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Administrative Empowerment: Its Concept, Dimensions, and Obstacles to Its Implementation in Institutions

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Abstract:

Administrative empowerment is one of the modern concepts that has received increasing interest by researchers and specialists in the field of business and organization, this interest reflects the vital role of empowerment in helping institutions to improve their performance and organize work within them, and also helps in adapting workers with continuous transformations and changes such as digital transformation, and increasing dependence on technology in the business environment. Administrative empowerment includes empowerment of employees in effective participation in decision -making, and enhancing their ability to contribute to various organizational processes, and through its application, the energies of creative workers are launched and their performance levels improve, which reflects positively on their loyalty and satisfaction within the work environment.

Through this article, we aim to highlight the concept of administrative empowerment, while reviewing its various dimensions, stages, in addition to the obstacles that successfully limit its applications in institutions.

Key words: administrative empowerment , participating in decision- making, workers satisfaction, obstacles, organizational operations.

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Introduction :

In recent years, the world has witnessed radical transformations in various social and economic fields, which have had clear impacts on business organizations and companies across all sectors. This transformation has been reflected in the adoption of advanced technologies and modern administrative methods that keep pace with ongoing global changes. These changes have also included shifts in the organizational and economic structures of institutions. In light of all this, organizations have had to seek flexible administrative approaches that ensure their sustainability and distinction in a competitive environment.

In this context, administrative empowerment has emerged as a modern administrative approach that contributes to improving institutional performance and ensures the development of human resource capabilities within the institution. The idea of administrative empowerment revolves around granting the worker or employee the authority and tasks that qualify them to actively participate in decision-making, while establishing and reinforcing the principle of trust and freedom in the workplace without direct interference from management. Empowerment is also based on a set of key dimensions, including delegation of authority, teamwork, participation in decision-making, continuous training, and motivation, etc. These dimensions lead to increased interaction between management and employees and enhance the stability of their performance in the organization. Moreover, the implementation of the empowerment approach has benefits and positive effects in terms of improving employee performance and increasing their satisfaction. However, its implementation is not without obstacles and challenges that may face some institutions, which may prevent the achievement of the desired outcomes. In order to achieve these outcomes, the organization must mobilize all the necessary capabilities and resources to ensure the success of the philosophy of administrative empowerment. This leads us to a series of questions:

What is meant by administrative empowerment**?** Where does its importance lie**?** What are its dimensions and stages**?** How can it be effectively implemented within the institution**?** And what are the obstacles that hinder its successful application in the business environment**?**

1 – Conceptual Meanings of Administrative Empowerment:

1-1The Concept of Empowerment:

Linguistically, empowerment means authority, ownership, and power. Almighty God referred to this in His Holy Book in the verse about Dhul-Qarnayn: *"Indeed, We established him in the land and gave him the means to everything"* [Al-Kahf: 84]. The meaning is that God Almighty empowered this righteous servant on earth, granting him strong authority and facilitating for him all the means that support and strengthen this authority(**Al-Amri, Barakat And others, 2022 P208).**

1-2Terminological Definition of Empowerment:

The verb *to empower* is defined in the Webster Dictionary as the process of granting legal authority (*invest with legal power*), transferring power to someone (*authorize*), or enabling an individual to perform a task (*enable*). Other scholars have also defined the term "empowerment" by analyzing its structure, particularly focusing on the component *power* within the word "empowerment." Power is defined as the ability to perform a task, and in this sense, empowerment refers to the process through which each individual gains power that was once centralized in the hands of the traditional leader, in order to carry out work more effectively.(**Boumenkar, Issaoui, 2018,P69)**

The definitions of administrative empowerment vary according to different authors, perspectives, and views on the subject.Some notable definitions of empowerment include:

Shermerhorn's definition: Empowerment is a means of unleashing talent and motivating individuals, enabling them to act in ways that make a difference in performance. It involves granting individuals the freedom to make decisions regarding their work.(**Al-Amri, Barakat And others,2022,P209)**

Bowen and Lawler's definition: Empowerment is viewed as the release of the employee's freedom—this is a mental state and a cognitive context that cannot be imposed externally overnight. Empowerment is an internal mental state that requires the individual to adopt and internalize this state in order to build self-confidence and belief in their cognitive abilities, helping them make decisions and choose the outcomes they aim to achieve(**Al-Jumaili,2008,P8)**

We also find the definition of Conger and Kanungo (1988), who considered empowerment as a process that leads to strengthening a person's belief in their self-capabilities. It is a feeling and a close job commitment resulting from the employee's sense of ability to make decisions, bear responsibility, that their performance is measured by results, and that they are viewed as a thinking person who contributes to performance and its development—not just a pair of hands executing what they are told**(Andraos, Ma'ayeh,2008,P48).**

As for Al-Afandi, he defined empowerment as: "A process of acquiring the necessary power to make decisions and contribute to setting plans, especially those related to the individual's job, and using the existing expertise of individuals to improve the organization's performance." (**Waleed,2016,P21).**

Based on the above, it is clear that the previous definitions agreed on a common point, which is that employees are granted by leaders the authority, power, and necessary freedom to make decisions and set plans independently and to employ their expertise in performing their tasks. This enhances their self-confidence and abilities, helps in refining their skills, and makes them creative and outstanding in their work within the organization, contributing to its effectiveness.

