

Employees' Empowerment As An Approach To Achieve The Business Excellence

- Case Study on Algerian Communications Company -

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تمكين العاملين كمدخل لتحقيق التميز التنظيمي

- دراسة حالة شركات اتصالات الجزائر -

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Received: 01 July 2015

Accepted: 06 Nov 2015

Published: 30 Dec 2015

Abstract

This Study sought to determine the Relationship between employees empowerment and business excellence, employees empowerment have been identified through its four dimensions were in (meaningfulness, self-determination, competence of employees, impact on job).

To achieve the above objectives, questionnaire was developed and distributed to a sample consists (352) subjects and then descriptive statistical technique such as (mean, standard deviation) and analytical statistical technique such as (multi-correlation) were used to analyze the data. the study has reached the following conclusions:

1. There was a statistical significant relationship between empowerment and business excellence.
2. There was a statistical significant relationship between (Meaningfulness, Competence) and business excellence.
3. There was no statistical significant relationship between (self-determination, Impact) and business excellence.

The study has recommended the followings: the need to address the development of perceptions of the four dimensions of empowerment, especially in the first level management by encouraging them to take responsibility and look at mistakes as opportunities to learn in order to increase the overall level of excellence.

Keywords: Business Excellence, Empowerment Employees, Employees of Competence, Meaning fullness of Job, Self- Determination, impact on job.

(JEL) Classification : M39 . M540 . J50 . O150. J20

ملخص:

سعت هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد العلاقة بين تمكين العاملين والتميز التنظيمي، وقد تحدد تمكين العاملين بأبعاده الأربعة التي تمثلت في (معنى العمل، كفاءة العمل، استقلالية العمل، تطوير العمل)، ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة تم تطوير استبانة لغرض جمع البيانات من أفراد العينة، وبلغ تعدادها (352) مفردة، وتم استخدام الرزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية (SPSS) لتحليل بيانات الاستبانة، اعتمادا على المتوسطات الحسابية والارتباط المتعدد وغيرها، وقد توصلت الدراسة إلى مجموعة من النتائج كان من أبرزها:

1. أن هناك علاقة إحصائية بين تمكين العاملين والتميز التنظيمي.
 2. أن هناك علاقة إحصائية بين (معنى العمل، كفاءة العمل) والتميز التنظيمي.
 3. أنه لا توجد علاقة إحصائية بين (استقلالية العمل، تطوير العمل) والتميز التنظيمي.
- وتوصي الدراسة بضرورة الاهتمام بتنمية أبعاد التمكين الأربعة وخاصة في المستويات الإدارية الدنيا من خلال تشجيع العاملين على تحمل المسؤوليات والنظر إلى أخطأهم كفرص للتعلم لأجل الرفع من مستوى التميز التنظيمي.
- الكلمات المفتاحية:** تمكين العاملين، معنى العمل، كفاءة العمل، استقلالية العمل، تطوير العمل، التميز التنظيمي.

رموز JEL: J20 . O150 . J50 . M540 . M39.

Introduction:

In a competitive environment in which organizations must be faster, leaner, provide better service quality, be more excellence, an empowered and proactive service worker is thought to be essential. [1]

However, delegation of authority for a long period of time in the past, dominated the management field. In fact, this view changed into the “empowerment” concept. It covers the participation and delegation of authority along with the motivation of the employees.

While discussion of employee empowerment has been prevalent in the popular literature for many years, theoretical research on psychological empowerment has been appearing only recently in scholarly journals. Empowerment is a concept that links individual strengths and competencies, natural helping systems and proactive behaviour to social policy and social change.

On the other hand, business excellence is a management concept that has been so popular in the contemporary literature of management nowadays. The reasons behind such popularity include the rapid change that organizations face today, the complexity of the business environment, the impacts of globalization and unstructured markets, the ever changing consumer needs, competition, the revolution of information technology and communications. [2]

This paper aims to highlights the four main dimensions of employees' empowerment that are meaningfulness, self determination, competence of employees, development of job, are investigated and examined its related with business excellence in Algerian Communications Company.

