

# Systematic Review of Employee Empowerment

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## ABSTRACT

Empowerment is the need of time. It provides both the strategic advantage companies are seeking & the opportunity people are seeking. It demands involvement of team members as business partners and writes the story of Companies success or failure. Leaders who empower teammates are placing additional responsibility on team members. For this reason employee empowerment has increasingly been attracting the attention of researchers & professionals. The objective of this paper is to present the result or main gaps from a systematic review of literature on the subject of employee empowerment. We have adapted the method used in Lage Junior and Godinho Filho (2010), Jabour (2013) and Seuring (2013). The method applied allowed us to identify existing gaps in the literature such as more studies should be conducted on relationship between employee empowerment and employee engagement in India.

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## 1. A Systematic Review of Literature about Employee Empowerment

One of the most significant changes in the area of management is the emergence of phenomenon empowerment of employees'. Since human resources are the heart and soul of every organization, all organizations should devote the most capital, time and program for the development of to the humans in different dimensions. Rapid environmental changes are the forcing the organizations to alter their management structure to adapt to the environment and empowering human resources is one of these mechanisms and has a key role in the survival of modern organizations. In this age, organizations have changed themselves from hierarchies to heteroarchies. With horizontal structure, network and team structures organizations are becoming flat. These structures considers world to be dynamic place. As such human resource is trained to respond as per the demand of time. Empowerment enhances the productivity of employees and thus brings competitive advantage for the companies. In fact, empowerment is a new way to increase productivity and efficiency by creating a sense of mutual commitment between employees and organization.

Blanchard also considers empowerment a reality which provides opportunities for decision making and does it by widening the range of authorities. In his opinion, empowerment is what leads to the breakage of the organizations' traditional hierarchies; because executive employees are closer to the problems and can better understand it and come up with superior solution. Empowerment is to empower the employees so that their self-confident is strengthened and they have enough ability, skill and motivation to carry out the desired activities (Avey et al., 2008). In more simple definition, empowerment is to increase of knowledge and awareness of employees, to increase skill and experience, to improve adaptability to the environment and ability of job improvement and making idea (Albrecht, Andretta, 2011). Empowerment of employees can also achieved by organizational systems like training, development of information systems and so on, and also can improved by increasing employees' motivation and

their willingness to learning. Salazar (2000) believed that in recent year's empowerment as a strategy for human resources, create an efficient, productive and satisfied employees in the workplace. Because of this empowerment is the most challenging task for any manager in present era.

## 2. Important terms used in the paper

Aiming to identify the main themes we conducted a thorough analysis of all papers published by journal, following the method used in Large Junior and Godinho Filho (2010), Jabbour (2013) and Seuring (2013). This method allows one to identify the main characteristics of the studies and, in particular, to group together papers that explore the following topics:

- Psychological empowerment
- Structural empowerment
- Organizational Agility
- Organizational Commitment
- Transformational Leadership

Employee empowerment has been broadly defined from two perspectives. The first one is Psychological empowerment and the other is structural empowerment.

### Psychological empowerment

Conger and Kanungo (1988) popularized the concept of psychological empowerment and gave it a motivational dimension. Empowerment is "process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through identification of condition that foster powerlessness and through their removal both by formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information." Psychological empowerment is defined as a psychological state where individual wishes and feels able to shape his work role and context. (Spreitzer, 2005). Thomas, Kenneth, W. and Betty, A. Velthouse consider psychological empowerment as an inner incentive which reflects the active role of employees in the organization and in their view, there is a difference between management strategies and organizational factors and employees' perception of empowerment. Empowerment is

the act of delegating power to someone. This means that individuals get help to improve their self-confidence in this process and overcome their sense of inability and the frustration they feel within themselves. It also means that their inner incentive helps them get a task done.

