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**A Literature Review of Empowerment
With A Suggested Model for Bahrain Defense Force**

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December 2003**

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**A LITRATURE REVIEW OF EMPOWERMENT WITH A SUGGESTED
EMPOWERMENT MODEL FOR BAHRAIN DEFENSE FORCE**

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ABSTRACT

In recent years the topic of empowerment has been given a great deal of attention due to its influence on organizational effectiveness and innovation. This project reviews the empowerment literature including its roots, definitions, notions, elements and different models that have been developed by management experts. Based on the literature review, an empowerment model is proposed for the Bahrain Defense Force (BDF). The model is based on three dimensions, namely, empowering management practices, empowered individuals and empowering working environment.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

Challenges, such as a fluctuating environment, sophisticated technology, the need for quick decision making and the importance of frequent changes, have established the need among organizations to change their traditional management practices (command and control) into democratic structures that offer employees greater autonomy, confidence and freedom to make decisions. Such democratic structures will not be effective unless employees have a sense of empowerment.

The concept of empowerment has received a great deal of attention during the past 20 years, due to its strong influence on organizational effectiveness and innovation (Spreitzer, 1995). Both private and governmental organizations have been trying to adapt this management concept to achieve their goals and improve their operation in today's volatile environment.

B. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This project reviews the empowerment literature and the models that have been developed on this concept by different management experts. Moreover, based on the discussed literature, an empowerment model will be proposed for the Bahrain Defense Force (BDF). This model will be compatible with the work environment and the culture of the BDF.

C. THE VALUE OF EMPOWERMENT

Employee empowerment can be a powerful tool for organizations. This new management style can increase efficiency and effectiveness inside an organization. It increases employee productivity. By empowering employees,

leaders and managers have the freedom to dedicate their time to more important matters (Spreitzer, 1995).

Empowerment also brings many benefits to employees. It makes them feel better about their contributions to the organization, it enhances employees' minds to find better ways to execute their jobs and it gives employees the feeling of confidence in themselves and their organizations (Bourke 1998).

The following are some of the benefits of empowerment, as emphasized by many researchers and authors in the field (e.g., Altizer, 1993; Quinn and Spreitzer, 1997; Spreitzer, 1995):

1. Quickly responding to changing environments.
2. Improving productivity and quality of work.
3. Creating and reinforcing a positive work culture.
4. Encouraging employees to use their talents and to be creative.
5. Solving problems quickly.
6. Maintaining pride and morale among employees.
7. Making employees act more responsibly.
8. Creating flexibility and innovation.
9. Facilitating knowledge sharing.
10. Increasing job satisfaction.

D. ABOUT BAHRAIN

Bahrain is a small archipelagic country located in the Arabian Gulf, east of Saudi Arabia. It consists of 36 islands, including: Bahrain, the largest island and the site of the capital Manama, and Al-Muharraq. The total area of Bahrain is 706 square kilometers. The population is estimated to be 666,400. The majority of the population is Arab, and most of these people are native-born; almost one-third of the population, however, is foreign-born. Muslims make up most of the total population. Arabic is the official language; however, English is widely spoken,

especially in business. The climate of Bahrain can be described as pleasant winters, and very hot, humid summers.

Bahrain's economy is basically hinged on natural resources, including oil, natural gas, fish, and agriculture. Likewise, the country has well-developed industries in aluminum products, tiles and cement blocks, plastics, asphalt, paper products, wheat flour and soft drinks. In addition, Bahrain has transformed itself into an international banking center.

The government of Bahrain is that of hereditary constitutional monarchy. In February 2002, Amir Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa proclaimed himself King and Bahrain was officially transformed into a kingdom. Since he was installed in 1999, the King has pushed social, economic and political reforms and has worked to improve relations with other countries.



Figure 1. Map of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

E. BAHRAIN DEFENSE FORCE

Bahrain Defense Force was formally organized on February 5, 1969. Although first started with one infantry unit, the BDF today includes all types of forces: Army, Navy, and Air Force. These forces are equipped with some of the most advanced weapon systems to achieve their goals.

The main roles of the BDF are:

1. Protecting the Kingdom from external threats.
2. Protecting the national coast of the Kingdom.
3. Assisting in maintaining law and order throughout the country.
4. Training and equipping itself in peacetime to achieve and maintain a satisfactory readiness.
5. Assisting the internal security forces when necessary.
6. Assisting in disaster relief.

F. PROBLEM DEFINITION

The Bahrain defense force (BDF), just like most military organizations, is characterized by a set of rules and rigid command structures. It uses one-way communication, from the upper management to the front-line employees, passing through various levels of hierarchy. The power and decision making always reside at the top.

In the past, this traditional model (command and control) has served this type of organization. Today, however, the rapid changes in technology, the unstable environment and the need for quick responses, have established the need for different management practices that overcome such challenges. Those practices include: participation in decision making, sharing power and authority, and effective delegation. For these practices to be effective, empowerment should be considered.

G. ORGANIZATION OF THE PROJECT

The project is divided into the following chapters:

Chapter I: presents the introduction, which includes the purpose of the study, the value of empowerment, information about Bahrain, information about Bahrain defense force (BDF) and the problem definition.

Chapter II: reviews the empowerment literature, including roots, definitions, notions and elements.

Chapter III: covers some of the most discussed models in the empowerment literature, including: the Conger and Konungo (1988), Thomas and Velthouse (1990), Altizer (1993), Thomas and Tymon (1993), and Spritzer (1995).

Chapter IV: proposes an empowerment model for Bahrain Defense Force (BDF).

Chapter V: concludes the project with recommendations for future research.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW OF EMPOWERMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a literature review of empowerment. It discusses the roots of the term and different authors' views on definitions, notions and elements related to empowerment.

B. ROOTS OF EMPOWERMENT

The term "Empowerment" was used in different areas before being used in management. These areas include political and social movements. According to Potterfield (1999, P38):

The intellectual roots of empowerment can be traced to a wide array of movements and ideas over the past few centuries, culminating in wide spread application of empowerment-related ideas to various social reform movements in the 1960 and 1970....social reform movements such as the civil rights movement, feminism, and others.

Potterfield (1999) indicates that through personal conversation with management and employee empowerment experts, he found that these experts were uncertain about when and where the term was used in management and organizational studies. At the same time, Honold (1999) argues that the use of the concept in management was found in the socio-technical approach (Lewin, 1951), the idea of job enrichment (Herzberg, 1968), and employee participation.