I. Literature review

1. Employees' Empowerment

The definitions of empowerment itself vary widely across scholars. Many studies define empowerment as intrinsic task motivation (e.g., Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990) or motivation reflective of the person–environment fit[3]. In other literature, empowerment has been defined as perceptions [4] and as commitment-based designs [5]. Researchers have also defined empowerment in terms of job structure the transfer of power or authority.[6]

Empowerment has become an important theme within general management over the course of recent years. There is general encouragement to give employees sufficient latitude in their work-definition and authority to be able to apply the full breadth of ability to the overall aims of the company. Recently, the usefulness of empowerment has started to become recognized in the different environment of Project Management [7]. Rutland discusses its importance both between companies, leading towards an increase in structures such as partnering (which implies a level of trust between the companies), and, more relevantly to this paper, for individuals within a firm: he discusses the importance of employee motivation as a differentiating factor between companies [8].

Empowerment is often defined as the act of giving people the opportunity to make workplace decisions by expanding their autonomy in decision making [9]. Also, empowerment has been described as the breaking down of traditional hierarchical structures[10]. From a service perspective, empowerment gives employees the authority to make decisions about customer service. In industrial and organizational psychology and management, empowerment is the enhancement of the autonomy of employees in their work or increased involvement that results in increased decision making more generally within the wider agenda and interests of the organization[11]. Geroy et al.

(1998) emphasized the organizational aspect of empowerment, calling it the process of providing employees with the necessary guidance and skills to enable autonomous decision making (including accountability and responsibility for making these decisions within acceptable parameters) that is part of an organizational culture. An empowered and committed workforce is generally claimed to be essential for the effective functioning of modern organizations[12]. Empowerment have been proposed and found to facilitate a worker's commitment to the organization. Empowerment can be measured through two constructs. One is psychological empowerment construct which has received much attention from researchers in many business fields [13].

The focus of psychological empowerment is an individual's psychological empowerment state. The other construct is empowerment climate which focuses on work environment. Concept of empowerment climate is a shared perception regarding the extent to which an organization makes use of structures, policies, and practices supporting employee empowerment.

It refers to work environment. Three key organizational practices are associated with empowerment climate[14]: autonomy through boundaries, information sharing, and team accountability. As the focus of our study is on work environment we take the empowerment climate construct. Moreover, organizational climate perceptions are related to individual attitudes and behaviours[15], we, therefore, study its relationship with leadership behavior in projects[16].

Based on the prior literature this paper take the three dimensions autonomy through boundaries, information sharing, and team accountability as the organizational practices associated with the empowerment climate of project teams having varying degree of virtuality, autonomy through boundary dimension [17].

2. Employees' Empowerment Dimensions

Empowerment is defined as increased intrinsic task motivation manifested in a set of four cognitions (task assessments) reflecting the individual's orientation to his or her job role: meaningfulness, impact, competence, and choice. Let's take a careful look at each of these cognitions. [18]

Specifically, **meaningfulness** is the individual's intrinsic caring about a given task, and is concerned with the value of the task goal judged in relation to the individual's own value system, ideals, and/or standards[19]. In other words, feelings of meaning, or purpose, emerge out of a fit between the needs of one's work role and one's beliefs, values, and behaviors[20]. Lack of meaningfulness is believed to result in apathy and feelings of detachment[21]that are detrimental to job motivation and quality of job performance.

Competence is "the degree to which a person can perform task activities skillfully when he or she tries" [22]. It can be understood as self-efficacy[23]specific to one's work, and should be distinguished from self-esteem as the former is confined to a work role in contrast to the latter being construed as global efficacy[24]. Indeed, self-efficacy, the central variable of social cognitive theory[25], has proven to be "one of the most focal concepts in contemporary psychology research", as demonstrated by the evidence that it has been studied in more than 10,000 investigations over the past 25 years. Accumulated evidence attests to a positive relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance. Research suggests that self-efficacy, as a positive psychological strength underlining the recently emerging core construct of positive psychological capital[26], can be enhanced and promoted in four very specific ways: Task mastery,

modeling, persuasion and/or feedback, as well as physiological and/or psychological arousal and wellness[27]. In sum, in Bandura's terms, competence is tantamount to agency beliefs, personal mastery, or effort-performance expectancy.

