

ORGANIZATIONAL EMPOWERMENT OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND IT'S RELATION TO THEIR WORK PERFORMANCE

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Abstract— In the competitive landscape of public administration, organizational empowerment is pivotal in fostering proactive, efficient, and high-performing employees. This study examines the relationship between organizational empowerment and work performance among government employees in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Gonzaga, Cagayan. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design, data were gathered from 60 government employees through an Organizational Empowerment Questionnaire and their Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF). The study evaluates three dimensions of empowerment: Dynamic Structural Framework, Control of Workplace Decisions, and Fluidity in Information Sharing. Findings indicate that employees exhibit a high level of empowerment in structural framework and information sharing but only moderate empowerment in workplace decision-making. The analysis further reveals a significant positive correlation between organizational empowerment and work performance ($r = 0.650, p < 0.05$), suggesting that enhanced empowerment fosters better performance and productivity.

Keywords: Organizational empowerment, work performance, government employees, decision-making, structural framework, information sharing, employee involvement, public administration

I. INTRODUCTION

In a competitive environment in which organizations must be faster, leaner, provide better service, be more efficient, and ultimately more profitable, an empowered, and proactive workforce is thought to be essential. This is why employee involvement plays such a big role in today's ultra-competitive business world. Employees are important to organizations because they enable those institutions to operate and offer valuable knowledge that helps businesses become successful. They are loyal to an organization if they believe that they are treated well, another factor that enhances a company's success. Hence, they should be empowered.

The term organizational empowerment is frequently used by business leaders and commentators on business activities. It refers to employees being more proactive and sufficient in assisting an organization to achieve its goals. The term became prominent as part of the total quality movement, although its roots are in issues raised earlier under the heading "employee involvement" (Lawler, 1988; Lawler & Mohrman, 1998) or employee participation. Employee empowerment is a goal that has proved difficult to achieve.

Empowerment is a topic that appears frequently in human resource, business, and management literature but more infrequently in the education and business literature. Empowerment is a tantalizing notion that seems to offer organizations the promise of more focused, energetic, and creative work from employees. But after years of trying, many organizations have not realized the promise the idea held. Employees' behaviors reflecting empowerment have been neglected despite their practical importance. Presumably, empowerment is not only implemented to change employee cognitions, but also to foster active behaviors that could have an impact on organizational outcomes. In view, empowerment is a process whereby employees develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems (Lord & Emrich, 2000; Atkinson, 2004). Furthermore, empowerment is an individual's belief that employees have the skills and knowledge to improve a situation in which they operate. Moreover, empowerment is defined and measured in terms of employees' power to participate in decision-making about working conditions. In addition, empowerment enhances commitment, expertise, and ultimately achievement. More importantly, it enhances self-esteem, increased job satisfaction, greater productivity, and stronger staff collegiality. In addition, empowerment has been viewed, as revealed in the results of many studies, as promoting collegiality, providing a quality working environment, and equipping employees to make decisions concerning the working environment, ensuring they can effectively perform their jobs (Renkl & Atkinson, 2003).

With the varying views of empowerment within the business context, several definitions of empowerment have been produced after an extensive review of the literature, defining two general perspectives of empowerment within a business context: the relational perspective and the psychological perspective. Relational empowerment has been referred to in the literature as top-down processing

as well as mechanistic. It is the belief that empowerment occurs when higher levels within a hierarchy share power with lower levels within the same hierarchy and is the most widely studied perspective (Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Bhatia, 2004; Manzoor, 2012). The relational perspective maintains that it is the implementation of new processes and the distribution of power that empower employees. On the other hand, the psychological perspective of empowerment focuses on the employee's perception of empowerment. Researchers studying psychological empowerment, also known as organic or bottom-up processing, maintain that empowerment is achieved only when psychological states produce a perception of empowerment within the employee (Wang & Ahmed, 2003; Worley & Lawler, 2010; Kazlauskaite, Buciuniene & Turauskas, 2012).

