

Empowerment of Managers and Project Group in Project-Cantered Organizations

Ph.D. Taheri Lari, Masoud¹; Kordestani, Siamak²; Ahmadian, Elaheh³

¹Department of Management, Mashhad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Mashhad, Iran

²Department of Management, Torbat-e- Jam Branch, Islamic Azad University, Torbat-e- Jam, Iran

³Lecturer of Payam Nour University, the Branch of Torbat-e- Heydarieh, Iran

ABSTRACT

In changeable environmental and quick technologic changes, performing activities of organizations should follow more paces to gain the ability of adaptability and improving amongst competitors. As a result, project activities which are quicker become more crucial. Furthermore, for organizations which are related to project performing or planning, following new project management is inevitable. According to current situation and wonderful changes, the most effective method for new project management is making human resource more effective and empowered. In the article, after defining project, project management, project-centered organizations, the reasons of organizations in being project-centered, empowerment, influencing factors and objectives of that, preparations, plans and obstacles of performing empowerment in project-centered organizations are discussed. Eventually, the methods of performing managers and project group empowerment are offered. Also, a conceptual model which is included main factors of empowerment is suggested.

KEYWORDS: Empowerment, project-centered organizations, project group, project managers, project management.

1 INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, the main core which is considered by project managers to a great extent is human resource. Allocating required human resource of projects is the most difficult and essential aspect in project management because these individuals determine the success of a project. Due to the temporary and uniqueness nature of projects, determining capable human resource for a project has its characteristics. For organizing a project, exploiting productivity culture leads to using all financial and intellectual facilities of employees and always capabilities, talents and potential facilities of organizations are blooming. Moreover, facilities, situations, capabilities of existing human resource which are effective in meeting project aims are able to maximize productivity without adding technology and new human resource. Optimal productivity is not gained by changes in structures, adding technology, making instruction and giving circular letter. Being human-centered is all kinds of individual, social and organizational productivity, (Graham et al, 1999).

According to developing competitiveness levels, technological complexes, various taste shortage of resources and high-speed of exchanging information, the importance of productivity and the need of study are inevitable. Productivity is a word which has been studied in small and large levels and includes global productivity to individual productivity (Alvani et al, 2001). However, human resource productivity index in Iran compared to other regional countries and East Asia is less (Nejad Haji, 1986).

Drucker (1984) predicted if developed countries do not increase their productivity in knowledgeable activities and services, they will face a stop in their economy in 21st century. In order to overcome to the uncertain situation, employee's productivity is the only way which has remained. (Skatt et al, 1986)

On the other hand, motivation is a factor that helps people to move internally. In fact, productivity and efforts of human being is the engine of an organization. Motivation determines the way and direction of movement and causes choosing. The more an individual is motivated, the more they are powerful in choosing the way of an activity (Christopher et al, 2001). Empowerment is one of the solutions for creating these characteristics in people and can be a motivating factor in workplaces.

Nowadays, employee's commitment and capabilities form competitive advantage, creativity, innovation, positivism, quality (Grasso et al, 2007).

Corresponding Author: Ahmadian, Elaheh, Lecturer Of Payam Nour University, The Branch Of Torbat-e- Heydarieh) Ahmadianelaheh222@gmail.com- TELL: 09158334578)

In other words, empowerment is a reaction in order to reinforcing individual beliefs which are related to efficiency, change process of internal beliefs of people or self-efficiency which leads to increase motivation and productivity (Fellows et al, 2007).

Empowerment has been one of fantastic concepts in businesses. Although there are a lot of discussions about the advantages of empowerment, it has not been exploited (Blanchard et al 2000).

Vattem and Camron assumed that through empowerment managers become able to make their productivity multiple and their organizations become more efficient and can be like others although most managers believe that empowerment is a skill which should be performed. But the real performing is rare these days (Vattem et al, 1999)

In the definition of empowerment there are two approaches, structural approach (which is called traditional) and psychological approach.

In structural approach, power is the main core of empowerment which means if power from top managers is transfer to lower managers as employees in lower levels of an organization and they can participate in decision making activity, empowerment is done. In psychological approach, delegating in making decisions attracts less attention and more attention is attracted by motivating activities in employees. The approach was stated for the first time by two researchers, Canger and Canengo who pointed out that empowerment is an increasing process of self-efficiency amongst an organization's members through knowing themselves and omitting factors which make an organization weak (Yang et al, 2009).