Impact is understood by the degree to which the individual "can influence strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at work"[28], and is the converse of learned helplessness[29]. Conceptually, impact is different from locus of control; the former is determined by the work context whereas the latter is regarded as a global personality characteristic that endures across situations. The impact motive can make it profitable for an employer to give employees autonomy in effort or task choices. [30]

Choice involves "causal responsibility for a person's actions" [31], and is a sense of autonomy over the initiation and continuation of work behavior and processes (e.g., deciding on work methods, pace, and effort) [32]. It should be noted that impact and choice represent different perspectives on the notion of control the former is control over one's work unit whereas the latter is control over one's work[33]. Some favorable consequences of choice have been documented in the literature; autonomy is positively related to psychological well-being[34]. Initiative has a significant direct effect on objective salesperson performance. In an attempt to better operationalize the construct "psychological empowerment," Spreitzer builds on the theoretical model constructed by Thomas and Velthouse 1990 to develop a four-dimensional scale to measure meaningfulness, impact, competence, and choice. Meaningfulness is named as meaning and choice as self-determination[35]. Together, these four dimensions should be conceptualized as neither antecedents nor consequences of psychological empowerment, but rather comprise its very essence, reflecting a proactive self-orientation of an individual in relation to his or her work role³⁶. As a whole, the approach adopted by Conger and Kanungo (1988), is predicated on the "perception aspect," viewing empowerment as the "psychological state of a subordinate" resulting from his or her supervisor's empowering and/or organizational empowering structures, policies, and practices. The four dimensions delineated previously are considered "the essential prerequisites for the motivation to engage in empowered behaviors in the work environment", and provide the initiative for individuals to proactively undertake behaviors necessary for goal achievement. Theorized to be negatively associated with powerlessness[37], the four specific dimensions of psychological empowerment combine and culminate in an overall gestalt of the experience of empowerment in the workplace[38].

3. Business Excellence

Today's world, Excellence business is agile, flexible and responsive as stakeholder needs and expectations change, often frequently and quickly. Excellence business measures and anticipates the needs and expectations of their stakeholders, monitor their experiences and perceptions, and monitor and review the performance of other businesses. Information is gathered from both current and future stakeholders. This information is used in order to set, implement and review.

Business excellence is a board and complex concept, because sentencing and assess the degree of achieving it issued from various parties each with its own concept of excellence, such as; managers, employees, suppliers, shareholders and society as a whole. And those may represent the stakeholders in the private sector's organizations. But in the public sector's organizations, the

matter may differ slightly, because the public sector's organizations provide and share services and information with any person or entity resides on the territory of the state or has a relationship with it.

Many authors and researchers defined business excellence from the stakeholder theory perspective, which defines organizations excellence; as those organizations which are achieving prosperity for all, or taking care of all stakeholders, namely: customer, employees, suppliers, shareholders, and society as a whole [39]

Even if we fail to highlight all facets of the complex concept of excellence, we propose to present some definitions, approaches and representations that have contributed to the "enrichment" of the concept of excellence and to the "shaping" of the concept of Business Excellence. The starting point in achieving excellence is to improve quality.

Excellence is the state or quality of excelling. Particularly in the field of business and organizations, excellence is considered to be an important value, and a goal to be pursued. In Landier's opinion, excellence represents the essence of a great managerial thinking, the "absolute", a mythical ideal. Excellence is defined in the following terms: "the ability of firms to make profits, while meeting the customers' requirements".

The evaluation of excellence is done in the space delimited by the three axes. The arrows indicate the path of improvement measures to achieve excellence. Therefore, excellence means success in the competition by obtaining high quality products and services, offered to customers in shortest time, in terms of efficiency.

4. Business Excellence Ii TQM? An Overview on Business Excellence Models

Business Excellence is "excellence" in strategies, business practices, and stakeholder-related performance results that have been validated by assessments based on specific models proven to support the challenging journey towards excellence.