### **Structural Empowerment**

Structural empowerment has its root in Kanter's theory of power in organization. His concept of empowerment means perceived access to information, opportunity, support and resources as well as perception of formal and informal power. In words of Mills and Ungson structural empowerment presents dilemma for managers who fear loss of control and adverse effect on organizational performance.

### **Organizational Agility**

Organizational agility is one of the effective factors on employee's empowerment. The organizational agility is evaluated in four dimensions: speed, competence, responsiveness and flexibility. In one of the best empirical studies about empowerment, Spreitzer (1992) identified four dimensions for psychological empowerment: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. Based on the study of Mishra (1992), Whetten & Cameron (1998) added trust dimension to the psychological empowerment and five key dimensions of empowerment were formed (Shahraki, 2010:7-8). It should be said that the executive organizations and systems could achieve their organizational missions, if they have the employees with high job and organizational quality. This depends upon the identification of effective factors on empowerment of employees. Organizational agility is one of the effective factors on employee's empowerment.

### **Organizational Commitment**

The literal sense commitment means essential that limits freedom of action. Commitment is a mental state which expresses a desire, need and obligation to continue to serve in an organization (Meyer and Allen, 1990). Organizational commitment expresses the psychological attachment to the place of employment (Ardalan et al., 2015). Organizational commitment is an important aspect of job attitudes. It provides psychological identity to employees about the organization they work for.

### **Transformational leadership**

**The concept of transformational leadership was popularized by Burns** and was then further developed by Bass. According to Bass there are four characteristics of transformational leaders. The first characteristic, individualized consideration suggests that transformational leaders support the development of subordinates' skills and assist them in achieving desired outcomes. Second, transformational leadership includes intellectual stimulation, whereby leaders promote a culture in which employees will develop intelligence and rational thinking. Intellectual stimulation helps employees to solve problem independently. Inspiration is the third element of transformational leadership. In this regard, leaders communicate high expectations and encourage employees to focus their efforts on achieving established goals. To do this, transformational leaders tend to use effective communication

techniques, such as symbols and simple language, to ensure that employees understand the main purposes of the assigned tasks. Finally, transformational leaders are regarded as charismatic leaders who offer a vision and a mission to employees. Such leaders will try to instill pride and gain respect and trust from employees so that the organization can achieve the required outcomes.

## **3. Methods and Research Techniques**

This research is integrative and systematic review. It presents a useful analysis to gather the result of studies on emerging topics, dealing more specifically with papers that relate to employee empowerment. It made it possible to analyze the main studies about the state of art and to characterize a research field allowing us to identify the challenges for the development of future research in the area (Huisingsh 2012, p.290)

This literature review is based on the works of Large Junior and Godinho Filho (2010, p.14), Jabbour (2013, p. 144) and Seuring (2013, p. 1514), adapting their method to this analysis, which focus on articles from a single journal. This research was divided into following activities:

- Analyzing articles previously published
- Providing a brief summary of the contribution made by these articles to an analysis of researcher subject
- Classifying and coding the different features of the articles
- Describing the strengths and weaknesses of these studies, based on available literature and
- Providing a research agenda and a structure to fill the main gaps related to the topic

## **4. Characterization of the instrument and execution of the research**

Initially, we carried out an analysis of the articles in the journal, presenting some overall aspects and gathering their citations on the Scopus, ISI, and Google, as shown in table 1. The objective of the quotation analysis is to identify the contribution and influence the articles had over the academic area.

We followed the order and numbering of the articles presented in table 1 throughout this paper. Based on this specialization, we assessed the issues raised by the authors, evaluating their impact and contribution to a better understanding of topic. In Table 2, we presented a brief summary of each article analyzed in paper researched. Based on the data collected from the analysis of the articles, we classified and coded the articles to make it possible to have an overall view of the studies about employee empowerment. The classification of the articles include nine large subjects, numbered from 1 to 9, coded by letters that go from A to I, as shown in Table 1. Apart from that, having in mind the scope of the analyzed studies, an article could receive more than just one code.

