

Research Article

INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP STYLE AND EMPLOYEES' EMPOWERMENT

Asadullah Khahande Karnama¹ and *Mahdiah Sheikhpour²

¹Departments of Management, Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman

²Department of Management, College of Human Sciences, Kerman Branch,
Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran

*Author for Correspondence

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the role of leadership style in manpower empowering and knowing it. In this case, two separate questionnaires were designed. After examining and approving their reliability and validity, they were distributed among employees of Azad University of Kerman and the obtained findings of the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS software and the results are expressed. In order to analyze the statistical data, descriptive and inferential methods and Pearson correlation and linear regression were used. Our hypotheses were tested in this study and the results indicate a significant relationship between leadership style and employee empowerment so this relation for an autocratic - imperative leadership style is inverse.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Human Resources, Empowerment and Human Resources

INTRODUCTION

Many studies have been conducted on Leadership Style and they show that leadership style affects the performance of an organization and also the behavior of employees. The role of leadership style in management improvement and employee empowerment is undeniable. Leadership is important because it can lead to changes in the organization.

Today, instead of emphasizing the traditional model of leadership that is directing and controlling, leadership with learning, collaborative teams, self-control, transformation and so on are emphasized. In fact, today's organizations are faced with rapid changes. Fulfilling goals and mission of organizations can be achieved best when its employees and particularly its managers are the most efficient and competent people. Due to the impact on the behavior of managers and subordinates, managers can play a decisive role in the organization. This also affects how to do the mission of the organization, the employees' behavior and the interaction with other organizations and society (people, community groups, elites, etc.). The purpose of empowering is using maximum capacity of employees to achieve the organization's goals. Although the issue of empowerment is of a few tens of years, but for more than a decade, human resources' scholars had special focus on this subject and have studied its scope, objectives, strategies, models and mechanisms. Empowerment is the key to the effectiveness of organizations and managers (Mowly *et al.*, 2005).

Empowerment strategy is one of the main strategies of today. Based on this strategy, departments of education and human resources try to prepare environmental conditions for staff creativity and innovation by implementing appropriate programs, while increasing the capabilities and competencies of managers. The managers' empowerment has been the focus of experts in human resources in the world (and more recently in Iran) over the past two decades.

It is important since empowering employees in organizations has been a topic of interest in recent years for organization's managers. Empowerment strategy is one of the main strategies of today. Based on this strategy, training courses and human resources in addition to increase the employees' capacity and competence, try to develop and provide an environment for employees' creativity and innovation. Employees' empowerment during the last two decades in the world (and more recently in Iran) has been the focus of experts in human resources. So the main question is whether the leadership style would lead to empower employees?

Research Article

Research Theoretical Principles

Management

Management is an effective and efficient use of human and material resources in managing, planning, organizing, mobilizing resources, guidance and control to achieve organizational goals based on the accepted value system (Harold *et al.*, 2001).

Management is doing things by other people, process by which the decision is done in organizations. Performing the functions of planning, organizing, leadership, coordination and control

Management is a process. The concept behind the management is conducting humanitarian organization.

Effective management takes good decisions and desired results are achieved. Efficient management is wise allocation and use.

Management focuses on purposeful activities (Alian, 2010).

Leadership Style

The first study of leadership was published in 1904 and it's most important and basic approaches took place during the First World War. In the period between World Wars I and II, most of attention was to the behavioral traits and behavioral leadership practices, so that the people achieved leadership by using it. In continuing these studies, the Eastern and Western scientists have tried to find an answer to the question of who can be a successful and effective leader. The evolution of these theories is as follows:

Superman, approach to leadership qualities, leadership behavior approach, situational or contingency approach to leadership, target-path leadership approach, charismatic leadership approach, transactional leadership approach, transformational leadership approach, cognitive leadership approach, servant leadership approach, genuine leadership approach, complexity leadership approach, cultural exchange leadership approach, electronic leadership approach, new generation leadership approach, members' leader exchange leadership approach, collective leadership approach, spiritual leadership approach and moral leadership approach (Amiri, 2013). According to Humphrey (1995) Leadership is not visible only in "head" but it also can be found in "heart" (Klove *et al.*, 2012).

