Human resources empowerment factors analysis for municipality of Tehran

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Abstract: Employees' empowerment is one of the effective techniques for increase the Productivity of employees and the optimism utilization of their ability. The purpose of recent research is to determine the effective factors for empowerment of human resources in the municipality of Tehran. This is one of the kind's correlation researches that have been done by the method of survey. Statistical population of research including managers and vice presidents of Tehran municipality has been in the exactly twenty two regions. Sampling had been done by random and the number of 240 persons had been selected as research sample. The tool of collecting information are walas and storm's standard questionnaire and has been used the methods of descriptive and deductive statistic in order to analyze the data. The findings of research show that there is a positive connection among the variables of leadership style, organizational learning, organizational structure, Participation. The variable of Participation has had the most effect over the employees' empowerment of municipality and the variables of organizational learning, leadership style and organizational structure have been in next ranks.

Introduction

The most vital possession of any organization is its "Manpower". The quality and empowerment of manpower is the chief factor inthe survival of an organization. Anenabledmanpower results in a powerful organization.

Robbins et al give a definition of empowerment by taking account of factors like: intrinsic motivation, perception and commitment, job structure, devolution of power or authority, and information and resources sharing. Empowermentis, in fact, a continuous and permanent process andis analyzed in different levels in a dynamic environment(Robbins, T. L. et al 2002).

From the viewpoint of Carter (2001), employees empowerment is an assembly of the systems, methods, and acts which are applied regarding the organizational objectives to improve and enhance the efficiency, development and efflorescence of organization and manpower by developing individuals' competence and capability(Carter, M. 2001).

Certainly, paying special attention to the factors effective on employees empowerment (especially municipality employees and managers) can be considered as the most essential factor in further dynamism and effectiveness of the trainings provided for unemployed applicants and youth. Empowerment makes employees to further internalize their assignments so that they pride themselves on their work and do the assignments enthusiastically. Otherwise, they will feel nothing special about their jobs. More empowered employees are also more satisfied and committed, feel less job stress, and probably show further co-operation and job involvement. Employees empowerment is one of the most efficient tools to raise the employees efficiency and exploit their individual and group capacities and capabilities for the sake of organization objectives. Empowerment is a process in which the continuous enhancement of performance is assisted by developing the dominance and the capability of individuals and teams. In other words, empowerment is a guideline for organizational development and efflorescence. After experiencing for years, it is now clear to the world that if an organization aims to keep leading in its economical and work affairs and not to regress in competitive fields, it has to possess an expert, innovative, and highly-motivated manpower. Human resources form the basis for actual wealth of an organization. There is a straight relationship between the human capital and efficiency in organizations. Among the most important concerns of the world's prosperous enterprises is the collection of an educated and intellectual human capital which is capable of changing the organization to which it belongs.

From the viewpoint of Drucker, economic growth is beholden to the empowerment of intellectual employees. Moreover, empowerment causes employees to feel that the job and the organization belong to them and they are very proud of working for it.

Smith (2010) defines empowerment as the preparation of required tools for individuals so that they would understand and use it for their sake.

Carson, when expressing the necessity of selecting and adopting the policy of empowerment in organizations, believes that the new age organizations are quite far from traditional and hierarchical structures and have a tendency towards the flexible network and team structures. These structures emphasize further social relationships and dynamism and put them at the top of all their affairs.

Scott (2008), when discussing the advantages of employees empowerment, believes that empowerment creates a sense of self-sufficiency and latitude in employees and allows them to improve their capabilities and skills, and thence enhance the effectiveness of themselves and their corresponding organization. On the other hand, empowerment enables managers to properly react to the dynamism of competitive environment, by training capable and motivated employees.

Robbins (2008) propounds numerous factors in employees empowerment such as psychological factors (personal and individual traits of employees) and environmental features (organizational and social conditions).