The first classification involves identifying the context analyzed by the articles. We established codes A, B, and C. Context is important in any study, since it helps us to analyze the places where there was a larger incidence of this study,

showing the set of places where employee empowerment is a concern.

The second classification refers to identifying the geographic region of the research. Countries coded from A to G. This classification complements the first one because it lists, in a more specific manner.

The third classification presents the objective of the articles, coded by letters A, B, C, and D. This classification relates to the expanded objective of the articles. For instance, in this classification, we have assessed if the study was concerned with a conceptual analysis of the theme or if it focused on an analysis of the presented context in a more practical approach. This classification allows one to identify whether the published papers jointly analyze employee empowerment from an empirical perspective or are studies that aim to theoretically advance knowledge on these themes. We present details of the sub-division of this classification in Table 1.

The fourth classification analyses the focus on the main topic of the articles in regards to the subject studied with the research, coded by the letters A, B, and C. In this classification, the concern directly relates to the research of the present piece, trying to identify what is the key subject in the article.

The fifth classification addresses the method applied in the analyzed articles, which received letters A to D. Thus, we verify which method was used the most by authors in the analysis of

the subject of employee empowerment. We aim to identify whether there is a predominant method on this subject.

The sixth classification involves identifying the analyzed sector, coded by letters A, B, C, and D. The focus in this classification is to detect and relate the measures adopted by the public or private sector, which are connected to empowerment issues. It is important to highlight that this classification aims to complement the scope of the first classification. We intend to verify whether the discussion of employee empowerment is better assessed in the public or in the private sector.

The seventh classification relates to sub-topics addressed by the articles, coded by letters A to H. We tried to verify if the articles published until now focus on these subjects and to list the subjects that are studied the most by researchers.

The eighth classification relates to sample size taken, coded by letters A to F. We have tried to verify if the articles published till now have been done on large or small samples by most of the researchers

The ninth classification emphasizes the dimension of the results of the articles, classified with letters from A to D. Thus, we sought to assess the results found in the analyzed articles. This classification aims to analyze whether the published papers begin new streams of research or seek to answer questions previously presented.

TABLE 1		
Category	Meaning	Codes for alternatives
1	Context	A. Developed
		B. Developing
		C. Non Applicable
2	Geographic Region	A. Europe
		B. Asia
		c. Middle East
		D. Africa
		E. America
		F. Australia
		G. Non Applicable
3	Objective	A. Conceptually Contributes to existing literature
		B. Presents Case Study
		C. Empirical
		D. Literature Review
		D. Non Applicable
4	Main Subject	A. Related to Psychological Empowerment of employees
		B. Related to workplace Environment
		C. Related to performance of employees
		D. Others
5	Methods	A. Quantitative
		B. Qualitative

		C. Case Study
		D. Others
6	Sector Analysed	A. Public Sector
		B. Private Sector
		C. Both Public and Private
		D. Not Applicable
7	Topics	A. Effective factors on psychological aspects of employee empowerment
		B. Empowerment in relation to employee engagement
		C. Effect of leadership style
		D. Empowerment and team working
		E. Related to workplace environment
		F. Empowerment impact on innovation and entrepreneurship
		G. Empowerment and Employee performance
		H. Others
8	Sample Size	A. Less than 200
		B. 201 to 500
		C. 501 to 800
		D. 801 to 1100
		E. Above 1100
		F. Not Applicable
9	Result	A. New Perspective
		B. Comparative Study
		C. Consistent with previous literature
		D. Others