Leadership is influence on the intellectual and behavioral characteristics of a group of people by a person who is called leader (Matsion, 2005). Three components of leadership process are (leader, follower and position) situational leadership approach is to find a causal relationship between these variables, which leads to predict behavior.

Studying situational leadership methods usually lead to a common situation that all of the situational leadership methods expect from the leader to behave in flexible manner to recognize the leadership style appropriate to situation and be able to apply the appropriate style (CJ, 2005).

Leadership style is: relating human resource management to short-term and long-term strategic goals to improve organization performance and creating an organizational culture that can improve the flexibility and creativity (Trôs *et al.*, 1994). Leadership style is the use of human resources according to a program and doing things to enable the organization to meet the desired objectives (Wright, 1992).

Leadership style is: inclusive and innovative foresight, and organizational changes in providing the organization's human resources, training and improving it and supplying the quality of working life for it and using strategic source appropriately and effectively by knowing and applying aspects of effectiveness and influence of internal and external environment in order to define strategies to achieve the mission and goals of the organization (Mirsepasi, 2002). Leadership style: a method by which a leader uses his influence to achieve goals is called leadership style and how to influence the staff depends on "power" including positions power, rewarding and punishing power, allocation and authority power (Kashi, 2006). Leadership style is considered as one of the most important organizational factors (Ahmed *et al.*, 2011). Director selects a method or style of leadership with the aim of obtaining its most influence the effectiveness as a leader and selecting an appropriate method synchronizing with the external motivation can meet the needs of belonging, respect and dignity (Ahmadi and Abdolmaleki, 2012).

A particular leadership style is not appropriate for all situations, so different styles are required in different situations according to the culture of the organization and organizational maturity of employees (Alwan, 2010).

Research Article

In general, a leader can motivate employees spiritually by having features such as inspiration, creativity, honesty and integrity (Ghorbanizadeh, 2013). Considering the leadership styles for these managers, has an important role in achieving goals of the organization (Sayeddian and Moradi, 2009).

Empowerment

Twenty-First centuries should be considered as a century of competition for survival. Increasing international interactions has turned the world into a global village and to survive and grow organizations have no choice unless equipping with a variety of development tools. Sources of wealth in any organization can be categorized in land, capital (money), HR (human resources and management), machinery and equipment, information and communications. Charles (1995) argues that traditional sources of wealth (land, property of materials, technology and even unskilled workers) can be bought as appropriate; a factor without which we cannot work in the organization, the workforce is empowered that can easily use these resources to obtain the best benefits; because of the importance of managers' role and effect, employee empowerment is one of the priorities of the organization. The purpose of empowering is applying most of the employees' abilities to achieve organization's goals. Although the issue of empowerment has a history for few tens of years, but more than a decade, scholars of human resources have special focus on this topic and they have studies its scope, objectives, strategies, models and mechanisms. Empowerment is the key to the organizations and managers' effectiveness (Movey *et al.*, 2004).

Bowen and Lawler consider empowering as contributing employees in organization front line in four elements of information, knowledge, bonuses and power (Bowen and Lawler, 1992). According to Conger and Kantego (1998) empowerment is: the process of strengthening the competencies of the organization people by identifying and determining the conditions that make them feel powerless and trying to resolve them by formal measures and using informal techniques to provide information that will help them in the organization. Empowerment means giving employees power, freedom, knowledge and skills to make decisions effectively (Daft, 2000).

Blanchard *et al.*, (2003) say that empowerment means to empower and it means to help people to improve their sense of self-confidence, to dominate their failure or inability and to create enthusiasm to activities and mobilize their intrinsic motivation to perform the task.