C. DEFINITIONS

The literature contains several definitions of empowerment, each of which offers a slightly different perspective. For example, Burke (1986, p.5) defines empowerment as: "To empower implies the granting of power-delegation of authority."

Similarly, Cornwall (1990, p.87) defines empowerment as “...the process of having power given from the traditionally powerful managers in an organization and instilled in everyone.”

Empowerment has been also defined from a different prospective: Randolph (1995, p.20) defines empowerment as “...recognizing and releasing into the organization the power that people already have in their wealth and useful knowledge and internal motivation.”

Similarly, Conger and Kanungo (1988, p.474) define empowerment as:

A process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information.

It is very clear that authors have two different views on empowerment. The first two definitions by Burke and Cornwall view empowerment as sharing power and authority (a relational perspective), while definitions by Randolph and Conger and Kanungo view empowerment as a motivational construct (a psychological perspective). Conger and Kanungo (1988) state that in the management literature these two meanings are confused and considered to have the same meaning. In the same manner, Thomas and Velthouse (1990, p.666) say:

Empowerment has become a widely used word within the organizational science. At this early stage of its usage, however, empowerment has no agreed upon definition. Rather, the term has been used, often loosely, to capture a family of somewhat related meanings. For example, the word has been used to describe a variety of specific interventions, as well as the presumed effects of those interventions on workers.

D. NOTIONS OF EMPOWERMENT

As mentioned earlier in the definitions, empowerment has been viewed from two perspectives: the psychological prospective and the relational prospective.

1. The Psychological Notion

Psychological empowerment, also known as organic (Quinn and Spreitzer, 1997) or bottom-up processing (Conger and Kanungo, 1988), focuses on employees' perception of empowerment and employees' inner natures. For example, if an employee has the authority to make a decision but does not believe that he has the capability to make the right decision, then having the authority to make the decision will not result in improved outcomes for either the organization or the employee.

As another example, Spreitzer (1996, p.486) indicates:

Resources may be decentralized in objective reality, but if employees are not informed that those resources are available for their use, then access to resources will have little influence on feelings of empowerment.

Thus, "...empowerment is not a personality disposition; rather, it is a dynamic construct that reflects individual beliefs about person-environment relationships" (Mishra and Spreitzer, 1998, p.579).

2. The Relational Notion

Relational empowerment has been referred to in the literature as top-down processing (Conger and Kanungo, 1988) as well as mechanistic (Quinn and Spreitzer, 1997). It focuses on sharing power and delegation of authority within the organization. As Spreitzer (1997, p.6) states:

In this perspective, empowerment can be achieved through delegation or sharing of power.... this perspective has received considerable attention in the literature largely through research on

participative management and decision making, employee involvement, delegation, and power distribution.

Relational empowerment has to do with the organization and how it should be structured and how the organizational culture should be designed to facilitate empowerment.

E. ELEMENTS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT

Four psychological elements were identified by Thomas and Velthouse (1990):

1. Impact

Impact is when someone believes he can influence his work and that others will respond to his ideas. According to Thomas and Velthouse (1990, p.672), impact is "...the degree to which behavior is seen as making a difference in terms of accomplishing the purpose of the task." Similarly, Spreitzer (1995, p.1443) defines impact as "the degree to which an individual can influence strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at work." Providing information about organizational mission is the key to shaping the Impact.

2. Competence

Competence is the confidence someone has about his ability to do his work well. Thomas and Velthouse (1994, p.672) define it as "The degree to which a person can perform task activities skillfully when he or she tries." Spreitzer (1995, p.1443) defines competence as "...an individual's belief in his or her capacity to perform activities with skill."

Effective supervision can enhance feelings of competence. This supervision can be achieved by providing feedback on performance and creating a climate encouraging reflection about work performance.

3. Meaningfulness

Meaningfulness is when someone feels that his work is important to him and he likes what he is doing. According to Thomas and Velthouse (1990, p.672) meaningfulness "...involves the individual's intrinsic caring about a given task" Similarly, Spreitzer (1995, p.1443) defines meaningfulness as "...the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual's own ideals or standards." Meaningfulness can be enhanced by providing information about the mission of the organization and through sharing this information throughout. Effective supervision may also create a sense of meaningfulness.

4. Choice

Choice is the freedom to choose how to do work and not to be closely managed. According to Thomas and Velthouse (1990, p.673), choice "...involves casual responsibility for a person's actions." Spreitzer (1995, p.1443) refers to choice as self-determination and she defines it as "...autonomy in the initiation and continuation of work behaviors and process." Choice can be determined by measuring the extent to which individuals have a sense of autonomy in relation to work pace, order and quality.

The management literature stresses that these four elements (impact, competence, meaningfulness, choice) create a complete set of elements for understanding psychological empowerment (Spreitzer 1995, Thomas and Velthouse 1990). Employees feel psychologically empowered when they see themselves as having choices in how they do their work, have confidence in their ability to do a successful job, believe in the value of their work, and know that their actions will positively influence their organization.

F. ELEMENTS OF RELATIONAL EMPOWERMENT

The following are some of the most recognized relational elements found in the literature:

1. Organizational Vision, Mission and Policy

Every organization has to define and share its vision, mission, and policy with its employees to create the environment of encouragement, freedom and trust needed for an empowered organization. Potterfield (1999, p.56) states:

A shared set of clearly articulated values and cohesive vision of the longer-term purpose of organization represent key traits of empowered individuals and empowered organizations.

Harrison and John define vision as "...a forward-looking view of what the organization wants to become" (Harrison and John 2002, p.49). At the same time, they differentiate vision from mission by stating "unlike mission, which addresses an organization's purpose at the present time, an organization's vision is very future-oriented" (Harrison and John 2002, p.51).

The employees will feel empowered if the organization's mission and vision are articulated in a way that is congruent with their values and beliefs. Block states "...we become empowered when we create around ourselves a bubble that expresses our wishes of what we want to create" (Block 1987, p.190). Similarly, Potterfield (1999, p.57) reports:

It is this democratic process that facilitates the foundation of a vision, based upon the values most important to the members of an organization, that is capable of fueling the enthusiasm, energy, and commitment workers need to succeed in an empowered organization.