One of researchers Spritzer suggested that if empowerment wants to be effective, it should be felt by people before being offering by others. From his point of view, replacing software approach about empowerment compared to hardware approach about empowerment can be helpful in the field. Consequently, by offering a new classification the approach can be created. In his opinion psychological empowerment is a motivational concept which contains 4 dimensions; competency (is a degree that an individual can do his/her job duties successfully), choice (being free and independent in determining needed activities for doing job duties), meaning (when job objectives are worth fully and a person has inside interests to the job) and impact (the degree that a person can have effect on administrative and practical result of a job). (Abdollahi, 2005)

The research tries to study the relationship between employee's empowerment and organizational productivity. It is a new notion in the field of employee's empowerment and organizational productivity which were not done in previous researches and it is a new notion. In previous studies, employee's empowerment and organizational productivity were discussed as two independent notions or related to other notions, although in this research they are considered as two dependent subjects. The findings of this research reveal that how the productivity of an organization can be improved by employee's psychological empowerment and giving the feeling to them. The researches study the relationship between 4 dimensions of empowerment as independent variables and productivity as a dependent variable. It also answers the following question: Does employee's empowerment from organic approach's point of view have influence on employee's organizational productivity in banks? Is there any meaningful relationship between empowerment dimensions and organizational productivity?

1-1: The Study Framework

1-2-1 Empowerment

Empowerment is one of new notions in developing human resource. However, due to a wide range of researches and studies in the field, it has a lot of Literature (Literature, 2007), especially because various approaches have studied in the field (Robbins et al, 2002). Although having a lot of literature about empowerment causes reinforcement in its concept, it causes inaccessibility to uniqueness and offering a conceptual model about it (Literature, 2007).

Empowerment is a process of making employees powerful. In the process, you help your employees to improve their self-confidence. Empowerment in this meaning is a gathering of internal motivations of a person (Vattem et al, 1999). Empowerment is also encouraging people in participating more in making decision which are influential on their activities. Through this way, some opportunities can be provided for individuals to show that good ideas can be created and covered (Smith, 2000).

Approaches

Researches offered empowerment through two approaches:

Mechanism approach; empowerment is delegating decision making in determined borders and giving responsibility to people in order to evaluate their activities. Esinberger (1986), Bourk (1986), Bluck (1989), Disi (1989), Rian (1989), Karson (1991), Parker (1994),... are the researchers in the field.

Organic approach: empowerment is the capability of taking risk, improvements and changes and perceiving employee's requirements. Kanger & Kanengu (1988), Tomas & Velthous (1990), Zimmerman (1990), Spreitzer

(1994-1996) ... are the researches in the field (Literal, 2007). Figure 2 illustrates the differences between these two approaches.

Due to the importance of ...'s studies especially his general model of empowerment amongst other psychological models, the model is the base of measuring psychological capability in the research.

1-2-2 Psychological Empowerment

Spreitzer (1992) suggested that if it is expected that empowerment has its efficiency, it should not be offered by anyone. They should have the feeling of that. As the researcher mentioned, psychological empowerment includes four feelings which are about individual psychology about his/her workplace. Meaningfulness, competency, impact and self-determining (Spreitzer, 1995)