A review of the literature shows that the focus of studies has predominantly been from a management perspective rather than the employee's perception of empowerment. This can lead to only partial understanding of the empowerment process because, as stated by Nesan and Holt (1999), studies that neglected employees' perspectives do not provide a complete picture. This is because management cannot speak for its employees since empowerment represents an individual employee's perspective. Employees' perspectives are crucial because empowerment is not a permanent, fixed reality that is shared by all, but rather is something that varies in how it is experienced from individual to individual (Greasley et al., 2005). Researchers such as Menon (1995) and Psoinos and Smithson (2002) also believe in this experiential perspective on the meaning of empowerment, whereby empowerment is viewed as a set of perceptions and beliefs. Thus, only through examination of the employees themselves is it possible to measure the level of empowerment that may exist within an organization.

II. METHODS

This study utilized both descriptive and correlational methods of research. The respondents of study involved the 60 government employees of the Local Government of Gonzaga.

Research Instruments

Organizational Empowerment Questionnaire

Employees' organizational empowerment was measured using the organizational empowerment scale developed by Matthews, Diaz, and Cole (2002). The tool consists of 20 items and is divided into three dimensions: Dynamic Structural Framework (7 items), Control of Workplace Decisions (7 items), and Fluidity in Information Sharing (6 items). Furthermore, each item of the instrument used a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this instrument in the current study's sample was .885.

Employees' Work Performance

The work performance of government employees was measured using the employees' annual Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF). The scale used in work performance is as follows:

NUMERICAL RATING	ADJECTIVAL RATING	DESCRIPTION OF MEANING OF RATING
5	OUTSTANDING	Performance represents an extraordinary level of achievement and commitment in terms of quality and time, technical skills and knowledge, ingenuity, creativity and initiative. Employees at this performance level should have demonstrated exceptional job mastery in all areas of responsibility. Employee achievement and contributions to the organizations are of marked excellence.
4	VERY SATISFACTORY	Performance exceeded expectations. All goals, objectives and target were achieved above the established standards.
3	SATISFACTORY	Performance met expectations in terms of quality of work, efficiency and timeliness. The most critical annual goals were met.
2	UNSATISFACTORY	Performance failed to meet expectations, and/or one or more of the most goals were not met.
1	POOR	Performance was consistently below expectations, and/or reasonable progress toward critical goals was not made. Significant improvement is needed in one or more important areas.

Data Analysis

The data gathered in the study were analyzed using the following statistical tools:

Frequency counts and percentage were used to describe the work performance of the respondents using the IPCRF with the following scales:

RANGE	ADJECTIVAL RATING
4.500-5.000	Outstanding
3.500-4.499	Very Satisfactory
2.500-3.499	Satisfactory
1.500-2.499	Unsatisfactory
below 1.499	Poor

Weighted mean was used to measure the level of organizational empowerment of the respondents using the following scales

RANGE	ADJECTIVAL RATING
4.51 – 5.00	Very High Level of Empowerment
3.50 – 4.50	High Level of Empowerment
2.50 – 3.49	Moderate Level of Empowerment
1.50 – 2.49	Low Level of Empowerment
1.00 – 1.49	Very Low Level of Empowerment

Pearson-R Product Correlation was used to determine significant relationship between employees' organizational empowerment and work performance.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Work Performance of Government Employees

Range	Description	Frequency (N=60)	Percentage (%=100.00)
4.51 – 5.00	Outstanding	48	80.00
3.50 – 4.50	Very Satisfactory	10	16.67
2.50 – 3.49	Satisfactory	2	3.33
1.50 – 2.49	Unsatisfactory	0	0.00
1.00 – 1.49	Poor	0	0.00

Table 1 provides information on the work performance of government employees of the Local Government of Gonzaga, Cagayan through their Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF). It can be seen from the table that almost all of the respondents obtained outstanding marks from their IPCRF. This means that their work performance represents an extraordinary level of achievement and commitment in terms of quality, timeliness, technical skills and knowledge, ingenuity, creativity, and initiative. Employees at this performance level demonstrated exceptional mastery of their job responsibilities in all areas. Employee achievements and contributions to the organization are of marked excellence (Civil Service Commission, 2012). Meanwhile, a few employees obtained a very satisfactory mark from their IPCRF. Finally, only two employees obtained a satisfactory rating from their IPCRF. It is also important to note that no employees received both unsatisfactory and poor ratings. This means that employees of the LGU-Gonzaga meet their required expectations and functions as stipulated in their job. Furthermore, almost all employees achieved their goals, objectives, and targets.