The policy for a corporation should be unique to that organization, and it should be simple. The language must reflect the corporate culture and the style of management. Potts and Sykes (1993, p.63) state:

In the traditional corporate culture, policy manuals often become simply the tools of the audit staff. In many companies, written policy statements are consulted only when it is necessary to take disciplinary or other action. Policies are reviewed by line management to ensure compliance with difficult decisions, measuring behavior against policy to determine the nature of violation for the purpose of discipline. A useful policy is a statement

that is clear and can help all facets of an organization work toward a common goal.

Every organization needs to identify and share its mission, vision, and policy with its employees, in order to set a clear path toward successful empowerment. Therefore, a clear and shared mission statement and vision, with a simple written policy would play an important role in management development. Moreover, this would create an environment where employees act autonomously in their work rather than wait for permission and direction from top management. In addition, "...clear vision and policy would provide challenge to employees, stretching their capability to improve themselves and the organization" (Quinn and Spreitzer 1997, p.45).

2. Sharing Updated Information

Organizations implementing empowerment, or planning to do so, cannot achieve their goals without having an efficient information network that allows everybody in the organization to access and share information. Bowen and Lawer (1992, p.23) state "...for empowerment to work, information about the organization's performance must be shared with front line employees."

Similarly, Kanter suggests that: "In order to be empowering, organizations must make information more available to more people at more levels through more devices" (1989, p.5). Moreover, sharing critical and useful information can play a big role in decision making. In other words, empowered employees will never be able to respond swiftly and promptly and reach an appropriate decision without updated information related to the specific decision at hand. In the same context, Potterfield (1999, p.53) indicates:

The empowered organization is ideally an open system, where information is shared freely and where communication takes place in all directions – including across departmental boundaries and even upward from the front-line workers to the corporate chiefs.

Similarly, Conger and Kanungo (1998) discuss the need for a good information network to facilitate good decision making. They see that any disruption in sharing information can increase an employee's uncertainty level. Furthermore, in companies with a good information sharing system, the element of trust between employees and the company is strengthened.

Today, Information Technology (IT) makes the task easier and more efficient. It ensures that information is available to those who need it, and in a form that is useful. Collins (1990, p238), referring to this powerful management tool, states that:

Information technology is becoming increasingly the key to national economic well being, affecting virtually every industry and service. One would be hard-pressed to name a business that does not depend on the effective use of information: to design products and services, to track and respond to market demands or to make well-informed decisions. Information technology will change the world more permanently and more profoundly than any technology so far seen in history, and will bring about a transformation of civilization to match. We notice that environmental trends like globalization and heightened international competitions are speeding the movement toward increased IT use by corporations. Dramatic technological developments and considerable decrease in prices of hardware, software, and telecommunication have simultaneously pushed the utilization of IT further along.

Brower (1995) identifies the information that needs to be shared for successful empowerment:

- a. The financial trends, current situation, and projections for the organization.
- b. Present and potential changes in markets, customers, and competition.
- c. Trends in the technology of production and products.
- d. The cost per unit day by day or hour by hour, if possible.
- e. Strategic direction of the organization and its priorities for the coming year.
- f. Key measures of performance.

3. Delegation of Authority

Delegation of authority is considered a cornerstone for empowerment. To be empowered, the employees must have the authority to make decisions without getting prior approval from a manager, and without having their decisions overruled. In this context Lashley (1999, p.178) states:

The success of a particular initiative will be dependent in the first instance on the empowered being given the authority and freedom to make decisions which they themselves consider to be valuable, significant and important.

Delegation of authority is the process managers use to transfer formal authority from one position to another within the organization. Similarly, delegation is defined by Nelson (1994, p.11) as:

Entrusting power and authority to a person acting as one's representative. During the process of delegating, team members are assigned a task or responsibility. They are given authority to complete the task, and they assume accountability for the completion of the task.

Providing delegated authority can enable employees to control their own work. Furthermore, delegating authority to employees gives managers greater opportunities to concentrate on senior level work. Nelson (1994, p.8) indicates:

Delegation gives you an opportunity to handle aspects of the job that no one else can do. These activities might include project, planning, monitoring team members, and handling personnel problems as they arise. Using delegation, you can focus on doing a few tasks well rather than too many tasks poorly.

Delegation of authority benefits the organization, managers, and employees. In this context, Nelson (1994) identifies the following advantages from of delegating authority:

- a. Frees managers' time so they can do more important work.
- b. Develops employee's skills.
- c. Demonstrates confidence in delegates.
- d. Reduces the time managers spend on decisions.

- e. Increases flexibility of work.
- f. Increases productivity of the organization.
- g. Increases the capability for taking quick decisions.

Nelson (1994) argues that most managers don't delegate because:

- a. They believe that they can do the job better.
- b. They lack the confidence in their employee's ability.
- c. They fear that delegation diminishes their authority.
- d. They are interested in the task and do not want to share the stratification gained from a task accomplishment.
- e. They are insecure about their own abilities.

At the same time, Nelson (1994) argues that employees resist accepting delegation because:

- a. They don't want to take responsibility.
- b. They lack confidence.
- c. They lack incentives for motivation.
- d. They fear criticism.
- e. They lack competence.

Delegation of authority is a must for empowering an organization. It involves allowing members to assume the responsibility and authority to make decisions. Authority must be shared through trust, assurance, motivation, and support.

4. Performance Management Systems

Empowering organizations requires performance management systems that provide a clear understanding of work responsibilities and tools for measuring quality and success. According to Nelson (1994, P.63):

Communicating the performance standards by which the team member will be evaluated ensures that the team member knows what good performance is. Performance standards help you and employees monitor performance and serve as a basis for evaluation.

Employees need to know if their goals and performance meet the organization's overall objectives and strategy. They also need management feedback on their performance and management suggestions to ensure optimal performance. Nelson (1994, p.63) states: "...setting performance standards provides a mechanism for measurement and feedback."

5. Reward Systems

Rewarding employees is another important element in employees' empowerment. Unless employees feel that their good performance is appreciated, they will have no incentive to make recognized performance. Spreitzer (1995, p.1448) states:

Individual-performance-based rewards are argued to be important for empowerment. Individual incentives enhance empowerment by: 1. recognizing and reinforcing personal competencies and 2. providing individuals with incentives for participating in and affecting decision-making process at work.

