



# Investigating Effective Factors on Employees Empowerment in Islamic Azad University, Sarab Branch

Saber Ghorbani, Roghayye Alilou, Leyla Noubari

Department of Management, Sarab Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sarab, Iran

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## ABSTRACT

Since 1990s, empowerment is one of the new topics of interest to researchers in the field of management, Industrial and Organizational Psychology. The researchers believe that strong and effective human resources have great benefits for all institutions and organizations. This paper reviews the factors affecting the empowerment of employees, to provide a development strategy. Hence, in order to gather information, a questionnaire (containing 34 questions) with regard to the concepts derived from the factors affecting the empowerment was used. The statistical population of this survey was all employees of Azad University Sarab branch, 73 people including 26 officials, 5 tentative officials, 38 treaties, and 4 with individual contractor. The research methodology is descriptive –surveying and the target type are implicational. The SPSS software used to analysis the data collected via questionnaires and the results of hypotheses analysis indicate that, there is significant relation between factors affecting empowerment (having clear goals, providing information, training, delegating authority, trust, and participative management) and empowerment of employees.

**Keywords:** Empowerment, employees, Islamic Azad University Sarab branch.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, regarding to the rapid changes organizations are trying to overtake their competitors. Organizations in order to achieve their goals, must consider many factors. An issue which has already attracted the attention of organizations is human resources that form an organization's real asset and through this critical factor, the company finds existence. A currently interesting point among scholars and experts in human resource management is employee empowerment [8]. Employees are talented, motivated and have a lot of latent powers and using these potentials regarding empowerment strategy, will lead to company's growth and neglecting them will lead deflect the path of progress [1].

Empowerment is a term of institutional arrangements in which, the autonomy, freedom of action, and responsibility for the decision delegate to employees based on it. Some researchers consider empowerment through participative management as, involving employees in decision making and maximizing their job's involvement in the organization [9].

Therefore, this research tries to study empowerment factors including having clear goals, providing information, training, delegating authority, trust making, participative management, and empowerment components (sufficiency, effectiveness, significance, trust, and autonomy) and propose strategies to develop and promote them. The empowerment, in fact, is a continuous and permanent process and analyzed in a dynamic environment at different levels. Empowerment implies on motivational or psychological issues, structural changes, the cultural and historical elements, and institutional context values consist of: Systems, methods, and measures that used to develop productivity, improvement, and growth of organization and human resources according organization's goals. In empowerment process, employees not only require authorities but require adequate training, financial credit, and enough information to be accountable in their decisions [9].

Many managers have identified the fact that the only real and sustainable competitive advantage for organizations, is their employees and for an organization to be successful, individuals should actively involve with the tasks. The concept of empowerment is closely related to wise use of human resources to achieve organizational effectiveness [4].

In recent years, employee empowerment acts as a human resource management strategy to create productivity and provide greater satisfaction for staff in autonomy, choices, responsibility, and participating in organization's decision-making. In other words, empowerment, increase independence, decision-making power, and employees' responsibilities for decision making [7].

Increasing customer expectations, the process of globalization and advanced technology are factors that make the 21st century's organizations different from traditional organizations. In traditional organizations, management only been applied on personnel energies while the 21st organizations require to manage employees' intellectual power and creativity in addition to energy. Employees must show their own initiative and act quickly to solve problems. Therefore, the need to develop staff capable of self-management caused that empowerment of human resources as a new program; attract management experts' attention[2].

Empowerment is achieved when employees feel they are capable, therefore, it is very important to determine the variables that affect the empowerment of staff and faculty. Since, The Azad University also has problems similar to governmental organizations, properly running empowerment programs can lead to improved performance and increased employee motivation and commitment, and thus increase the effectiveness and efficiency of organization. The subject of this study was to examine empowerment and it tries to answer the following question:

What are the variables associated with the empowerment of employees of Azad University Sarab branch?

Rapidly changing environment, increasing competition and complexity, threaten the life of many organizations. Today, organizations need employees who are able to identify the right path with their initiative and timely decisions. Employees are also seeking meaningful work, greater loyalty and clearness, and want more self-discovery and self-actualization of their work [6].

A study by "Lewis Harris" organization (1994) shows that, feeling powerlessness and alienation among the staff has grown strongly in recent years. According to this study, staff strongly feels the frustration, powerlessness and helplessness, and this result in lower quality services or products, and is also dissatisfied customers and clients. Therefore, managers should be entered on global organizations and makes changes. New technologies and also changing customer mindset all means that, with these relentless conditions, a company incapable of producing cheaper products with better quality wider than their global competitors are forced abandon their work. Contemporary workforces are very different with those in the past. New workforce has great capacity and talent to grow and develop, but is restless and impatient because of the will to has his fate on his hands. Day by day, the need to make trust between members and managers grows so that, the staff can work with all responsibility in more open environment and managers can be capable and willing to ask group members act responsibly and freely, so empowerment is a worthy response to above mentioned issues and problems [1]. This paper reviews the factors affecting the empowerment of employees, to provide a development strategy. The following objectives are along this purpose

1. Explaining the relationship of having clear goals with Empowerment of employees of Islamic Sarab Azad University Sarab branch.
2. Explaining the relationship of providing information with empowerment of employees of Islamic Sarab Azad University Sarab branch.
3. Explaining the relationship of education with empowerment of employees of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch.
4. Explaining the relationship of delegating authority with employee empowerment entrusting the University.
5. Explaining the relationship of making trust with employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch.
6. Explaining the relationship of participative management with employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch.