When defining the operational definition of empowerment, we can say that it is: a set of processes and practices aimed at granting the employee the ability to make decisions and providing them with the necessary authority to participate effectively in organizational activities. This is based on the

cognitive and intellectual abilities they possess, enabling them to set plans related to their tasks, along with identifying the results they seek to achieve. This contributes to motivating them and increasing their confidence in themselves and their abilities.

2- Importance of administrative empowerment:

The importance of administrative empowerment, as indicated by Saleh and Al-Mubaideen (2011), lies in extracting the maximum potential and creativity of human resources through its contribution to raising employees' morale and enhancing their organizational loyalty. It also helps reduce operating costs by minimizing unnecessary administrative levels, and lowering absenteeism and turnover rates, which contributes to achieving the organization's goals. Moreover, administrative empowerment accelerates the decision-making process by reducing time, as well as enhancing creative and innovative abilities, achieving employee commitment and job satisfaction, and easing the burden on managers at higher administrative levels. It also contributes to satisfying employees' needs, reducing their work pressure, increasing their self-confidence, developing a sense of responsibility, and strengthening their organizational loyalty through their understanding of the organization's circumstances and capabilities(**Al-Amiri, Barakat, And others,2022 pp. 208–209**)

Accordingly, we find that administrative empowerment contributes to achieving many positive outcomes, which were identified at three levels according to the classification presented by Al-Douri and Saleh, as follows:

1. **Employee Level**: Empowerment leads to mostly positive outcomes for the right employee. Among the most important benefits of employee empowerment are the achievement of internal belonging and active participation. Empowered employees tend to participate more positively as their sense of belonging and responsibility toward the organization's goals increases. They also gain knowledge and skills through successful empowerment programs.
2. **Organizational Level**: Through the provision of information, knowledge, skills, training, and incentives, the organization raises the capabilities of its employees. This is reflected in serious work efforts that result in positive outcomes for the organization, helping it achieve its short- and long-term goals.
3. **Customer Level**: Customers dealing with empowered employees expressed high levels of satisfaction. This indicates a direct relationship between employee empowerment and customer satisfaction. (**Al-Kaabi,2016p128**)

Based on the above, we can affirm that administrative empowerment represents a fundamental tool for improving performance within the organization, as it achieves positive results on multiple levels. At the employee level, empowerment strengthens internal belonging, increases active participation, and instills a greater sense of responsibility, in addition to developing knowledge and skills through training and motivation programs, which enhances efficiency. At the organizational level, empowerment contributes to achieving objectives, increasing profitability, and strengthening competitiveness and effectiveness. As for customers, empowerment enhances their satisfaction with the organization and its employees. Nevertheless, it is essential for the organization to provide the appropriate conditions to achieve empowerment, such as building high trust between employees and supervisors, and providing the necessary resources and support to ensure the success of this process.

We can highlight the importance and benefits of implementing administrative empowerment through the following table:

Table No. (01) illustrates the benefits of administrative empowerment for both the individual and the organization

Benifit for the organisation.	For the individual.
Increased productivity.	Fulfillment of individual needs for esteem and self actualization
Reduced absenteeism and turnover	Increased indiviual resilience to work related stress.
Improved quality of product or servise.	Greater loyalty to the organization.
Achieving a distinguished position.	Greater job and supervision satisfaction
Increased competitive ability.	Increased self motivation
Greater collaboration in problem solving.	Development of a sense of responsibility
Enhanced innovative capacities	

The Source: **Abdullah Baqabas, , 2018, p. 18.**

From what is presented in the table, we can say that the implementation of any administrative approach yields numerous benefits, including administrative empowerment, which leads to various positive outcomes that benefit the organization, its employees, and even its customers. Empowering employees helps develop their abilities and skills, and enhances the level of trust between them and the management—especially when they are granted the opportunity to make decisions and participate actively. This increases their motivation and loyalty, turning them into creative and innovative individuals in their performance. It also raises their productivity levels and contributes to reducing the need for direct supervision.
On the organizational level, administrative empowerment helps achieve goals efficiently and effectively, ensures sustainability and excellence in a changing work environment, and enhances competitive capabilities.