In the same context, Lawler (1986, p.29) states:

People will be motivated to perform well when three conditions exist: 1. rewards are perceived to be tied to performance 2. the rewards that are tied to performance are valued. 3. effective performance is perceived to be achievable.

If the organization expects competency, innovation and good performance from its employees, it should provide a reward system that is valued by the employees.

To develop an effective empowering environment within an organization, both aspects of empowerment, psychological and relational, should be

considered. Empowerment requires that both individual and organizational goals are aligned. Otherwise, people will be empowered to do things that are not in the organization's interest and, alternatively, people will be empowered to do things in the organization's interest but not motivated to do so because it is not in their own self interest.

Spreitzer (1992, p.7) states that: "...relational and psychological empowerments are believed to be related because psychological empowerment may be an outcome of relational empowerment." Similarly, Quinn and Spreitzer (1997) emphasize that one perspective of empowerment should not be considered more important than the other. They claim that empowerment programs fail possibly because company decision makers emphasize either the relational or the psychological approach in their attempt to find the best way to empower their employees. Quinn and Spreitzer suggest that a true empowering program must contain elements drawn from both prospectives.

G. CONCLUSION

The main aspects of the empowerment literature have been covered in this chapter. A brief history of empowerment roots was reviewed. Empowerment has been discussed from both its relational and psychological interpretations. The main elements of both notions of empowerment have been thoroughly discussed.

The points that should be kept in mind regarding this chapter include the following:

1. The term empowerment was used in different areas long before it was used in the management field.
2. Management experts look at empowerment from two prospectives, relational (mechanistic or top-down processing) and psychological (organic or bottom-up processing).

3. Both notions of empowerment, relational and psychological, are interrelated; one may lead to the other. Therefore, for successful employee empowerment, elements from both notions should be considered.

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III. DIFFERENT MODELS IN EMPOWERMENT

Authors have developed different models related to empowerment. Some of the most recognized are the following:

A. THE CONGER AND KANUNGO MODEL

In their article “The empowerment process: Integrating theory and practice,” Conger and Kanungo (1988, p.474) define empowerment as:

A process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing self-efficacy information.

They argue that relational elements, such as delegation of authority and sharing information and resources, are only conditions that may support and enable the empowerment process. They indicate that there is another set of conditions should be considered besides those elements.

Conger and Kanungo constructed a five-stage model of the process of empowerment, as shown in Figure 2. In the process, they include diagnosis of organizational conditions that are responsible for feelings of powerlessness, techniques to remove some of the conditions leading to powerlessness, providing subordinates with self-efficacy information, subordinates’ feeling of being empowered, and behavioral effects of empowerment (Conger and Kanungo, 1988).

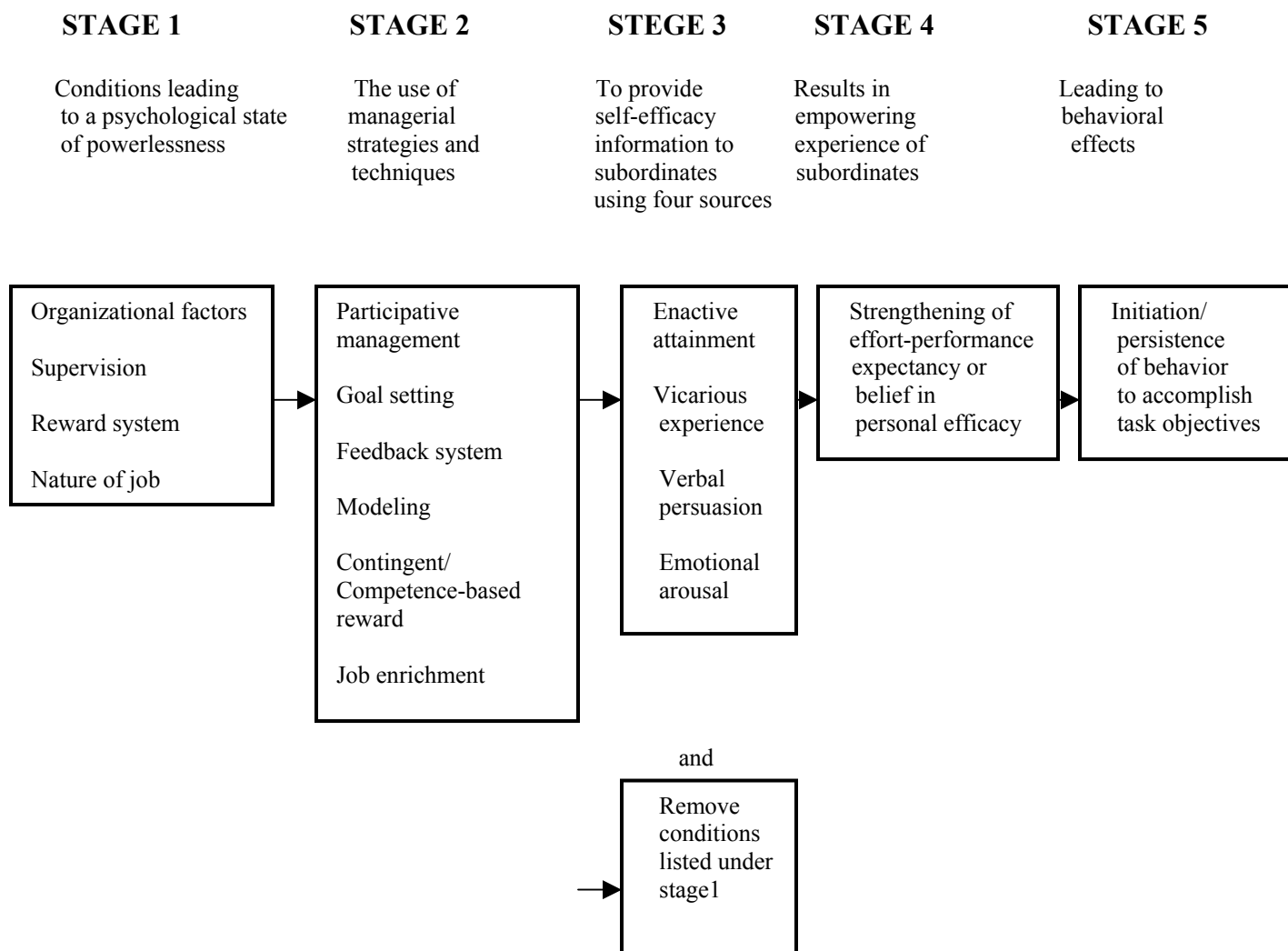


Figure 2. Five stages in the process of empowerment. (Copied from Conger and Kanungo, 1988, p.475).