Table 2.a. Organizational Empowerment of Government Employees along Dynamic Structural Framework

Dynamic Structural Framework	Mean	Qualitative Description
“Thinking out of the box” behavior is appreciated	4.20	High Level of Empowerment
The organization provides information on what the organization wants to accomplish in the future	4.15	High Level of Empowerment
The organization provides information on how organization objectives are going to be achieved	3.85	High Level of Empowerment
Employees have a say in changing organization policies	3.47	Moderate Level of Empowerment
The organization does not encourage risk taking with regard to work production	3.80	High Level of Empowerment
While performing job duties, employees are not encouraged to use independent problem-solving skill	4.21	High Level of Empowerment

The organization has established guidelines and policies for employees	4.30	High Level of Empowerment
Category Mean	4.00	High Level of Empowerment

Table 2.a presents the organizational empowerment of government employees along the dynamic structural framework. The table shows that employees have a high level of empowerment provided by their organization. Specifically, the organization has already established guidelines and policies for employees. This can be attributed to the concept of decentralization in the government setting, in which policies and guidelines for employees are already in place and synchronized. In this way, policies and guidelines are already universal in nature, so all government employees in all agencies share the same policies. Meanwhile, it is also observed in the agency that out-of-the-box thinking is appreciated in the organization. This means that the organization allows its employees to think differently or from new perspectives. In this way, employees are given a chance to share their creative and critical ideas, which may contribute to the success of the organization. It has also been revealed in previous literature that this kind of thinking leads to positive outcomes individually and, more importantly, in the whole organization (Lord & Emrich, 2000; Atkinson, 2004). Meanwhile, while performing job duties, employees are not encouraged to use independent problem-solving skills. In the context of organizational development, collective problem-solving skills are more vital than independent problem-solving skills (Renkl & Atkinson, 2003). In this sense, the present finding stresses that the organization emphasizes the value of teamwork and organizational efforts in achieving goals and outcomes. In general, it can be gauged from the results that LGU-Gonzaga provides a clear set of modifiable guidelines that assist employee decision-making both procedurally and behaviorally in an evolving work environment. Previous studies affirmed that the high level of empowerment of employees in their organization is due to their manifestation and understanding of the organization’s vision and mission (Wang & Ahmed, 2003; Worley & Lawler, 2010; Kazlauskaitė, Buciniene & Turauskas, 2012).

Table 2.b. Organizational Empowerment of Government Employees along Control of Workplace Decisions

Control of Workplace Decisions	Mean	Qualitative Description
Employees have a say in defining their job responsibilities	3.20	Moderate Level of Empowerment
Employees have a say in setting their own productivity standards	2.62	Moderate Level of Empowerment
Employees have discretion in when they take their paid leave of absence	3.40	Moderate Level of Empowerment
Employees have a say in the departments to which they are assigned	3.65	High Level of Empowerment
Employees have input in the hiring of new employees	2.15	Low Level of Empowerment
Employees have a say in the establishing of their own retirement plans	3.70	High Level of Empowerment
Employees provide reviews of their supervisors	4.65	Very High Level of Empowerment
Category Mean	3.34	Moderate Level of Empowerment