3-Dimensions of Administrative Empowerment :

Researchers have varied in their views and approaches regarding the definition of the dimensions of administrative empowerment and the establishment of generally agreed-upon dimensions. Through review, we can identify the following key dimensions of empowerment :

1.Delegation of Authority :
This refers to a supervisor granting subordinates the right to act and make decisions within a limited scope necessary for completing specific tasks. In administrative empowerment, it is assumed that authority should be delegated to the lowest administrative level. This requires expanding the scope of authority delegation so that employees at lower administrative levels have broader powers in setting objectives and more freedom in action**.(Al-Damas, Nassef,2022,p372**)

2.Work Teams :
Empowered employees should feel that the staff in their nit scan work together collectively to solve work-related problems, and that their ideas are respected and taken seriously. This requires a high level of trust. The development of work teams in an organization depends on the presence of a strong leader who can provide guidance, encouragement, and support to team members to overcome any difficulties they may encounter. Team members should have diverse skills, be committed to achieving a common goal and shared responsibility, and possess a high level of authority in making executive decisions**.(Radi, 2010 p. 24**)

3.Participation in Decision-Making :
This means involving employees in making decisions by giving them more freedom and autonomy. Some believe that administrative empowerment means giving employees the ability and independence to make decisions, especially at lower administrative levels.

4.Self-Efficacy :
This refers to an individual's ability to perform and complete assigned tasks efficiently and competently as a result of their experience, skills, and knowledge. It also involves sharing information that builds trust between management and individuals, making them aware of surrounding events, changes, and the organization's current state. Information must be accurate, correct, and available at the right time**.(Heba Mohammed,2023 p122)**

5.Communication and Information Flow :
Decision-making depends on the decision maker's ability to obtain the greatest amount of data and information related to the alternatives available from various sources. The more accurate and reliable the data and information, the more successful.

The resulting decision will be. Therefore, it is essential to accurately identify and define the required data, determine its sources, ensure that it is concise, objective, and comprehensive, and that it is obtained at the appropriate time. **.(Al-Damas, Nassef,2022,p372)**

6.Motivation :
Empowerment loses its foundation if the organization does not provide appropriate rewards. Empowerment requires a rewards system based on performance rather than just work. When rewards are tied to performance by linking employees' gains to the success of the organization, this leads to increased employee motivation to achieve the organization's goals and objectives **(Mohsen, 2015, p. 351).**

7.Training and Organizational Learning :
This refers to the ability to enable continuous change by generating the knowledge required for

work. It goes beyond training and learning at the level of the current job to include training and learning at the level of the organization's functions and the tasks that achieve its goals**.(Al-Amiri, Barakat and other 2022, p.210)**

The dimensions of administrative empowerment collectively form the foundation for creating an effective and productive work environment. By focusing on these dimensions, an organization can enhance employee performance and achieve its strategic objectives. Empowering employees does not only mean granting them authority, but also equipping them with knowledge, motivation, and a supportive environment that fosters trus and belonging, along with providing communication - channels to deliver information. All of this contributes to improving productivity, boosting the organization's competitive ability, and developing employee performance.

We can outline the dimensions of administrative empowerment according to researchers' perspectives as follows :

Table (2) : Dimensions of Empowerment from the Perspective of Researchers

Order	Researcher	Types (dimensions)
1	**Ersted.1997.328**	1- Possessing knowledge 2- Participation in decision-making
2	**Blanchard.etal.1999.290**	1- Information sharing 2- Freedom 3- Work teams
3	**Daft.2010.505**	1- Information 2- Knowledge 3- Power 4- Rewards
4	**Light.2004.37**	1- Power 2- Knowledge 3- Information 4- Rewards
5	**Halversen.2005.48**	1- Freedom 2- Participation 3- Work environment 4- Growth opportunities
6	Andrews and his associates.	1- Participation 2- Resources 3- Accountability 4- Climate 5- Training 6- Power 7- Responsibility 8- Job satisfaction 9- Communication 10- Management support

		11- Recognition
7	Al-Sakaranah, 2010, p. 304.	1- Task dimension 2- Power dimension 3- Commitment dimension 4- Culture dimension
8	Abdul-Hussein, 2012, p. 83.	1- Negotiation 2- Training and education 3- Autonomy 4- Motivation
9	afna	1.Communication 2.participation of information 3.work teams 4.influence in motivation strength

.Source : **Al-Kaabi, 2016, p. 126**

From the above, we can say that despite the differing views and perceptions regarding the dimensions of administrative empowerment, there is wide agreement on a set of basic dimensions that form the essence of this concept. These dimensions include the delegation of authority, which grants employees the ability to make decisions independently ; training and development, which contribute to enhancing employees' capabilities and skills ; motivation, which increases their drive and leads to better performance ; and communication and the flow of information, which assist employees in decision-making. In addition, freedom and the principle of trust create a flexible work environment that encourages creativity and active participation, and teamwork, which is considered one of the important dimensions, promotes collaboration and collective work, thus enhancing interaction between employees and management. Despite the variety of empowerment dimensions, they all function in an integrated manner to achieve the organization's goals, ensure efficiency, improve performance in its environment, and increase the effectiveness of employee empowerment.