Importance and Necessity of Empowerment

The insufficient use of intellectual resources, mental abilities, and potential capacities of human resources is one of most important challenges for today's managers in organizations. The abilities of employees are not exploited in most organizations and managers cannot take advantage of their potential capacities. In other words, despite the individual's ability to exhibit creativity, innovation, and further activity, for some reasons these capabilities are not desirably used in organizational environment. Experts in the field of organizational improvement and change management have introduced human resources empowerment as apolicy effective on the performance and the improvemnet of manpower. Theybelieve that human resources empowerment is one of the contemporary theories which is employed by organizations and is, in fact, a response to the vital demands of contemporary management.

Quinn and Speritzer believe that although empowerment can earn organization competitive advantage and most managers approve its eligibility, its execution poses difficulties for most of the organizations (Quinn, Speritzer, 1997).

According to the previous studies, It is found that empowered individuals are a great wealth for organization and managementsince they are reliableandleaders themselves and are also capable of adopting the external changes of organization. They are open-to-learning and enjoy the participation in activities.

The Historical Background of the Study

Blanchard et al define empowerment as the release of individuals' internal capabilities to achieveadmiring accomplishments. From his point of view, empowerment means enabling individuals in order to help them increase their self-confidence, overcome thier disabilities and create enthusiasm for the accomplishment of their assignments (Blanchard K, et al 2001). Most writers consider the decision made by employees, which is made based on their approaches of accomplishing and organizing theirassignments, as the key mechanism of empowerment (Cohen S.G, et al 1996), (Dunphy D, Bryant B 1996), (Kazlauskaite Ruta et al 2006), (Lin C 1998), and (Manz C.C, Sims H.P 1987).

Some advantages of empowerment are as follows: the quality improvment of products and services, the increment of employees commitment and managing power, effectiveness promotion, synergy, responsibility and finally, the enhancement ofcomptitive advantage in global market.

According to social cognition theory, three groups of factors are effective on individuals' perception of their Abilities: individual and personality traits, work-team features and social structure features of work unit. For individual and personality traits, it is worth mentioning that gender, employment type, organizational position and employees education have enormous influence on individuals' abilities. In order to increase the personnel endeavorto achieve organizational objectives, it is required to raise the "commitment" of employees (Robinson ,1996). defines "commitment" as the individual perception ability and the personnel participation in organization. He believes committed employees are more disciplined and take more active part in organizational activities and affairs.

Another individual and personality trait is "creativity". Most researchers, like **Harrinison and Fairez (1995),** take creative people and entrepreneurs as the basis of organization. In other words, the more the entrepreneurship and creativity are, the higher the organizational capacity will be.

Some researchers such as (rotter, 1966) propound the concept of "control center" when discussing individual traits. They believe people refuse to take risks and get pessimistic about everything when they believe in "external control center" and find themselves unable to control events,

while those who accept the concept of "internal control center" are intended to follow some worthwhile objectives and do not attribute their achievements to luck and destiny. The later group form work teams and subsequently, try to motivate and empower individuals by participation in teamwork because the basis of empowerment is to authorize employees.

(Lippin, 2001) have investigated the employees-empowerment-based safety and healthcare trainings and stated that the participants in this survey believed in-service trainings bring about some changes in the preservation of workplace and employees' safety and health. These factors increase individuals' ability to accomplish their assignments. From his point of view, two key factors play important roles in this achievement. One is the managerial support for employees empowerment using safety and healthcare trainings, and the other is considerable interest in these trainings.

In order to actualize the empowerment concept by developing it in theoretical and practical subjects of management, various models have been suggested during about last two decades. Some of these models are shortly reviewed here.

(Kanooni, 2005) finds four variables effective on employees empowerment: official structure of organization, lack of required skills, reluctance of management, and obsolete informational system (Margaret Erstad, 1997). reviews the previous works of some experts and suggests the following techniques for employees empowerment:

1. Existence of a permissive payment system in order to award employees for their empowered attitudes.
2. Research and scrutiny of empowerment-related problems
3. Demonstration of empowerment as an approach to quality improvement
4. Employment of the groups which persuade to empowerment
5. Request for a balance between operational and human affairs to accomplish empowerment
6. Description of empowerment by clarifying how work group is designed and makes the self-management concept crucial to them
7. Devotion to the application of fiction and humor, as a way of simulating the empowered cultures
8. Theorizing about the application of empowerment in public sector
9. Presentation of practical examples of an empowerment program by affecting employees participation in lower management levels