The five stage model of empowerment includes:

1. The first stage is a diagnosis process. In this stage, it is critical to find out the specific conditions that are responsible for feelings of powerlessness among subordinates. According to Conger and Kanungo (1988, p.477) conditions that may be responsible for feeling powerless are as follow:

- a. Organizational factors including:
 - (1) Significant organizational changes.
 - (2) Competitive pressures.
 - (3) Start-up ventures.
 - (4) Impersonal bureaucratic climate.
 - (5) Poor communications.
 - (6) Highly centralized organizational resources.
- b. Supervisory style:
 - (1) High control.
 - (2) Negativism (emphasis on failure).
 - (3) Lack of reason for actions.
- c. Reward systems:
 - (1) Non contingency.
 - (2) Low incentive value of rewards.
 - (3) Lack of competence-based rewards.
 - (4) Lack of innovation-based rewards.
- d. Job Design:
 - (1) Lack of role clarity.
 - (2) Lack of training and technical support.
 - (3) Unrealistic goals.
 - (4) Lack of appropriate authority.
 - (5) Low task variety.
 - (6) Limited participation in programs, meetings, decisions that have a direct impact in job performance.
 - (7) Lack of appropriate and necessary resources.
 - (8) Lack of network-forming opportunities.

- (9) Highly established work routines.
- (10) High rule structures.
- (11) Low advancement opportunities.
- (12) Lack of meaningful goals.
- (13) Limited contact with senior management.

2. After the diagnosis stage, managers in stage 2 implement empowerment strategies, such as participative management and its requirement for goal setting, job enrichment, feedback systems, modeling, and competence based rewards. The purpose of implementing these strategies is to remove some of the external conditions responsible for powerlessness and to provide subordinates with self-efficacy information in the next stage.

3. In stage 3, the source of information is provided through inactive attainment, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal.

4. The result of receiving information mentioned in stage 3 is that subordinates feel empowered in stage 4.

5. In the final stage, the behavioral effects of empowerment are noticed and can be shown, through initiation and persistence of behavior to accomplish task objectives.

To sum up, in “The Empowerment Process,” Conger and Kanungo look at empowerment as “a process whereby an individual’s belief in his or her self-efficacy is enhanced. To empower means to strengthen this belief or to weaken one’s belief in Personal powerlessness” (Conger and Kanungo, 1988, p.474). They identify several context factors that can lower the powerlessness feeling among employees.

B. THE THOMAS AND VELTHOUSE MODEL

Thomas and Velthouse (1990) build on Conger and Kanungo's work with their cognitive model of empowerment. They define empowerment in terms of intrinsic motivation. Thomas and Velthouse (1990, 667) state:

To empower means to give power to. Power, however, has several meanings. In a legal sense, power means authority, so that empowerment can mean authorization. Power also may be used to describe capacity, as in the self-efficacy definition of Conger and Kanungo. However, power also means energy. Thus, to empower also can mean to energize.

The authors indicate that they improve Conger and Kanungo's model in three ways. First, they identify the empowerment concept with a type of motivation. Second, they specify a complete set of task assessments. Third, their model is constructed in a way that it can reflect the process that employees use for task assessment.

Thomas and Velthouse identify four task assessments they feel to be the basis of employee empowerment. Those task assessments: impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice, are the employees' judgments regarding the task they are performing. The authors define the task assessments as follow:

1. Impact

"Refers to the degree to which behavior is seen as (making a difference) in terms of accomplishing the purpose or task, that is, producing the intended effects in one's task environment" (Thomas and Velthouse 1990, p.672).

2. Meaningfulness

"Concerns the value of the task goals or purpose, judged in relation to the individual's own ideals or standards" (Thomas and Velthouse 1990, p.672).

3. Competence

“Refers to the degree to which a person can perform task activities skillfully when he or she tries” (Thomas and Velthouse 1990, p.672).

4. Choice

“Involves casual responsibilities for a person’s actions” (Thomas and Velthouse 1990, p.673).

In addition to the task assessment, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) develop a model that captures the process by which employees arrive at task assessment. According to the authors, the elements of this process, as shown in Figure 3, are:

1. Environmental events: “...are a source of data about the consequences of the individual’s ongoing behavior and about conditions relevant to that person’s future behavior” (Thomas and Velthouse 1990, p.671).

2. The task assessments, as mentioned earlier, are impact, choice, competence, and meaningfulness.

3. Behavior includes activity, concentration, initiative, resiliency, and flexibility.

4. Global Assessments “...are an individual’s generalized beliefs about impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice. These are abstract beliefs in contrast to the specific assessment (Element 2) that motivate a person’s behavior in a given task situation” (Thomas and Velthouse 1990, p.669).

5. Interpretative styles include attributing, evaluating, and envisioning.

6. Intervention “...refers to deliberate attempts to produce empowerment (increased intrinsic task motivation) through changes in the environmental events that impinge upon individuals, or through changes in

individuals' manner of interpreting those events" (Thomas and Velthouse1990, p.662).