TQM models are often called Business Excellence Models. Also, TQM itself is now often called Business Excellence. This is to distinguish the "new" TQM from the past work on TQM. There was confusion as to what TQM was in the 80s and early 90s. In a great measure, this was because a tendency of naming any business improvement program as TQM. Therefore, the name TQM became tarnished. Business Excellence is really the same as TQM, but with a more clearly defined approach. In TQM and Business Excellence 129 this sense, an interesting point of view is emphasized by the authors of the paper "Quality is dead in Europe - long live excellence - true or false?" [40]. It is a deliberately provocative paper that challenges the replacement of the terms quality and TQM with the term "excellence".

The first Business Excellence models were developed in the mid-1980s and came about as a result of the quality movement in the West, which in turn was a response to the advancements in quality and competitiveness in Japan. The models themselves began as quality awards or TQM models, as TQM had emerged in the mid-1980s as the new philosophy and panacea for businesses. Over time, the term "Business Excellence" started to replace the terms "Quality" and "TQM", partly as a result of the before mentioned considerable confusion as to the meaning of TQM (since all types of business improvement programs were being called TQM). Today, many countries view Business Excellence models as a key mechanism for improving the performance of organizations, as well as national competitiveness.

The most popular of these models are manifestations of principles of TQM implementation in the entire organization. By far the majority of organizations that use such a model do so for a self-assessment through they can identify improvement opportunities, areas of strengths, using the model as a framework for future organizational development. In the followings, we present an overview of some referential Business Excellence models.

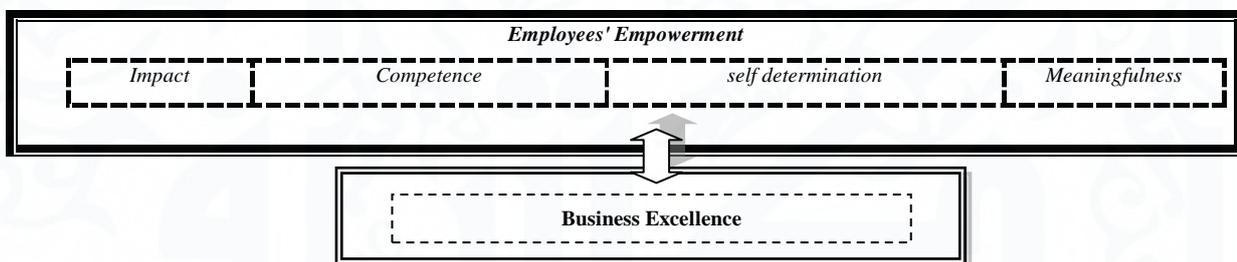
II. Research Model and Hypotheses

Based on the main research questions and aims, in this section of the paper the research analytical framework is presented.

Employees' Empowerment for organizations are encompasses the four main dimensions as follow: meaningfulness, self determination, competence of employees, impact on job.

Business excellence and its relationship with employees' empowerment.

Figure 1: The Research Analytical Model



Source: Prepared by the researcher.

Table 1 describes the main research hypotheses that highlight the relationship between business excellence and the dimensions of the employees' empowerment.

Table 1: The Research Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Description
H.1	there was a statistical significant relationship between employees empowerment and business excellence.
H.1a	there was a statistical significant relationship between meaningfulness and business excellence.
H.1b	there was a statistical significant relationship between self determination and business excellence.
H.1c	there was a statistical significant relationship between competence of employees and business excellence.
H.1d	there was a statistical significant relationship between impact on job and business excellence.

Source: Prepared by the researcher.

III. Methodology

The method of this research are Applied Research in goal, and in the view point of data gathering is Descriptive-Analytic (non-experimental) that is implemented with the research format. The main contribution of this research is the novel model in the field of business excellence and empowerment management that is very useful and applicable for companies. This model presents the demonstrated relationship between the research variables and shows the clear insights for the both academic researchers and practitioners of the field.

IV. Reliability of the Research

Table 2 show the results for reliability test for each variable tests. As mentioned in the table 2, the questionnaire for each of the variable has been reliable. The Alpha Cronbach for these hypotheses is 0.786.

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability

The questionnaire	Business Excellence	Employees' Empowerment	Alpha
0.786	0.842	0.761	

Source: SPSS outputs.