(Karakoc, 2009). found that employees empowerment is affected by tendency towards development, critical thinking proficiency, change acceptance, abundant self-confidence, co-ordination, dynamic structure, performance evaluation, feedback, award, support, training, relationships, the level assigned to employee, motivation and praise given by management, making the participation culture, common vision, emphasis on flexibility and vote independence, information sharing, and management confidence in employees (Lawson, Karen ,2006). suggests four important factors for employees empowerment: 1. Involving employees in decision making, 2.involving employees in programming process, 3. Appreciating employees 4. Providing employees with continuous training and support (Pasley, Todd Michael , 2002). believes that the following four variables enhance employees empowerment and participation: power, information, award, and knowledge. Information and knowledge require the establishment of immense relationship (Pasley, Todd Michael , 2002).

Philamon based on his research results, found that following variables impact upon empowerment: obviation of employees' needs, relationships between individuals, attendants support, colleagues, organization, employees beliefs and feeling of fixation. He evaluated employeescapability from the view point of job significance, competence, and dominance (Philamon, Jan Elizabeth, 2004)

(Dunphy D, Bryant B,1996) et al have researched the obstacles to employees empowerment. They consider the obstacles to be as lack of the management commitment to empowerment, reluctance to make changes, reluctance to involve employees in making decisions, existence of weak relationships between employees and managers, and having difficulties to understand the fact that in the short term it is possible for performance to decrease during empowerment execution.

Other experts believe four variables of knowledge, relationships, trust, and incentives are effective on empowerment (Thamizhmanii, S. & Hasan, S. ,2010). From the view point of (Seibert, Scott E., Silver, Seth R. & Randolph, W. Alan, 2004) et al, the concept of empowerment has its roots in some fundamental issues like actual motivation, job planning, collaborative decision making, social learning theory, and self-management (Seibert, Scott E., Silver, Seth R. & Randolph, W. Alan,2004). Wilkinson et al (1997) sought to find out how total quality management (TQM) results in employees empowerment (Gill, Amarjit, Flaschner, Alan B. & Bhutani, Smita, 2010). believe that empowerment modification indicates one's belief incapability of his/her choice. In addition, empowerment is the

devolution of power and responsibility to employees so that they can provide customers with the best possible services at their own discretion. They also believe a non-authoritarian management style may result in empowerment.

According to (Bowen & Lawler, 1992)access to information has a great impact on decision making and brings empowerment. They define empowerment based on four organizational components: 1. Information about organizational performance 2. Awarding based on organizational performance 3. Capability to make effective decisions by taking organizational objectives into consideration 4. Capability to make decisions effective on organizational performance (Bowen & Lawler, 1992).

(Fragoso, Heloisa,1999). finds following factors necessary for employees empowerment to succeed: cultural change of organization, inversion of pyramid management, change acceptance by employees, responsibility-taking by employees, information sharing, creation of vote independence, feedback providing, training, creation of self-guiding groups, and existence of a clear prospect.

Quinn and Speritzer propound two static and dynamic standpoints about empowerment in their model. From the static point of view, empowerment is the devolution of decision making in a definite field. Responsibility is devoted and individuals are responsible for results. But in dynamic viewpoint, empowerment is defined as risk-taking, changes growth, growth of employees demands, modeling of the empowering attitude for them, grouping and persuasion to cooperative attitude, persuasion to intelligent risk-taking, and trusting individuals to accomplish assignment. Anyway, either of these standpoints has defects and a combination of them would be satisfying. Finally, empowerment should be described by considering basic beliefs and personal trends. These two experts believe that four steps are required to be taken from the dynamic point of view: 1. Creation of a clear prospect and attempting to reach it 2. Opening in organization (open information flow) and teamwork 3. Disciplining and controlling 4. Existence of the organizational support and a sense of safety and stability (Quinn and Speritzer 1997).

Based on this, hypotheses are:

1-There is a significant and meaningful relationship between organizational learning and employee empowerment.

2-There is a significant relationship between organizational structure and employee empowerment.

3-There is a relation between leadership style and employee empowerment.