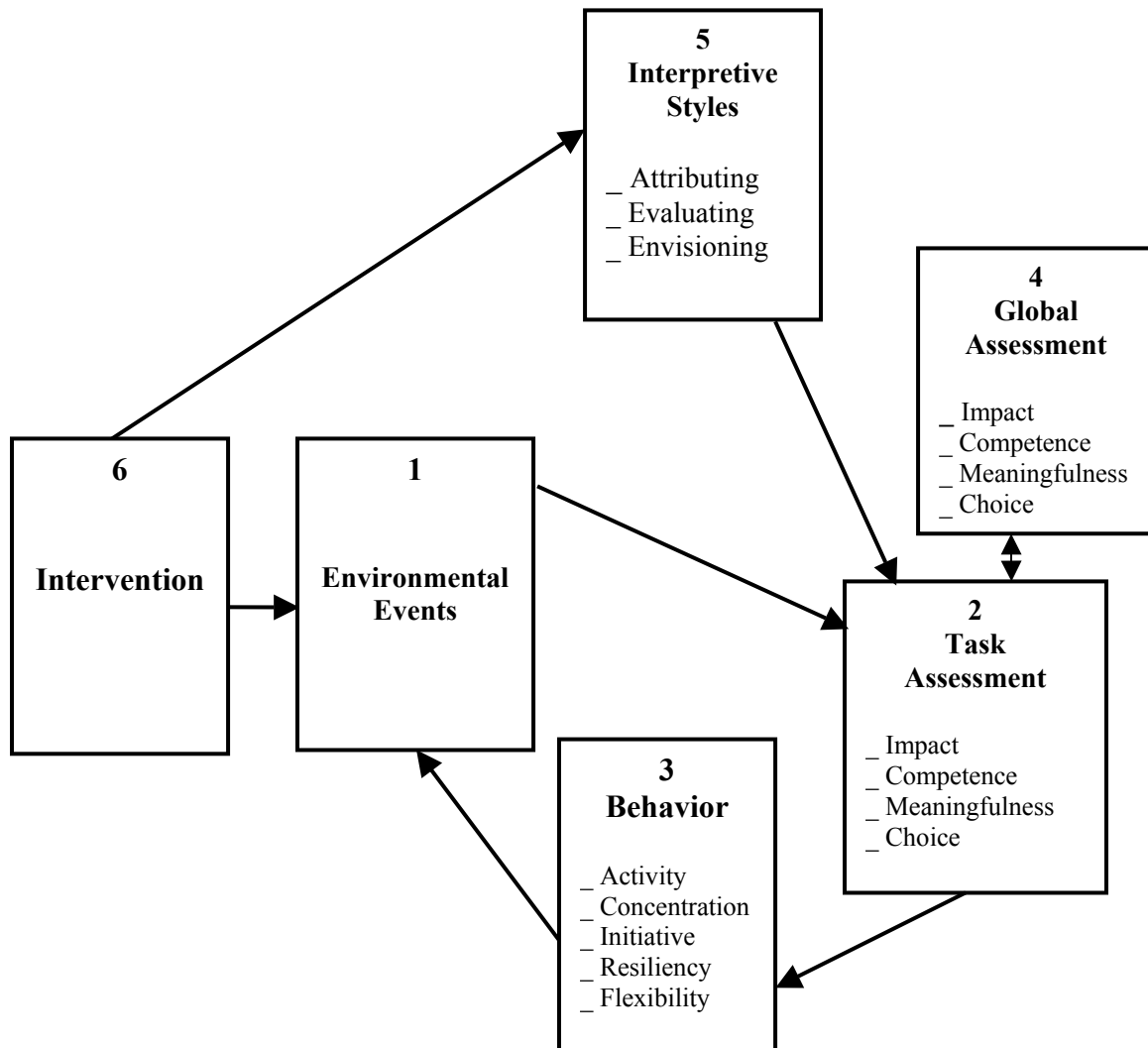


Figure 3 Cognitive model of empowerment (Copied from Thomas and Velthouse1990, p.670).

In their model (see Figure 3), "...environmental events provide data to the individual about the consequences of ongoing task behavior and about conditions and events relevant to future behavior" (Thomas and Velthouse 1990, p.669). This data, together with global assessment, shapes and influences the individual's task assessments relative to impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice. Additional information is added to the task assessment by the interpretive styles through external events. The interpretive styles provide information regarding "...how well things are going, about what may have caused past events and about what could happen in the future" (Thomas and Velthouse 1990, p.669). Global assessments are "... cumulative learnings from past task assessments and are used to help (fill in the gaps) in assessing a novel situations" (Thomas and Velthouse 1990, p.673). Through the interventions element, changes are made to facilitate implementing of empowerment.

In conclusion, Thomas and Velthouse build upon Conger and Kanungo's 1988 model. They identified four task assessments and they came up with a model that reflects the process by which employees reach the task assessment that is responsible for motivation.

C. THE ALTIZER MODEL

In his article, "Four Steps to Empowerment," Altizer (1993) identifies four tactics of empowerment used in his company. He starts his article by emphasizing the importance of empowerment and total quality management. Furthermore, he states that empowerment is not optional; it is a must if the organization aims to improve its quality system. He continues his article by highlighting what he considers to be the four steps to empowerment. These steps are:

1. Review Employee Authority Level

In this step, the author argues that there is no need for high procedure controls in the organization, if the employees are well trained and educated. Furthermore, Altizer (1993, p.21) states:

Authority limits serve a useful purpose, but when the circumstances that precipitated their use have changed, the empowering manager removes them for three reasons: 1. to allow employees the freedom to meet customer requirements, 2. to fully develop employee skills, and 3. to demonstrate the deepening trust in employee abilities.

2. Delegate, Delegate, Delegate

Altizer emphasizes that management should allow their employees to find solutions to the process problems they encounter. The author agrees that employees often present problems without solutions because: “they feel their own solutions would be (or have been) disregarded, or because it’s just easier to get the boss to make the decision” (Altizer, 1993, p.22). Furthermore, he states: “The empowering manager provides parameters and solution resources, but requires employees to solve the problems” (Altizer, 1993, p.22).

3. Encourage Innovation

The author stresses that employee initiative and innovation should be encouraged for quality improvement. He argues that for quality improvement, employee initiative and innovation are demolished when managing employees with restricted rules.

4. Recognize and Reward Empowered Actions

The author emphasizes the importance of the reward system for empowerment, and states that the ultimate goal for this step is to encourage empowered actions. In this context he states: “The empowering manager recognizes and rewards desired actions with public praise, letters, or by just getting out of the way” (Altizer, 1993, p.22).

To sum up, Altizer provides managers with a number of steps to adopt employee empowerment in the work place. At the end of his article he states: “Continuous improvement requires knowledgeable, capable employees who have the power to examine the status quo and make changes” (Altizer 1995, p. 23).

D. THE THOMAS AND TYMON MODEL

Built upon the earlier work of Thomas and Velthouse (1990), Thomas and Tymon developed the “Empowerment Inventory.” They state “...people feel empowered when they are energized by the tasks they perform” (Thomas and Tymon 1993, p8).