V. Statistical Analysis

In this section of the paper the statistical analysis for sample research and for test the research hypotheses are investigated and presented.

1. Sample Analysis

For sample analysis we used descriptive statistical as (frequencies, percents, mean, standard deviation).

Table 3: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	211	59.94
Female	141	40.06
Total	352	100.00

Source: SPSS outputs.

As shown in the table 3, there is a considerable percentage of male workers in the labor force working in Algerian Communications Company.

Table 4: Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
25 or less	26	7.83
26 – 35	42	11.93
36 – 45	83	23.57
46 – 55	152	43.18
56 or more	49	13.97
Total	252	100.00

Source: SPSS outputs.

As shown in the table 4, By examining the Age, it is found that almost half of the labor force is composed of between 46-55 years old.

Table 5: Experience

Experience	Frequency	Percent
Less than 3 years	22	6.25
3 - 6 years	80	22.72
7 - 10 years	73	20.73
11 years or more	177	50.30
Total	252	100.00

Source: SPSS outputs.

Data concerning experience, shown in the table 5, is consistent half of the labor force has 11 years or more of experience.

Table 6: Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Middle school	18	5.11
High school	141	40.05
Diploma	160	45.45
Higher studies	33	9.39
Total	252	100.00

Source: SPSS outputs.

It is shown by the table 6 data that the bigger portion of the sampled workers carries a diploma degree.

Table 7: functional level

Functional level	Frequency	Percent
Front line	236	93.65
Manager	16	6.35
Total	252	100.00

Source: SPSS outputs.

In light of the chosen course of data collection for this research, the table 7 result is a highly desirable one in terms of that the questionnaires are aimed at viewing the opinions of front line employees.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for the independent variable (Empowerment)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Employees' Empowerment	3.78	0.75
Meaningfulness	4.13	0.44
self determination	3.19	0.72
Competence	4.22	0.39
Impact	3.58	0.63
Business Excellence	3.31	0.70

Source: SPSS outputs.

2. Correlation Analysis

For investigation the relationship between each one of the dimensions of the Employees' empowerment and the business excellence, we are used the correlation model.

Table 9: The results of Correlation model for hypotheses 1 and it's sub hypotheses

Hypotheses	R square	F Calculated	Sig*	Confirm / Reject
H.1	0.38	55.57	0.000*	Confirm
H.1a	0.25	43.77	0.000*	Confirm
H.1b	0.01	6.74	0.981	Reject
H.1c	0.24	41.23	0.000*	Confirm
H.1d	0.03	7.03	0.443	Reject

* $\alpha=0.05$

Source: SPSS outputs.

As clear in the table 9, the two dimensions of Employees' Empowerment including (Meaningfulness, Competence) are positive relationship with business excellence in algerian communications company. And the rest two variables (self determination, Impact) has no significant relationship with business excellence in algerian communications company.

Concluding remarks and recommendations

Empowerment is a concept that links individual strengths and competencies, natural helping systems and proactive behavior to social policy and social change. In other words, empowerment links the individual and his or her well-being to the wider social and political environment in which he or she functions. From a psychological perspective, empowerment links mental health and well-being to mutual help and to the creation of a responsive community. Indeed, personal and social change relies extensively on various methods of empowerment.

In the other hand, achieving business excellence that activate in the turbulent environment and market is so important and vital. This paper investigates the relationship between employee's empowerment and business excellence in algerian communications company.

In this research the 4 main dimensions of Employees' Empowerment has been consider and the relationship between dimensions of employee's empowerment and business excellence has been investigated. These 4 main dimensions for in this paper Employees' Empowerment were including: Meaningfulness, Competence, self determination, Impact.

Results of data analysis has been showed that employee's empowerment is positive relationship with business excellence and also positive relationship between two dimensions (Meaningfulness, Competence) and business excellence for the company that activated in the oil sector.

It is highly recommended that algerian communications company that especially activated in communication sector for gaining excellence should attend to the empowerment of employees in the appropriate form. Empowerment enables both employees and managers to gaining updated knowledge and abilities to get the excellence in their work.

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