## 2. RESEARCH LITERATURE

Several studies conducted in the field of psychological empowerment and different views and models are presented. Vetter and Cameron (1998) based on Sportier Research (1995) and Mishra (1992) categorized Psychological empowerment into five dimensions of feeling competent, sense of meaningfulness, feeling autonomy, sense of effectiveness, and sense of having trust to others. Several ideas and models have been presented about effective factors for empowerment. For example, Zimmerman (1995) emphasizes on methods such as backing up, participative management and staff training. Spertizer (1995) in his studies found that, workers access to information, reward system, collaborative atmosphere, social and emotional support are associated with psychological empowerment. Independence and freedom strategies, having challenging and clear goals, support, delegate authority, and leadership style (democratic and patterning) are methods that Ramzden (1997) mentions for empower faculty. Baden and Lavler (1995) proposed three levels for service organizations employees 'empowerment namely participation in the proposals, the proposals system, and job enrichment and the limited scope [8]. Thus, the conceptual model of research has formed based on "feelings of competence, a sense of autonomy, a sense of

significance, a sense of effectiveness, and a sense of trust in others" as dimensions of empowerment and on "having defined goals and responsibilities, providing information, training, delegating authority, trust making, participative management "as factors that influence employee empowerment. Due to the importance of psychological empowerment as one of the most important success factors of empowerment and participation in decision-making processes, identifying conditions that affect this variable have special importance [4].

In empowerment, autonomy and freedom of action and responsibility for decision-making are delegated to staff. In other words, vertical overloading and other similar methods to increase employees' freedom of action called empowerment [10].

The purpose of this study is examining factors influencing the empowerment of employees of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch Arab branch and proposing development strategies.

In this regard, the main hypotheses of this research as following:

There is relationship between effecting factors and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch.

Sub-hypotheses:

- There is relationship between having clear goals and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch.
- There is relationship between providing information and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch.
- There is relationship between education and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch.
- There is relationship between delegating authority and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch.
- There is relationship between making trust and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch.
- There is relationship between participative management and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology is descriptive – surveying and the target type are implicational.

In this descriptive research, the researcher wants to know about the situation of the issue, phenomenon, variable, and object. In other words, this study examines the current situation and systemically describes it and addresses its characteristics and traits, and examines the relationship between the variables if needed [3]. In the surveying method, the data collected from relatively large items. In this method, the characteristics of individuals have not considered as individuals, but it deal with the overall statistics that obtained from abstraction of data from the numerous cases (Best, 2000). In applied research, the results will be used in decision making, policy machining, and also planning [3].

Statistical population consists of all elements and persons who have one or more common trait in a geographic scale (whether global or regional) [5].

Since the number of individuals in statistical population is limited, and also taking into account that the likely some of them were on vacationer refuse to answer questionnaire due to busyness or disinclination and also consider this issue that, to get the reliable results, sufficient number of surveys have to be met, it was decided to distribute questionnaires among all employees. Then, questionnaires collected and after separating incompletely answered ones, a total of 45 full answered questionnaires had been analyzed.

To collect data from sample set and test these hypotheses a pre adjusted questionnaire with regard to the research variables has been used. Also, the library method and resources including books, papers, scientific magazines, Internet, and the theses have been used in the literature and history of research.

To analysis the data obtained from collected questionnaires, the descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used. The descriptive statistics were used to summarize, categorize and describe the data, and the inferential statistics benefitting SPSS software to test the hypotheses and generalize the results. Therefore, to perform descriptive analysis of the data frequency tables, graphs and descriptive statistics indicators such as, mean, mode, median of standard deviation, variance, and coefficient of skewness was used. In addition, to perform inferential analysis of the data, the statistical hypothesis test used to reject or confirm hypotheses so that, Pearson r correlation test was used to examine hypotheses of this study. In this step, normal distributions and test statistics was used. In

the next step, using hypothesis test results, each of the six hypotheses were analyzed. The Friedman test was used to rank hypotheses.

#### 4. RESULTS

Empowerment is a process that gives employees more autonomy and shares such information with them that contain factors that can affect job performance. Empowerment avoids weakness of the employees and organization and strengthens the autonomy, innovation, creativity, determination, and perseverance of the staff and makes conditions to overcome possible problems that may they face. Through empowerment, managers rely on employees' abilities to perform their duties at a higher level of confidence. Hence, to examine the factors affecting the empowerment of employees at the Islamic Azad University Sarab branch, the one main hypothesis and six sub-hypothesis were used and detailed analysis results as follows

**Conclusion of the first research hypothesis:** in this hypothesis the relationship between clear goals and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch investigated.