4-There is a relation between participation, accountability and empowering staff

Research Methodology

This research is one of correlation studies which have been conducted in survey method. A survey of managers and deputy mayors of Tehran in 22 regions, which is 662 people. Sample size of 240 was obtained from the formula of **Cochran** sampling which consisted of 240 (randomly selected) was sent and finally 240 useable questionnaires were received.

Data collection tool was Wallace and Storm standard empowerment questionnaire. The questionnaire contains four subscales: 1- organizational learning (training, strategy and corporate culture) 2- the organizational structure (team building, field supervision, decentralization, and formalization) 3- leadership style (importance of employees, goals, social support and delegate disposal) 4- Popular participation (creativity, decision making, teamwork and commitment) are.

Research validity has been confirmed by Storn (2007), Wallace and Storm (2000), James (2009) and Askari (1386) through the content validity method.

Research reliability has been confirmed by Wallace and Storn (2000) through half way method and Cronbach's aipha ratio for the subscales of organizational learning is (81/0), organizational structure (85/0), leadership style (87/0), popular participation (86/0) and the questionnaire (85/0) has been reported.

In order to analyze the data descriptive and inferential statistics method (frequency distribution, frequency, chi-square test, Spearman and Kendall test and Friedman's rank test) is used. The data has been analyzed by SPSS software after enter computer.

The research findings
Respondent's distribution based on Demographic:
Table 1 shows frequency distribution of respondents based on demographic variables. Data in Table 1 show that men form more than half of the respondents. Approximately 96% of respondents have a bachelor's degree and a lower and only about 4 percent of master's degree or higher. More than half of respondents are over 10 years of service. About 50 percent of respondents are under 40 years of age. And less than half of respondents have more than 20 years experience.

Table 1: respondent's frequency distribution based on Demographic

variable	Measurement Index	frequency	frequency percent	Aggregation frequency percent
educations	diploma	89	37/3	37/3
	super diploma	22	9/3	46/7
	bachelor	118	49/3	96
	super bachelor and dr	11	4	100
	total	240	100	100
age	25-40 age	124	52	52
	41-55 age	112	46/7	98/7
	56 age and above	4	1/3	100
	total	240	100	100
years of service	10years and less	38	16	16
	11-20 years	141	58/7	74/7
	21-30 years	58	24	98/7
	31 years and above	3	1/3	100
	total	240	100	100

Chi- test to assess the relationship between independent variables and empowerment:

In Table 2, chi-square test is given to assess the relationship between independent variables and. Chi square test results show that all four research hypothesis were confirmed. In other words, it can be argued that there is a significant and meaningful relation between organizational learning, organizational structure, leadership style, employee participation with employee empowerment.

Table 2: Chi- test to assess the relationship between independent variables and empowerment

independent variables	dependent variables	X2	degree of free (df)	level of Significance (sig)	hypothesis conclusion
organizational learning	empowerment	36/717	12	0/000	hypothesis verification
organizational structure	empowerment	48/300	14	0/000	hypothesis verification
leadership style	empowerment	30/452	12	0/04	hypothesis verification
participation	empowerment	34/567	13	0/024	hypothesis verification

In table 3 Kendall and spearman correlation between independent variables and empowerment is given, the data in Table 3 includes the correlations between dependent and independent variables and the condition of their meaningfulness.

Table 3: assess the correlation between independent variables and dependent variables

independent variables	dependent variables	frequency	Kandal		Sparman	
			Coefficient of correlation	Sig	Coefficient of correlation	Sig
Organizational learning	empowerment	187	0/356	0/000	0/349	0/000
organizational structure	empowerment	187	0/412	0/000	0/402	0/000
leadership style	empowerment	187	0/321	0/000	0/311	0/000
participation	empowerment	187	0/341	0/000	0/339	0/000

Study hypotheses:
1- There is a significant relation between organizational learning and employee empowerment. According to Table 2, chi-Do and significance level value are respectively (36/717 and 0.000) and because significance level is smaller than 0.05, so organizational learning and employee empowerment are not independent. This means that there is a relation between organizational learning and employee empowerment. In order to measure this

relation we use correlation test. According to table 3 Kandal and Sparman correlation respectively are (0.356 and 0.349) and both correlations are significant in 0.01 level of significance. So according to the fact that the level of correlation in Kandal and Sparman is positive, there is a positive relation between organizational learning and employee empowerment.