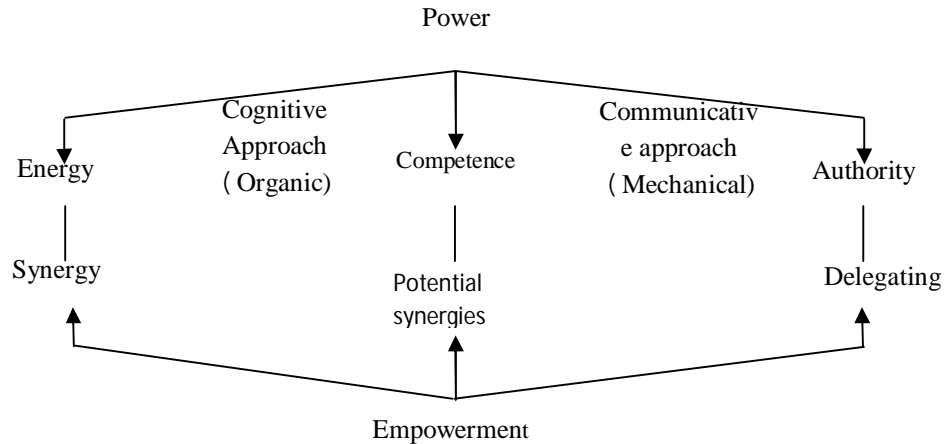


Figure 1: Empowerment approaches (Mohammadi, 2006)

Mishra (1992) also added another dimension which is trust or being sure and safe.

The feeling of meaningful means, an opportunity that a person feels that he/she follows crucial job objectives and is worth fully. Also he/she feels he/she is going in a way that his/her time and ability is significant (Appelbaum et al, 1998). Being meaningful is a balance between job requirements, beliefs, values and behaviors (Spreitzer, 1995).

Being effective feeling is a level that a person is cable to penetrate in strategic and administrative results and or have activities in their job (Ashforth, 1989). Being competent is a degree that a person can do job duties skillfully and successfully. High level of being important feeling and competency feeling increase job satisfaction through creating interest in individuals compared to their duties (Thomas et al, 1990). A mixture of these elements, ----- In the model, the shortage of each element decreases empowerment but won't omit it.

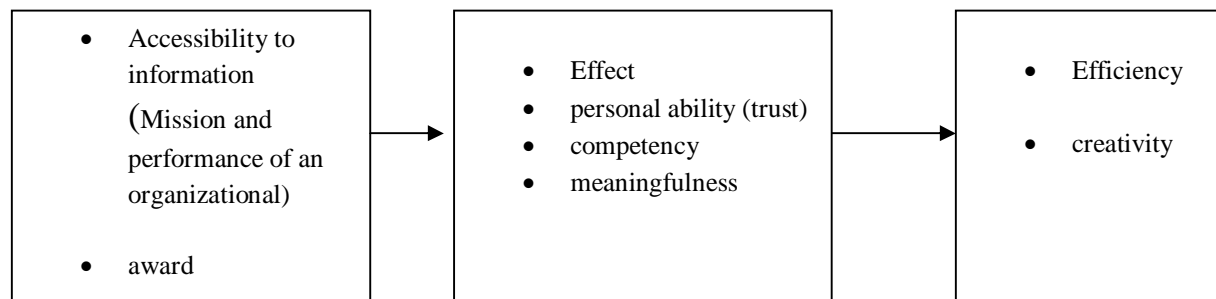


Figure 2: Model of mental empowerment in workplace (Spreitzer, 1995)

Advantages of Human Resource Empowerment

Capable employees can response quickly and on time to customers' wants through offering services.
Capable employees can response quickly and on time to dissatisfied customers through getting back the product.
Capable employees have better feeling to themselves and their own jobs.
Capable employees communicate warmly and friendly by customers.
Capable employees can be a big resource of service thoughts. (Bowen et al, 1995)

1-2-3 Productivity

Productivity as one of economic concepts is defined as following: The amount of productive product or service compared to per energy unit or work which is cost. In other words, productivity is gaining maximum possible benefit through productivity and optimal usage of human resource, abilities, talent, skill of human resource, field, machineries, organization's facilities, time and place ... to promote societies welfare. Model presumed that productivity is the amount of production output according to resource consumption unit which is compared with similar ratio in basic period and is applied.

(Abtahi, 2003)

Productivity = efficiency + effectiveness

Productivity = performing correct duties + performing duties correctly

In organizations productivity is measured to improve efficiency and effectiveness. According to above explanation, it can be said that; Peter Drucker stated that productivity is not just an increases in production or effectiveness but it is a mixture of effectiveness and efficiency or in other words it is performing correct duties and performing duties correctly and also gaining organizations' objectives. (Seyyed Javadein, 2005). Measuring productivity can improve the performance. It can increase Productivity between 5-10 percent without increasing organizational changes or new investments.
Productivity is quality and being useful and in a general definition it is a degree and amount that an activity leads to predict aims (French et al, 1992).