Table 2b presents the organizational empowerment of government employees in control of workplace decisions. The table shows that employees have a moderate level of empowerment. This can be attributed to the nature of government agencies, which are decentralized. Government agencies have already established guidelines that do not allow employees any control or input into the majority of workplace decisions. In such situations, it does not necessarily mean that the organization cannot empower its employees (Ghosh, 2008; Daniels, Beesley, Cheyne, & Wimalasiri, 2008). However, it can also be seen from the table that, of all the indicators of control of workplace decisions, the item on whether employees are provided with reviews from their supervisors was rated by the respondents as very high. This means that a supervisor-employee relationship exists in the organization, specifically in the area of feedback. In this sense, the organization has a culture of leadership through the concept of feedback. Employees are aware of their strengths and weaknesses as perceived by external factors such as their supervisors. Studies conducted on employee and supervisor relationships reveal that effective feedback may lead to healthier organizational work relationships and also lead to more effective and higher work productivity (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2004; Riggs & Breyz, 2006).

Table 2.c. Organizational Empowerment of Government Employees along Fluidity in Information Sharing

Fluidity in Information Sharing	Mean	Qualitative Description
Employees are provided with financial records of the company	3.80	High Level of Empowerment
The company has an efficient way to disseminate information to all levels of employees	4.25	High Level of Empowerment
Employees have access to the information in their personal workfiles	4.00	High Level of Empowerment
The company publishes information on the company’s reward structure	4.01	High Level of Empowerment
The company provides employees with information on company clients	3.45	Moderate Level of Empowerment
Employees have knowledge of company-provided professional development programs	4.20	High Level of Empowerment

Category Mean	3.95	High Level of Empowerment
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Table 2c shows the organizational empowerment of government employees in fluidity in information sharing. The table reveals that their empowerment in this dimension is high. This means that all information concerning the organization is accessible to everyone in the organization. Literature stresses that the intent of FIS is to ensure that information dealing with the functioning of the organization is shared (Widen-Wulff & Davenport, 2007; Matthews, Michelle Diaz & Cole, 2003). The findings of this study reveal that employees should not be limited to sharing only task-related information but must also be able to express their ideas and grievances. Furthermore, in organizations with FIS, the element of trust between employees and the organization is strengthened (Lutters, Ackerman, & Zhou, 2007).

Table 2.d. Organizational Empowerment of Government Employees

Organizational Empowerment	Mean	Qualitative Description
Dynamic Structural Framework	4.00	High Level of Empowerment
Control of Workplace Decisions	3.34	Moderate Level of Empowerment
Fluidity in Information Sharing	3.95	High Level of Empowerment
Overall Mean	3.76	High Level of Empowerment

Table 2d provides a summary of the organizational empowerment of the employees of LGU-Gonzaga. The table shows that government employees have a high level of empowerment in dynamic structural framework and fluidity in information sharing, while they have a moderate level of empowerment in control of workplace decisions. In general, employees of LGU-Gonzaga have a high level of organizational empowerment. The findings are consistent with the results of previous studies on high levels of organizational empowerment (Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Bhatia, 2004; Manzoor, 2012).

Table 3. Significant Relationship between Government Employees' Organizational Empowerment and Work Performance

Variables	Pearson-R	p-value	Decision
Government Employees' Organizational Empowerment	.650	.000	Reject Ho
Government Employees' Work Performance			

Table 3 presents the significant relationship between government employees' organizational empowerment and work performance. The table shows that there is a positive correlation between organizational empowerment and work performance. This means that as employees' organizational empowerment increases, their work performance and productivity also increase. Hence, the findings of this study reveal that organizational empowerment plays a very important role in the lives of employees in terms of productivity and efficiency. The finding is consistent with previous studies stressing the role of empowerment on work performance and productivity of employees (Chow, Lo, Sha, & Hong, 2006; Spence Laschinger, Finegan, & Shamian, 2002).

IV. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the organization ensured that its employees worked in an environment geared towards employees' development by providing policies and guidelines that supported both employees and the organization, and also provided avenues to access information relevant to their needs and work. However, the organization did not have enough avenues for its employees to be part of decision-making activities that might affect the organization in general. Furthermore, their high level of organizational empowerment led to higher work performance and productivity.

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