N	Context	Region	Objective	Main Subject	Method	Sector Analysed	Sample size	Topics	Result
1	B	B	C	C	A	B	B	A,E,G	A
2	B	C	A	A	A	B	A	B	C
3	B	B	A	A,B	A	D	A	C	C
4	B	C	B	A,C	C	A	B	F	C
5	B	C	A	A	A	A	B	E,G	C
6	A	A	A,B	B	C	A	E	G	B
7	A	E	B	B	C	B	E	E	D
8	B	A	B	A,B	C	B	E	D	C
9	B	B,D	D	A,C	A	C	E	G,H	B
10	B	C	B	A	A	A	A	A	D
11	B	C	A	B	A	A	A	B	C
12	C	F	B	B	C	D	E	E,G	C
13	B	B	A	B	C	C	B	E,G	C
14	B	C	A,D	B	A	D	A	F,G	C
15	C	F	A	A,B	A	A	B	A	C
16	B	C	C	A,B,C	D	B	B	E,G	C
17	B	C	A,D	B,C	C	B	B	A,G	C
18	B	C	C	B,C	A	D	A	C,E,G	C
19	B	B	A,D	A	A	C	A	C,G	C
20	C	F	B	A	B	D	E	G	C
21	B	B	A	A,B	A	A	A	A,G	C
22	B	B	D	A	A	D	B	A	A
23	B	B	C	C	A	B	B	E,G	C

24	B	B	A	A	D	C	E	A	C
25	B	B	C	B	A	A	B	A,C	C
26	B	B	C	A,C	A	B	B	F	C
27	C	C	B,C	D	B	B	G	C	C
28	A	E	B	A,C	C	B	B	I	C
29	B	B	A	A,B	A	B	B	A,C	C
30	C	G	A	A,C	A	C	A	G	C
31	B	B	A	B,C	A	C	A	A,C,E	C
32	A	E	A	A,B	A	C	B	C,G	C
33	B	D	C	A,B,C	A	C	C	A,E	C
34	A	A	A	A,B,C	A	C	B	E,G	C
35	A	E	C	A,C	A	B	E	A,C,G	C
36	B	C	B	A,C	B	A	A	C,E,G	C
37	B	B	A	A,C	A	A	A	A,G	C
38	B	B	A	A,C	A	B	A	A,H	C
39	A	E	A	A,B	B	B	B	H	C
40	A	B	A	A,C	A	B	B	A,C,G	C
41	A	A	A	A,C	A	A	B	C,G	C
42	A	A	A	A,B,C	A	C	B	C,E,F	C
43	B	C	C	B,C	A	C	A	C,D	C
44	A	E	A	A	A	C	D	E	C
45	A	A	C	A	A	C	E	A,D	C
46	A	A	A	A,B,C	A	C	C	C,G	A
47	B	B	C	A,C	A	C	C	A,C,F	C
48	A	A	A	B	A	A	B	A,C,G	C
49	B	E	A	A,C	A	C	B	A,H	C
50	A	B	A	B	A	C	B	A,C,D	C
51	A	A	A	B	A	B	B	A,G	C
52	A	A	A	A	A	A	D	A	C
53	A	E	A	B	A	B	B	A,H	C
54	B	A	A	A,B,C	A	C	B	A,B	C
55	A	A	A	A,B	A	B	B	D	C
56	B	C	C	B	A	C	B	E	C
57	B	B	C	B,C	A	C	B	B,G	C
58	B	B	C	B,C	A	C	A	C,E,G	C
59	B	B	A	B,C	A	C	A	C,G	C
60	B	E	A	B,C	A	A	A	C,G	C
61	A	E	A	A	A	A	B	A,H	C
62	A	A	A	A,B	A	C	E	E	B
63	B	B	B	C	A	A	A	G	C
64	A	A	A	B	A	C	E	E	C
65	B	B	A	A,B,C	A	C	B	A,E,F	C
66	A	E	A	A,C	A	A	B	A,E	C
67	A	A	A	B,C	A	C	B	E,G	C
68	A	E	A	A,C	A	C	E	A,C,G	C
69	A	E	A	B	A	B	C	F	C
70	A	A	A	A,B	A	C	E	A,B,H	C
71	B	D	A	A,B	A	C	B	A,B,C	C
72	B	B	C	A,B,C	A	C	B	B,E	C