4- Requirements and Foundations of Administrative Empowerment:
Many studies emphasize the importance of creating and consolidating certain basic foundations before empowering employees in the organization, which include four main components**(Hiba Muhammad,2023, p. 123)** summarized by Al-Qahtani as follows:

- Environmental components: a strong culture, both internal to the organization and external in society.
- Administrative components: the use of effective managerial methods, modern organizational structures, and good incentives.
- Human components: leaders who believe in empowerment, qualified employees, and cooperative clients.
- Material components: modern technology and a work environment that supports productivity

Therefore, implementing the principle of empowerment in the organization requires some significant changes and administrative attitudes within the organization **(Al-Harbi2021, p. 303**.)

- In addition to these components, there is another classification of requirements that can be noted as follows: knowledge, skills, communication, flow of information, trust between leaders and subordinates, and both material and moral incentives.. **(Heba Mohammed,2023, p. 123).**

5 – Stages of Implementing the Empowerment Strategy:

The administrative empowerment strategy, like other strategies, is implemented in several stages, as outlined by Al-Kubaisi and others:

1. **First stage**: Diagnosing the conditions within the organization and classifying them into organizational factors such as changes, bureaucratic climate, absence of creativity, neglect of training, disorder in the distribution of authority, and employees' feelings of powerlessness and loss of status.
2. **Second stage**: Moving toward adopting new managerial methods such as participation, goal setting, job enrichment, accurate job description, and defining requirements, authority, and rights.
3. **Third stage:** Providing comprehensive information about managers at all levels, using four sources for evaluation: ineffective practices, successful and creative experiences, verbal persuasion, and academic qualifications.

4. **Fourth Stage**: Informing individuals of their evaluation results, assessing their readiness to practice empowerment, increasing their exerted effort, and encouraging their commitment to success and self-effective work.
5. **Fifth Stage**: Achieving significant behavioral changes among individuals at all levels through their determination to accomplish and meet the goals of the adopted empowerment strategy**(Al–Harbi**, **2021**, **p**. **304**)

6. **Barriers to Empowerment Implementation**:

Undoubtedly, the process of administrative empowerment within an institution faces many obstacles and challenges that must be addressed and contained in order to advance the application of the empowerment strategy. These obstacles include:

1. Lack of willingness to change
2. Extreme centralization in decision-making
3. Fear of losing authority among senior management
4. Hierarchical organizational structure
5. Managers' fear of losing their jobs
6. Strict systems and procedures that discourage initiative and innovation
7. Secrecy in information exchange
8. Preference for traditional administrative leadership styles
9. Lack of administrative trust. (**Abdullah, Hussein, and other ,p317)**
10. Weak incentive systems
11. Preference for traditional administrative leadership styles
12. Weak training and self-development
13. Lack of administrative trust
14. Divergence in goals between management and employees

According to Fortester (FOTTESTER2000), the main obstacles to empowerment are as follows:

- Managers do not want to apply the concept of empowerment, due to their fear of losing power and influence.

- Equality between the concepts of empowerment and authorization of power, and considering the mandate as a synonym for empowerment.
- Applying empowerment by transferring and simulating successful empowerment programs in other organizations, despite the different circumstances of each organization, not taking into account the needs of the participants in the authority.**(Khalfa, Issaoui, 2018,p363,364)**

Conclusion

Based on the above, it can be said that administrative empowerment is one of the fundamental approaches relied upon by global companies and organizations to ensure excellence and competitiveness. This is achieved by enhancing human resource capabilities and developing their skills and knowledge, granting them meaningful opportunities to participate in decision-making, giving them a degree of freedom in carrying out their tasks and responsibilities, and providing them with the necessary information and communication channels to help them take control of their work.

However, it is important to note that the success of this approach largely depends on the presence of a culture that supports empowerment, as well as the conviction of the organization's leadership in the importance and necessity of implementing empowerment. Additionally, it requires the provision of all the tools and resources necessary to ensure the success of this method, thereby enabling the organization not only to achieve its goals but also to attain excellence.

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