The purpose of empowering is enabling and efficient use of people minds like their arms. Empowerment refers to an inner sense of individuals that causes them to take independent decisions in their work process. Human resources constitute the real wealth of an organization. There is a direct relationship between human capital and productivity in organizations (Alam *et al.*, 2008). Empowerment is a novel and effective technique for improving the productivity of the organization by using the potential of employees. Employees have a hidden knowledge through their knowledge, experience and motivation and actually empowering is freeing up this power. This technique provides potential capacities to use human abilities that it is not completely used which in a healthy environment gives a balance method in implementing full control by the management and suggests staff complete freedom (Bergeron, 2007). The strategic management is a part of organization's mission without it organization is faced with difficulties in implementation and control strategies. Key position and strategic role of human resources has been known in the effectiveness and increasing efficiency and organizational performance and excellence of employees' performance for all management discipline scholars.

The empowerment of employees includes the collection of systems, methods and measures used through development of people competence to improve and increase productivity, development and growth and development of organization and human resources with respect to the objectives of the organization (Carter, 2001). On the one hand challenges of leadership, economic culture and issues, and on the other hand the strategic development factors of human resources, including: organizational learning, innovation, staff development and customer success made organization's adopt strategic direction to the empowerment of employees. One of the fundamental problems of executive agencies is the shortage of trained and skilled human resources. Since most people do not have problems in terms of theoretical knowledge but it rarely provides opportunities for operational use, training of human resources and

Research Article

increasing their job skills to perform tasks after entering the organization, perhaps is one of the most important strategies that can be used to strengthen human resources in organizations. Each organization has specific objectives for the training its human resources that primarily are changed with respect to design and implementation of organizational strategies and its extension. However, the public purpose of education include to improve performance, to update employee information, to solve job problem, to solve organizational and professional problems, preparations for the promotion and introduction of new employees with the organization's goals (Jarvis, 2002).

Factors affecting employee empowerment are:

1- A sense of significance in the job:

Significance of the job means high values jobs and intrinsic interests in job (Thomas and Woolsey, 1990, 671). The significance refers to the balance between the working requirements with the beliefs, values and behaviors (Spritz, 1995). Empowered people feel significance and valued for their career goals. Their standards and thoughts are consistent with what they are doing (Viten and Cameron, 1998).

2. A sense of competence in the job

When individuals extend a sense of competence with having a minimum competency, enthusiasm to try to do and not having major obstacles to the success, they feel empowerment (Veten and Cameron, 1998).

3. A sense of having a choice in job

4. A sense of being effective

The feeling of effectiveness in the job: Veten and Cameron (1998) believe that by affecting the work environment or production data changes can be made. Therefore, the feeling of being effective at work is completely related to their sense of control.

5. A sense of participating with others

Reasons for non-participation of employees in organizations are: sense of non-belonging and attachment to the organization by employees, contrary individual and organizational goals, lack of motivation, feelings of risk of participation, lack of teamwork among staff, the lack of a cultural context, lack of education, lack of sufficient time and opportunity, confidentiality of some of the designs, different styles of leadership and management weaknesses.

Empowered employees, by introduced empowering dimensions will be able to survive the organization from crisis and show their loyalty to the organization by creating golden opportunities in the business (Moghli and Hassanpour, 2009).

Research Hypotheses

1. There is a significant relationship between the autocratic/imperative leadership style and employees' empowerment.
2. There is a significant relationship between the democratic / participative leadership style and employees' empowerment.
3. There is a significant relationship between the assignor / non-imperative leadership style and employees' empowerment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The statistical population in this study includes some of employees of Kerman Azad University. To assess the validity of the present study questionnaire, the content-related validity is used. To calculate the reliability, various methods are applied in this study and Cronbach's alpha method is used and its formula is described in the following.

Whatever the obtained percentage is closer to 100%, it represents a more reliable questionnaire. Alpha coefficient less than 60% is considered weak, range of 70% is acceptable and more than 80% is considered good, in this study, two separate questionnaires including 80 questionnaires were distributed among some staff and calculated Cronbach's alpha for the variables have been shown in the table, since the Cronbach's alpha of questionnaire questions (0.97) is higher than 70%, so reliability of questionnaire is approved (Sarmad, 2001).