1-2-4 Productivity Characteristics

The result of activities which are related to productivity can be categorized in four items:

Decreasing costs, 2. Decreasing items, 3. Increasing quantity and 4. Improving quality.

Against some ones, productivity is not just for industries; productivity has a lot of levels and is for all people in all levels. It means that people can be effective in some various levels through thoughts, innovations and inventions. Different levels of productivity are:

Individual level, 2. Work group level, 3. Organizational level, 4. Commercial, servicing, industrial or agricultural level, 5. Economical level, 6. Local and national level, 7. Global level (Khaki, 2005).

In individual level, an organization is looking for a method to increase productivity individually and in a group, group productivity is considered. It is crystal clear that more productivity is stated in organizational level and stated fields and most rules of productivity can be seen there. It is possible that in some special situations it will be for national economic planning and politics for example during a war some luxurious and unnecessary product factories try to co-operate with other food production factories or even weapon production factories and stop producing their own products or general usefulness some houses on the way of a highway instruction, are bought, exchange or destroyed.

General advantages of productivity are:

Saving costs

Increasing general welfare level

Income and benefit

Economical growth

Economical stability in global market

Industrial improvement ...

Improving and promoting productivity need planned efforts from all employees and supervisors which is contained improving work condition, motives changes, employees' motivation methods, improving systems, instruction, rules, circular letters , methods, technology and etc (Abtahi, 2003).

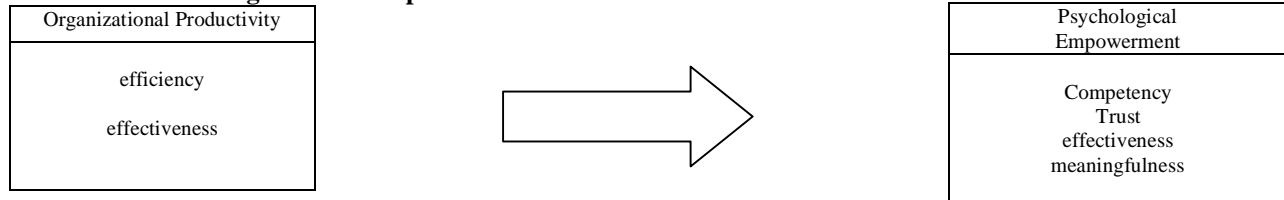
1-3 Prior Research

There have been some studies which have been done about empowerment and productivity such as; study the relationship between organizational structure and employees empowerment in distributing part of oil organization in Tehran, study and analyses of human resource empowerment, study influential factors on human resource empowerment in performing part of oil organization. Also they are about productivity, prioritizing influential factors in promoting human resource productivity, study social factors which have effect on administrative part's productivity in state organizations in Shiraz, study social of human resource productivity in education part. The suggested model can give a base for knowing different variables of the research (psychological empowerment and organizational productivity) and is formed the hypotheses of the research.

2- Conceptual Framework of Study

The conceptual model of the research is a model based on theoretical relationships between research gap's factors in problems/gap area. According to definitions which will be mentioned, conceptual model of the research is as following:

Figure 3: Conceptual Model of the Research



2-1 : Research hypotheses

The following Hypotheses were created for this study based on the conceptual framework for the study and literature review

Main-hypothesis: There is a meaningful relationship between psychological empowerment and organizational productivity.

Sub-hypothesis:

Sub-hypothesis 1: There is a meaningful relationship between meaningfulness and organizational productivity.

Sub-hypothesis 2: There is a meaningful relationship between employee competency and organizational productivity.

Sub-hypothesis 3: There is a meaningful relationship between effectiveness and organizational productivity.

Sub-hypothesis 4: There is a meaningful relationship between trust and organizational productivity.

3- Research Methodology

This research is an applied research and based on objective it is descriptive-correlation. A descriptive research determines current situation. Descriptive information is collected through questionnaire, interview or observation. The main tool of evaluating in this research is questionnaire.

The first questionnaire: The organizational productivity questionnaire of Peter Drucker which includes 24 questions of 5 alternatives and the response is in a 5-scale Likert scale (from 1 to 5) from very weak to very well.