2- There is a significant relation between organizational structure and employee empowerment. According to Table 2, Chi-Do and significance level value are respectively (48/300 and 0/000) and because significance level is smaller than 0.05, so organizational structure and employee empowerment are not independent. This means that there is a relation between organizational structure and employee empowerment. In order to measure this relation we use correlation test. According to table 3 Kandal and Sparman correlation respectively are (0.412 and 0.402) and both correlations are significant in 0.01 level of significance. So according to the fact that the level of correlation in Kandal and Sparman is positive, there is a positive relation between organizational structure and employee empowerment.

3- There is a significant relation between leadership style and employee empowerment.
According to Table 2, Chi-Do and significance level value are respectively (0.04 and 30.452) and because significance level is smaller than 0.05, so leadership style and employee empowerment are not independent. This means that there is a relation

between leadership style and employee empowerment. In order to measure this relation we use correlation test. According to table 3, Kandal and Sparman correlation respectively are (0.321 and 0.311) and both correlations are significant in 0.01 level of significance. So according to the fact that the level of correlation in Kandal and Sparman is positive, there is a positive relation between leadership style and employee empowerment.

4- There is a significant relation between employee participation and employee empowerment.
According to Table 2, Chi-Do and significance level value are respectively (0.024 and 34.567) and because significance level is smaller than 0.05, so employee participation and employee empowerment are not independent. This means that there is a relation between employee participation and employee empowerment. In order to measure this relation we use correlation test. According to table 3, Kandal and Sparman correlation respectively are (0.3911 and 0.341) and both correlations are significant in 0.01 level of significance. So according to the fact that the level of correlation in Kandal and Sparman is positive, there is a positive relation between employee participation and employee empowerment.

In order to rank the independent variables and its impact on employees empowerment Friedman rank test was used, which is discussed in the following table:

Table 4: ranking factors impact on employees' empowerment

row	variables in accord with impact	impact amount	rank
1	participation	3/65	1
2	Organizational learning	2/66	2
3	leadership style	2/35	3
4	organizational structure	1/74	4

As is clear from Table 4 popular participation has most effect on empowerment of employees. Organizational learning, leadership style and organizational structure are the next category.

Results and Discussions
The investigation of the factors effective on the empowerment of municipality employees shows that empowerment creates potential capacities to exploit human capital abilities and can be used by organization management to raise employees effectiveness and thence organization itself.

Empowerment is a complicated and multi-faceted process and its successful accomplishment relies on the preparation of required background. In other words, if the culture of empowerment is made,

its execution in organization becomes practical and with superior management support and sincere trust it develops inside the organization. The accomplishment of empowerment programs requires special attentions to be paid to its two aspects, that is, "the method of human resources management and guidance" and "development of personal capabilities and organizational progress".

The general objective of this study is to investigate the empowerment of Tehran municipality employees. This objective was achieved by taking account of following variables: participation, organizational learning, leadership method, and organizational structure. The effect of these variables on the empowerment of Tehran municipality employees and managers was evaluated using

statistical theories. Results indicate that mentioned variables exert an influence over the empowerment level of municipality managers and assistants.

In order to rank the independent variables and their impacts on employees empowerment, Fridman Rank Test was employed. Results show that "participation" has the most significant influence on employees empowerment and organizational learning, leadership style, and organizational structure have lower ranks.

It is worth mentioning a point about the participation. Involving employees in all activities, especially in making a final crucial decision, enhances their empowerment and increases their commitment and responsibility as well. In addition, involving employees in different levels promotes the level of their capability and efficiency.

Empowerment enhancement requires giving great attentions to training and culture making. To achieve this, continuous in-service trainings based on organizational objectives would be a great help. An authoritative leadership style and anarchy pose an obstacle to optimum employees empowerment. Finally, organizational structure, as a background and primary factor, can affect the enhancement or decline of employees performance and capabilities.

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