Research Article

Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study is divided into two parts, descriptive and inferential statistics, which are discussed later.

Descriptive statistics: studying the relationship between demographic variables (gender, level of education and work experience)

In this study, 98.8% of employees are female and 13.6% are male and 6.2 percent have Diploma, 13.6 percent have associate degree, 66.7 percent have M.A degree and 13.6 percent have M.A degree.

It should be mentioned that among the participants completed questionnaires, 5 percent have has work experience less than 5 years, 10% between 5 and 10 years, 12.5 percent 10 to 15 years and 72.5% have had over 15 years. Mean, standard deviation of led light component are shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation of led light component

Max	Min	SD	Extent	Median	Mean	Component
49	24	5.496	38	36.00	35.93	autocratic/imperative
50	34	4.439	42	42.00	41.82	democratic / participative
49	26	4.874	34	37.00	37.18	assignor / non-imperative

Table 2: Correlation coefficients between leadership style and its dimensions with employees' empowerment

Assignor / non-imperative	democratic participative	/ autocratic/imperative	Leadership style	Variables
.72	.61	-.5	.69	correlation coefficient
.021	.032	.04	.025	Sig.(2-tail)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between managers' leadership style and employees' empowerment.

As it can be seen in table 2, considering the correlation coefficient of 0.69 and sig. = 0.025 there is a significant relationship between managers' leadership style and employees' empowerment.

Sub Hypothesis

- There is a significant relationship between the autocratic/imperative leadership style and employees' empowerment. As it can be seen in Table 3, considering the correlation coefficient -0.5- and sig. = 0.04 there is a significant and inverse relationship between the autocratic/imperative leadership style and organizational commitment.
- There is a significant relationship between the democratic / participative leadership style of school managers and employees' empowerment. As it can be seen in Table 3, considering the correlation coefficient 0.61and sig. = 0.032 there is a significant relationship between democratic / participative leadership style and employees' empowerment.
- There is a significant relationship between the assignor / non-imperative leadership style and employees' empowerment. As it can be seen in Table 3, considering the correlation coefficient 0.72 and sig. = 0.021 there is a significant relationship between managers' assignor / non-imperative leadership style and employees' empowerment.

Managers are experienced people organizationally, as it can be seen in the analysis of the data, 72.5 percent of employees have work experience over 15 years. Managers' democratic / participative leadership style was 41.82 that indicate that managers use participatory style and inform their employees most of the time.

Considering values, emphasizing the achievements, participation in decision making instead of authoritarian rule cause managers help their colleagues and inform them in affairs and considering and due to the subordinates' commitment and expertise, supports them. After autocratic/imperative leadership

Research Article

style managers mostly use assignor / non-imperative leadership style and the results showed that 37.18% of the managers use assignor / non-imperative leadership style. In general, considering the organizational values, motivate members, and positive thinking, considering the participation of members and entrusting and more intimate relationships and encouraging teamwork can improve school leadership and ultimately help improve performance and at last 35.93% of the managers use autocratic/imperative leadership style. According to the obtained results it is suggested that school administrators try to improve relations with staff and taking a better approach to leadership style, try to won the trust of employees and improve organization empowerment and thus its performance. Achieving a prosperous country, free and progressive requires targeted, updated and essential work of competent workforce; employee empowerment is influenced by various factors. A part of them is related to individual culture, attitude and personality. But an important part of it is related to the organization, leadership and management, and how to deal with people in the organization. If leadership and management are poor, the environment will be discouraged and will not be modified over time and therefore the organization cannot achieve its goals. The leadership can play a crucial role, and to be empowered and enable people to work efficiently. Members of an organization, including managers and experts as the most valuable organizational resource are very effective to acquire, maintain and develop competitive advantages of organization and empowerment is one of its most important components that can lead to positive outcomes such as improving productivity, stability of personality, reducing absenteeism, job satisfaction and citizenship behavior (Aynns, 2004).