The maximum score for per person is 24 and 120. Coding method in questionnaire is as following:

Table 1: Coding questions according to 5-scale Likert

very well	good	middle	weak	Very weak
5	4	3	2	1

The second questionnaire: employee's psychological empowerment questionnaire which includes 12 questions and the response of each question is based on 5-scale Likert (1 to 5) from very weak to very well and have 4 heading. Coding methods is as following:

Table 2: Coding questions according to 5-scale Likert

strongly agree	agree	to some extent	disagree	strongly disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Related questions of each heading are as following.

Table 3: Heading of questions of employee's psychological empowerment.

Heading of Questions	Question Numbers
Competency feeling	1-3
Trust feeling	4-6
Effectiveness feeling	7-9
Meaningfulness feeling	10-12

In order to test validity research's tools, Cronbach alpha was used because it is a suitable tool for testing validity and internal coordination amongst elements.

Consequently, validity of the research is tested by Cronbach alpha. For each heading, Cronbach alpha is tested separately which is as following.

Table 4: Cronbach alpha for research variables in sample.

Items	Headings of Questions	Cranach Alpha
1	Organizational productivity	0/8312
2	Psychological empowerment	0/7112
2-1	Competency feeling	0/6563
2-2	Trust feeling	0/7095
2-3	Effectiveness feeling	0/6870
2-4	Meaningfulness feeling	0/8131

According to Cronbach alpha coefficient, it is valid.

3-1 Researches Population

To do descriptive analysis, 97 of sample were considered according to some demographics (gender, marital status, kind of employment, education level, age and job)

Table 5: Demographics							
(78%) Man			(22%) Woman			Gender	
(13%) Single			(87%) Married			- Marital Celibacy	
(% 26) Contract			(% 74) Official			Employment Type	
(% 1) MA		(%5) BA		(% 11) Degree		(% 83) Diploma	
(% 18) 51-60		(%22) 41-50		(% 49) 31-40		(% 11)20-30	
More Than 30		26-30		21-25		16-20	
% 2		% 10		% 11		% 4	

Table 6: The results of Kolmogrov Smirnov test for employee questionnaire's variables

Variables	Mean			Meanful Level	Result
Organizational productivity	96/36	9/070	1/232	0/096	Normal
Psychological empowerment	48/28	4/994	1/196	0/114	Normal
Competency feeling	12/42	1/450	2/284	0/00001	Abnormal
Trust feeling	11/83	1/837	2/196	0/00001	Abnormal
Effectiveness feeling	11/71	1/931	1/592	0/013	Abnormal
Meaningfulness feeling	12/30	2/308	1/902	0/001	Abnormal

4- Testing Research Hypotheses

Main Question: There is a meaningful relationship between employee psychological empowerment and organizational productivity. ($P < 0.05$)

If it is presumed that:

Y: employee organizational productivity.

X: employee psychological empowerment variable.

P: Pierson Real Correlation Coefficient between employee organizational productivity and employee psychological empowerment in discussing society.

Table 7: Pierson Correlation Test for investigating the relationship between employee's psychological empowerment.

Organizational Productivity		
	Pierson correlation Coefficient	Meanful Level
Psychological Empowerment	0/456	0/00001

As it can be seen in table 7, correlation coefficient is 0.456 and meaningful level is 0.00001 which is less than 0.05. Consequently, null hypothesis which is about the existence of meaningful relationship between two variables is accepted.

Result: There is a meaningful relationship between employee psychological empowerment and employee's organizational productivity. ($P = 0.00001$)

Sub-Question 1: There is a meaningful relationship between competency feeling and employee's organizational productivity:

Y: employee organizational productivity.

X: Competency feeling.

P: Pierson Real Correlation Coefficient between employee organizational productivity and competency feeling in discussing society.

Table 8: Pierson correlation test for investigating the relationship between employee organizational productivity and competency feeling.

Organizational Productivity		
	Pierson correlation Coefficient	Meanful Level
Competency Feeling	0/376	0/00001

As it can be seen in table 8, correlation coefficient is 0.376 and meaningful level is 0.00001 which is less than 0.05. Consequently, null hypothesis which is about the existence of meaningful relationship between two variables is accepted.

