (Rajalingam, 2015; Gaudreau Meyerson et al. 2012; Muogbo U S, 2013;).

9. Employee’s skillset
The skill an employee has drives him to work hard and as a result the employees would be empowered. When the employees are highly skilled, then there are more possibilities for being acquiring more authorities and responsibilities in an organization. It is quite reverse in the case of low skilled workers because semi-skilled and unskilled human resources could not produce a greater output. So, they are not empowered.

10. On-the Job Training
Training refers to imparting necessary knowledge and skills required for the employees to perform their job. Effectively and extremely trained employees will easily be accumulated with more powers. It is due to the fact, because the well taught staffs in an organization will perform more successfully with their tasks (Muhammad Saqib Nawaz et al. 2014).
11. Career Aspirations

Ever person has different career interests and aspirations. Similarly, in an organization the employees aspire to achieve certain positions at top level from their current position. So in order to progress in their career the employees works hard and perform well and as a result the organization adds additional powers to the existing employees. From this is very clear that there is a constructive impact of career aspirations on the employee empowerment.

12. Organizational commitment

When the employees in an organization are very much committed towards their job, then their performance on the job will automatically rises. This shows that there is a positive relationship between organizational commitment and work performance (Daljeet Singh Wadhwa, 2015). When the work performance increases, it automatically results in the organizational commitment of the employees.

FACTORS INFLUENCED BY EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

Apart from being affected by above factors, there are few main factors which were influenced by the employee empowerment variable. Such variable includes work performance, Worklife balance, job satisfaction and attrition.

1. Work Performance

Work performance not only affects employee empowerment but it is also influenced by it. In certain cases, the employee empowerment is decided based on the performance of the employees For instance, when the employees performs excellently above the standards expected then in order to honor him he will be assigned with more powers and responsibilities. But, at the same time on the other hand sometimes the management for motivating and improving the workers’ performance will empower them.

2. Worklife balance

Worklife balance refers to the balance between the work and the personal life an employee has. Worklife balance also can be defined as the satisfaction level an employee receives on meeting the demands of two domains (Greenhaus et al, 2003). When the employees are empowered with additional powers in an organization, then they can easily manage their family and work demands. Therefore, it could be concluded that there is a momentous association among employee empowerment and worklife balance.

3. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is the contentment a person obtains from performing his work. The employees will be satisfied when they have proper rewards and recognition for the work done, favorable organizational policies and proper family and organizational support. In addition to this, employee empowerment also influences the job satisfaction level of the employees. When the employees are satisfied with their job, they will work hard and their performance increases. As a result, they are empowered. There is a significant impact of employee empowerment on job satisfaction (Haznain Raza et al., 2015; Muhammad Haroon Ameer et al., 2014; Kuldeep Singh 2015; and Indradevi R., 2012).

4. Attrition

Attrition also known as labor turnover intentions has an inverse relationship with employee empowerment. When the undeserving employees are empowered (or) talented and committed workers are not empowered, then there are chances of turnover of those employees due to the lack of managing those powers and job dissatisfaction.
FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

From the both of the above factors affecting and those affected by the employee empowerment variable, work performance has been in both the aspects. Hence, it becomes necessary for studying the relationship between employee empowerment and work performance. This area has already been studied by many researchers like Esayas Degago, 2014; Gaudreau Meyerson et al. 2012 and Haleema Zia et al. 2014. But, in order to find out a deeper insight about the relationship among employee empowerment and work performance it has to be studied more empirically.

This employee empowerment has a positive relationship with that of the work performance (Esayas Degago, 2014; Gaudreau Meyerson et al. 2012). In some cases, the employees empowerment has a negative impact on the job performance in an organization (Haleema Zia et al. 2014). This negative relationship is due to the empowerment of the undeserving employees i.e., when those type of uncommitted workers are provided with necessary additional powers it will make them to utilize their powers wrongly and results on the low performance. In some times, it also affects others’ work performance.

There are cases in which the unskilled and semi-skilled employees would be empowered which will be result on the reduction of the work performance. On the extreme cases, though the deserving and talented employees are empowered, due to problems like lack of proper rewards and recognition, unfavorable organizational policies and support, lack of family support and heavy workload and responsibilities makes those employees to burnout and it mismatches on their work performance. In turn those employees quit their job.

These factors could be avoided and overcame through the proper planning and execution of employee empowerment on the deserving workers. In case of problems associated with the deserving problems must be rectified through regular counseling and necessary rectification measures. For those employees, the organization must provide their fullest support and frame necessary policies to avoid their burnout. Family should also be supportive towards the employees for proper concentration of their work. Hence we could conclude that through proper execution of employee empowerment, the work performance of the employees could be improved.

REFERENCES