Conclusion

When leadership is considered as a function, it is an important component of management and its existence depends on applying some actions and these skills can be considered as ways or styles of leadership in order to achieve specific goals. Leadership styles apply factors that are seeking to excite people internally. Human as an essential component of organizational development, in the context of group and organizational activities has an important and valuable role. Today, the development of organizations depends on the correct use of human resources. Leadership style by creating infrastructure creates favorable conditions that will enable managers to maximize employee's ability to perform their task. The research results showed that these strategies have a large impact on employee empowerment. The findings showed that there is a significant relationship between leadership style and employees' empowerment, the autocratic/imperative leadership style has a negative relationship.

To promote a greater sense of empowerment among the staff, senior management of the organization should clearly express the organization's vision so that employees undertake more responsibility for their work at all levels of the organization; clarifying the purpose and specifying tasks, roles and rewards may facilitate feeling of empowerment among employees. Also understanding the needs of employees, creating an atmosphere of support and considering creating confidence methods most likely are engaged in feeling the psychological empowerment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are grateful to Islamic Azad University, Kerman branch authorities, for their useful collaboration.

REFERENCES

- Alem Tabriz A and Mohammad Rahimi A (2008).** *KM (KM) and Organization Resource Planning (ERP) with Attitude of Information Systems* (publisher: Saffar Eshraghi).
- Amiri M (2003).** Ethical leadership theory based on the prophetic tradition: Journal of Organizational Behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior Studies* 1(4) 97-121.
- Blanchard KH, Carlos JP and Randloph A (2003).** *Empowerments Take More Than One Minute* (San Francisco: Barret-Koehler).
- Bowen DE, Lawler III and Edward E (1992).** The empowerment of service workers: What, why, how, and when. *Sloan Management Review* 33(3) 31-39.
- Bergeron B (2007).** *Knowledge Management Principles; Braban Bergeron*, translated by Manoochehr Ansari (Mehraban Nashr book publishing company) Tehran.

Research Article

Jarvis P (2002). *Adult Education and Continuing Education*, translated by Gholamali Sarmad (Tehran: SAMT).

Carter M (2001). *Strategic Planning (in Nonprofit or for Profit Organizations)*, Available: <http://www.Strategicplanning.com>.

Conger JA and Kanungo RN (1988). The empowerment process: Integrating theory and practice. *Academy of Management Review* **13**(3) 471-482.

Daft RL (2000). *Organization Theory and Design* (Cincinnati: South-Western College Publishing).

Ghorbanizadeh V (2013). Investigation of the relationship between moral and spiritual intelligence with transformational leadership. *Journal of Medical Ethics, in Science and Technology* **8**(2) 1-12.

Harold K (2001). *Management Principles*, third edition, translated by Mohammad Hadi Chamran (Institute of Scientific Publications).

Hussein A (2010). *Talent Management Principles* (Sepahan Press) ISBN: 9789642565443.

Khodadade Kashani SH (2006). The relationship between transformational, practical leadership styles, without Physical Education Faculty of Tehran. MS Thesis of physical education, Tehran University School of Physical Education.

Mirsepasi A (2002). *Strategic Human Resource Management and Labor Relations* (Tehran, Mir Publishers).

Moghly A, Hassanpoor A and Hassanpoor M (2009). Investigating the relationship between empowerment and organizational commitment in nineteen education districts of Tehran. *Tehran University Public Administration* **1**(2) 119-132.

Moye J, Melinda Henkin B Alan and Egley JR (2004). Teacher-principal relationships. Exploring linkages between empowerment and interpersonal trust. *Journal of Educational Administration* **43**(3) 260-277.

Truss C and Gratton L (1994). Strategic Human Resource, Management. *The International Journal of HRM* **43**.

Thomas Kenneth W and Betty A Velthouse (1990). Cognitive elements of empowerment: An interpretive model of intrinsic task motivation. *Academy of Management Journal* **15**(4) 666-681.

Wright P and Macmahon G (1992). Theoretical Perspective for SHRM. *Journal of Management* **18**.

Whetten David A and Kim S Cameron (1998). *Developing Management Skills* (New York: Addison – Wesley, Wheelam).