According to the results of analysis, there is significant relationship between having clear goals and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch.

Table 1: Relationship between clear goals and employee empowerment

Frequency	Percentage	Validity
4	9	3
4	9	3.7
9	20	4
6	13	4.3
4	9	4.7
18	40	5
45	100	Total

**Conclusion of the second research hypothesis:** In this hypothesis the relationship between providing information and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch investigated. According to the results obtained in the research population, organizations must provide information about the procedures and work processes in order to update the personnel's technical information and enrich their job content. In addition, in order to achieve substitution process principle they must use job rotation techniques. Therefore, it is necessary to provide sufficient information about jobs in the statistical population and it can be achieved through job analysis.

Table 2: Relationship between providing information and employee empowerment

Frequency	Percentage	Validity
1	2.2	2.7
1	2.2	3
1	2.2	3.3
3	6.7	3.7
4	8.9	4
9	20	4.3
11	24.4	4.7
15	33.3	5
45	100	Total

**Conclusion of the third research hypothesis:** In this hypothesis the relationship between education and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch investigated.

According to the obtained results, there is a significant relationship between education and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch.

Effective training is one of the important tools in employees' empowerment to achieve organizational goals. Providing appropriate opportunities for staff and continuing education in order to meet the needs of employees will empower them.

Table 3: Relationship between education and employee empowerment

Frequency	Percentage	Validity
2	4.4	3.2
4	8.9	3.5
3	6.7	3.8
8	17.8	4
11	24.4	4.2
6	13.3	4.5
4	8.9	4.6
7	15.6	5
45	100	Total

**Conclusion of the fourth research hypothesis:** In the hypothesis the relationship between delegating authorities and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch investigated and according to the performed analyses, there is significant relationship between delegating authorities and employee empowerment.

Table 4: Relationship between delegating authorities and employee empowerment

Frequency	Percentage	Validity
2	4.4	2.3
5	11.1	2.7
5	11.1	3
4	8.9	3.3
14	31.1	3.7
6	13.3	4
6	13.3	4.3
3	6.6	5
45	100	Total

**Conclusion of the fifth research hypothesis:** In this hypothesis the relationship between making trust and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch investigated. According to the obtained results, there is a significant relationship between trust making and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch.

Table 5: Relationship between making trust and employee empowerment

Frequency	Percentage	Validity
1	2.2	1
2	4.4	1.7
2	4.4	2
4	8.9	2.3
7	15.6	2.7
15	33.3	3
8	17.8	3.3
1	2.2	3.7
2	4.4	4
2	4.4	4.7
1	2.2	5
45	100	Total

**Conclusion of the sixth research hypothesis:** In this hypothesis the relationship between participative management and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch investigated. According to the obtained results, there is a significant relationship between participative management and employee empowerment of Islamic Azad University Sarab branch.

Table 6: Relationship between participative management and employee empowerment

Frequency	Percentage	Validity
1	2.2	1
3	6.7	2
2	4.4	2.2
4	8.9	2.5
6	13.3	2.8
13	28.9	3
4	8.9	3.2
2	4.4	3.5
4	8.9	3.8
2	4.4	4
1	2.2	4.2
2	4.4	4.5
1	2.2	5
45	100	Total

## 5. Conclusion

Applying the ideas of employees in decision making and benefitting their cooperation to improve and promotion of employees' jobs, utilizing employees' experiences and encouraging them to participate as working groups, all are effective in employees' empowerment. Therefore, the most employees contribute in the organization's tasks the more information they get about the organization's function results of decisions made, and as a result they will feel more empowered.

Employees should be aware of their responsibilities, duties, and goals of the organization. Providing an environment in which, employees feel they are empowered, requires that employees have a clear vision of the organization path and how they can help it. Therefore, it is necessary to systemically investigate the fields of employees' awareness of responsibilities, duties, roles and goals of the organization in statistical population. The results show that, there is significant relationship between providing information and employees' empowerment. It means that, the more employees have information about their jobs the more they feel empowered. Therefore, management should strive to provide all necessary information their employees to enable them efficiently perform their tasks. They must provide required education and training for employees in several categories and develop correspondent programs to increase efficiency. Delegating authority empower employees through giving them a sense of power. Employees believe that, entrusting them is a confirmation to their merits. Working capacity increases with delegating authority, increased responsibility, sense of autonomy in decision making and self-efficiency, resulting in increased productivity and effectiveness of organization. Creating a sense of confidence to administrator among employees makes them have good feeling about administrator and organization instead of feeling suspicious. It means that, the more employees trust managers' entrust to staff the more they will be supported and it results in their empowerment. Organization must provide positive and friendly working relationship between staff and build trust between managers and them. In an organization, the more employees involved the tasks the more they had to manager, as well as the experience positive emotions instead of negative emotions.

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