73	B	B	A	C	A	C	D	F	C
74	A	F	C	A,C	A	C	B	D,F,H	C
75	B	B	A	B	A	C	C	C,D,E	C
76	B	B	A	A,B	A	B	B	A,B,F	C
77	A	B	A	B,C	D	C	A	E,G	C
78	A	B	A	B,C	D	A	A	E,G	C
79	A	F	A	A,C	A	C	C	A,G	C
80	A	E	C	A,B	A	B	B	A,E	C
81	B	B	A	A,C	A	C	B	A,H	C
82	A	B	A	B,C	A	C	A	C,F	C
83	B	B	A	A	A	C	F	E	B
84	B	B	A	A,B,C	A	A	A	A,E	C
85	C	G	A	A,B	A	C	B	A,C,E	C
86	C	G	A	A,B	A	C	A	A,E	C
87	B	B	A	B	A	C	C	E,H	C
88	A	E	C	A,C	A	A	E	G	C
89	A,B	B,E	A	A,C	A	C	C	A,G	B
90	A	E	C	A,B	A	C	E	A,E,H	C
91	C	G	B	B	C	C	C	E,H	C
92	A	E	A	A,C	A	C	A	A,G	C
93	A	E	A	B	A	C	B	E,H	C
94	A	F	A	A,C	A	C	D	A	C
95	G	G	A	B,C	A	C	C	C	C
96	G	G	A	A,C	A	C	D	G	B
97	A	B	C	B,C	A	C	C	C,F	C
98	B	B	A	C	A	C	B	C,G	C
99	B	B	A	A,B	A	B	B	E,H	C
100	B	B	A	A,B	A	C	B	D	C
101	B	B	A	B,C	A	C	C	A,G	C
102	B	A	C	B	A	C	E	E	C
103	A	F	B	B	C	C	F	B,E	C
104	B	B	A	A,C	A	C	B	A,G	C
105	A,B	B,C,E,F	A	B,C	A	B	E	C,G	B
106	B	B	A	A	A	C	E	A	C
107	B	A	A	B,C	A	A	B	C,F	C
108	C	B,C	A	A	A	C	C	A	C
109	C	G	A	A,B,C	A	C	B	A,E,G	C
110	C	G	D	A	C	C	F	A,D	C
111	B	B	A	A,B,C	A	C	C	C,E,F	C
112	B	B	A	A,C	A	C	D	A,F	C
113	B	A	A	A	A	C	D	A	C
114	B	B	A	A,C	A	C	B	A,G	C
115	B	B	A	A,B,C	A	A	A	A,C,G	C
116	B	B	A	A,C	A	C	B	A,F	C
117	B	B	A	A,B	A	C	C	A,B	C
118	B	B	A	A,B	A	B	A	E	C
119	B	B	A	B,C	A	C	B	C,F	C
120	B	A	A	A,B	A	C	B	A,C	C
121	A	A	A	B	A	C	A	E	C

122		A	A	C	A	C	C	F	C
123	B	B	A	A	A	B	C	A	C
124	B	B	A	A,C	A	A	A	F,G	C
125	B	B	A	B	A	A	B	E,H	C
126	A	E	A	B	A	C	B	D,H	C
127	A	A	B	B	C	C	E	C	C
128	A,B	A,B	C	B,C	A	C	D	E,G	B
129	B	B	A	C	A	B	B	G,I	C
130	B	B	A	B,C	A	C	C	C,F	C
131	A,B	A	A	B	A	C	B	E	B
132	B	B	A	A,C	A	C	A	A,F,G	C
133	B	A	A	A,B	A	C	B	A,C,E	C
134	A	B	A	B,C	A	C	B	E,G	C
135	A	A	A	B	A	C	E	E	C
136	A	E	A	B,C	A	C	A	C,G	C
137	A	B	A	B	A	C	A	C,E	C
138	A	A	A	C	A	C	B	F,G	C

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