Result: There is a meaningful relationship between competency feeling and employee organizational productivity. ($P = 0.001$)

Sub-Question 2: There is a meaningful relationship between trust feeling and employee organizational productivity. ($P < 0.05$)

Y: employee organizational productivity.

X: Trust feeling variable.

P: Pierson Real Correlation Coefficient between employee organizational productivity and trust feeling in discussing society.

Table 9: Pierson correlation test for investigating the relationship between employee organizational productivity and trust feeling.

Organizational Productivity		
	Pierson correlation Coefficient	Meaningful Level
Trust	0/342	0/001

As it can be seen in table 9, correlation coefficient is 0.342 and meaningful level is 0.001 which is less than 0.05. Consequently, null hypothesis which is about the existence of meaningful relationship between two variables is accepted.

Result: There is a meaningful relationship between trust feeling and employee organizational productivity.

Sub-Question 3: There is a meaningful relationship between effectiveness and employee organizational productivity. ($P < 0.05$)

Y: employee organizational productivity.

X: Effectiveness feeling

P: Pierson Real Correlation Coefficient between employee organizational productivity and effectiveness feeling in discussing society.

Table 10: Pierson correlation test for investigating the relationship between employee organizational

Organizational Productivity		
	Pierson correlation Coefficient	Meaningful Level
Effectiveness Feeling	0/390	0/00001

As it can be seen in table 10, correlation coefficient is 0.390 and meaningful level is 0.00001 which is less than 0.05. Consequently, null hypothesis which is about the existence of meaningful relationship between two variables is accepted.

Result: There is a meaningful relationship between effectiveness feeling and employee organizational productivity.

Sub-Question 4: There is a meaningful relationship between meaningfulness feeling and employee organizational productivity. ($P < 0.05$)

Y: employee organizational productivity.

X: Meaningfulness feeling variable

P: Pierson Real Correlation Coefficient between employee organizational productivity and meaningfulness feeling in discussing society.

Table 11: Pierson correlation test for investigating the relationship between employee organizational productivity and meaningfulness feeling.

Organizational Productivity		
	Pierson correlation Coefficient	Meaningful Level
Meaningfulness Feeling	0/152	0/135

As it can be seen in table 11, correlation coefficient is 0.152 and meaningful level is 0.135 which is less than 0.05. Consequently, null hypothesis which is about the existence of meaningful relationship between two variables is rejected.

Result: There is not a meaningful relationship between meaningful feeling and employee's organizational productivity. (P = 0.135)

5- Discussion and conclusion

According to the results, there is a meaningful relationship and correlation between empowerment feeling and employee organizational productivity in Keshavarzi Bank of Torbat Heidariye and amongst psychological empowerment factors, effectiveness, competency and trust feeling have high level correlation consecutively. Meaningfulness feeling does not have a meaningful relationship with employee's organizational productivity. The finding is not adapted to Nouroozie's (2005).

In other research, Ghasem Zare (2006) has priorities as following:

1. Competency feeling, 2. Self-determining feeling, 3. Trust feeling, 4. Meaningfulness feeling, 5. Effectiveness feeling.

Also, Byham (1998) in his research was self-determined as the most crucial factor. That is because psychological approach focuses on employee's perception from empowerment and employee's empowerment.

These psychological are influenced by various factors. ... And ... (1995) are mentioned in fluency factors as following: 1. Environmental events, 2. Job evaluation, 3. General assessments, 4. Descriptive styles of people, 5. Behaviors, 6. Inversions.

Moreover, finding of questionnaires data about empowerment presents the difference in level and amount of employee's empowerment.

In other words, existence or shortage of some psychological empowerment factors in employees does not illustrate the existence or shortage of employee's empowerment.

The difference is due to the level and amount of employee's empowerment feeling. Consequently, some employees have more capabilities and some others have less.

Eventually, according to the research finding and exploiting psychological empowerment for promoting organizational productivity level, it is suggested that:

1. Exploiting needed training for promoting employees individual skill levels.
2. Creating positive job vision in individuals about businesses.
3. Creating integrated system of sending internal information for helping capable activities of individual.
4. Paying attention to capabilities and skills of employees, trust and giving trust to them.
5. Being careful about employee's opinion and mental standards.
6. Efforts in improving meaningfulness feeling of employees about the job.

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