Like Thomas and Velthouse (1990), Thomas and Tymon use task assessments as a foundation for their work, with the exception of using progress instead of task assessment impact. Task assessments, which are called feelings in the Thomas and Tymon model, are defined by the authors as follow:

1. Choice: is the opportunity you feel to select task activities that make sense to you and to perform them in ways that seem appropriate. The feeling of being free to choose – of being able to use your own judgment and act out of your own understanding of the task.
2. Competence: is the accomplishment you feel in skillfully performing task activities you have chosen. The feeling of competence involves the sense that you are doing good, quality work on task.
3. Meaningfulness: is the opportunity you feel to pursue a worthy task purpose. The feeling of meaningfulness is the feeling that you are on a path that is worth your time and energy – that you are on a valuable mission, that your purpose matters in the larger scheme of things.

4. Progress: is the accomplishment you feel in achieving the task purpose. The feeling of progress involves the sense that the task is moving forward, that your activities are really accomplishing something (Thomas and Tymon 1993, p9).

The authors clarify that these feelings resulted from both "...task activities (behaviors) you perform and the task purpose (goal or mission) you are trying to achieve" (Thomas and Tymon 1993, p8), as shown in Figure 4.

		SENSE OF OPPORTUNITY	SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT
TASK ACTIVITIES		Feelings of CHOICE	Feelings of COMPETENCE
TASK PURPOSE		Feelings of MEANINGFULNESS	Feelings of PROGRESS

Figure 4. EMPOWERMENT GRID (Copied from Thomas and Tymon 1993, p.9).

Furthermore, the authors identify the elements that increase each of the four feelings of empowerment. The authors call these elements the building blocks. For each building block, the authors set up two sets of actions: the first lists actions the manager can take to empower his employees, these are called team actions; the second lists actions that the individual can take to empower himself, these are called personal actions (for details see appendix) .

To summarize, the Thomas and Tymon expanded the work of Thomas and Velthouse (1990) by identifying building blocks for each of the four feelings (task assessments). Furthermore, they came up with two types of actions for each building block. These actions are labeled as team and individual actions that can be taken by both managers and individuals to increase empowerment.

E. THE SPREITZER MODEL

Spreitzer, in her work “Psychological Empowerment in the Workplace,” validates and develops a multidimensional measure of empowerment in the workplace. In her model, she supports the idea of Thomas and Velthouse (1990) that there are four distinct dimensions of empowerment. Those dimensions are impact, competence, meaning, and choice, which she calls self-determination.

She also finds that each dimension combines to produce an overall measure of psychological empowerment. In this context she states (Spreitzer 1995, p.1444):

The four dimensions are argued to combine additively to create an overall construct of psychological empowerment. In other words, the lack of any single dimension will deflate, though not completely eliminate, the overall degree of felt empowerment.

Furthermore, Spreitzer developed a partial nomological network of psychological empowerment in the workplace, as shown in figure 5. In this network, the author identified and confirmed antecedents and consequences of psychological empowerment as well as social structural characteristics of the work unit. As shown in figure 5, the antecedents are locus of control, self-esteem, access to information and rewards. Two consequences of empowerment are specified as effectiveness and innovation.

To summarize, Spreitzer sees empowerment as a continuous variable, where employees can be viewed as being empowered to a greater or lesser degree, not simply whether or not they are empowered. She developed and

validated a multidimensional measure of empowerment in the workplace along with a partial nomological network of psychological empowerment in the workplace.

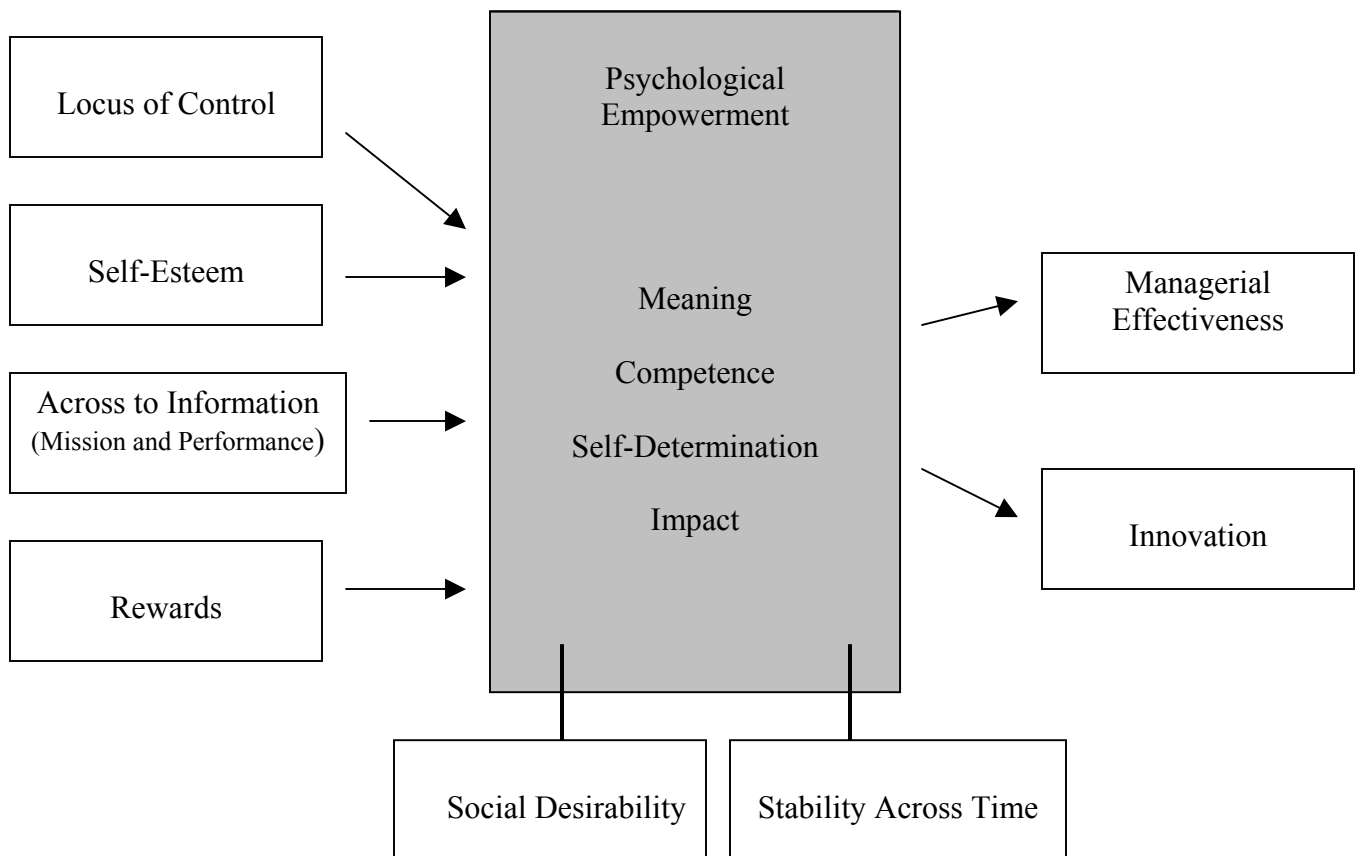


Figure 5: Partial Nomological Network of Psychological Empowerment in the Workplace (Copied from Spreitzer 1995, p.1445).

F. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, different empowerment models were highlighted. These models were developed by some interested management experts. Most of the models share similar principles.

IV. A SUGGESTED EMPOWERMENT MODEL FOR BDF

In this chapter an empowerment model is proposed for the BDF. This model is based on the literature and the author's opinions about empowerment.

A. The Model

The model is based on two empowerment definitions described earlier in this project. Burke (1986, p.5) defines empowerment as: "...the granting of power-delegation of authority." Conger and Kanungo (1988, p.474) define empowerment as:

A process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information.

The first definition suggests that empowerment is relational, or management practices, while the second suggests that empowerment is a motivational construct. Therefore, the proposed model will be a multidimensional model as suggested by Spreitzer (1997), who stresses that a unidimensional model of empowerment can not capture the full essence of the empowerment concept.

The model consists of three dimensions: empowering management practices, empowering working environment, and empowered individuals (figure 6). Each dimension has a number of required elements that must be developed to create a sustainable empowered organization. Moreover, empowerment requires a continuous interaction among the three dimensions; so that the absence of one dimension can make the other two ineffective for the empowerment process. This is represented by the arrows between the dimensions, as shown in Figure 6.

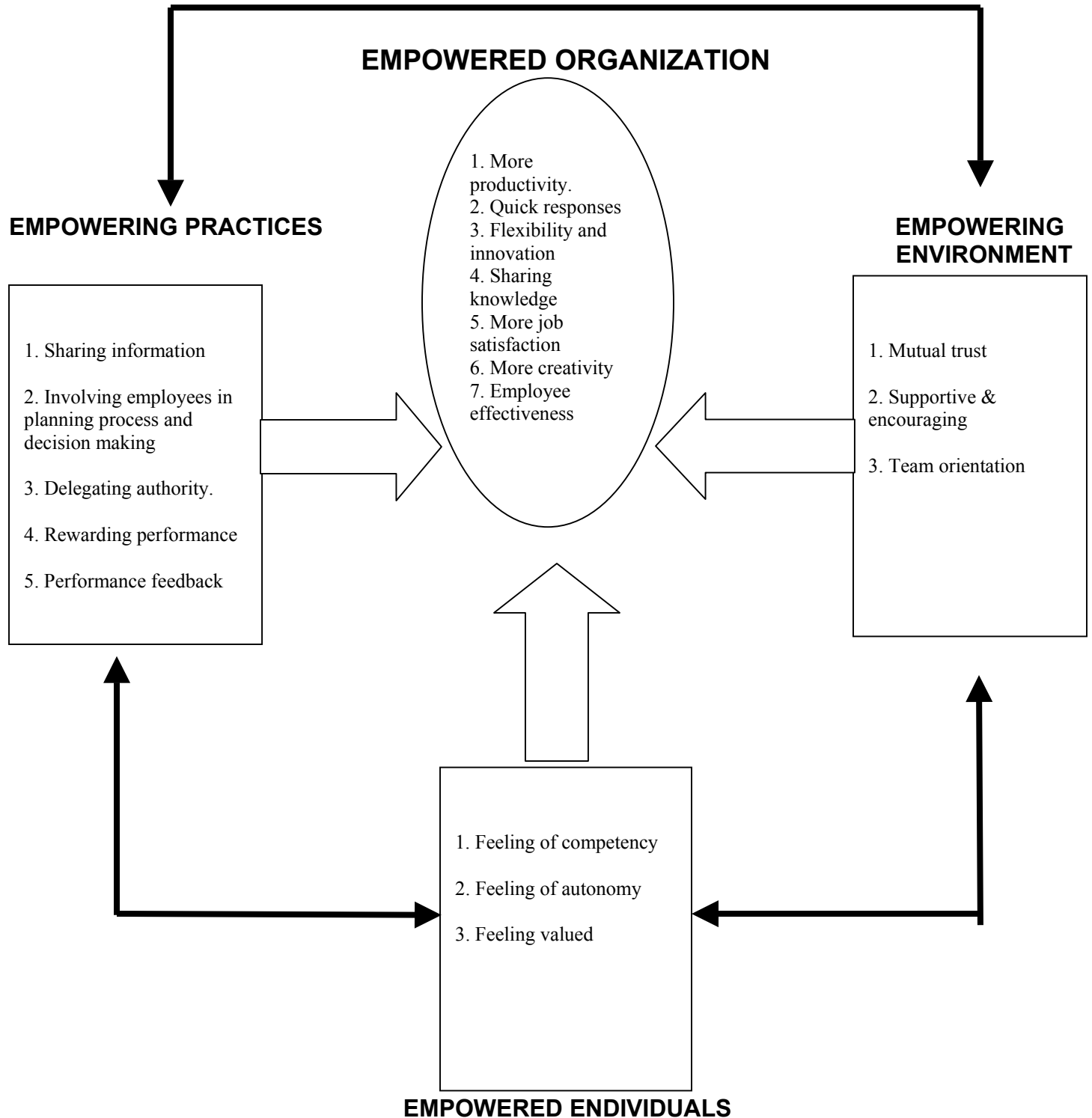


Figure 6: A suggested Empowerment Model for BDF.

B. EMPOWERING MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Empowering management practices are the elements the organization has to implement to facilitate empowerment. For successful empowerment, the following practices are critical for the BDF units (Fig 6):

1. Sharing Information within the Unit

Leaders at every level should encourage and stress sharing relevant information with their subordinates and the front-line employees. The information can help employees understand what the unit is trying to accomplish and how it is progressing in that direction. Moreover, a good decision by subordinates requires accurate and current information.

The types of information to be shared within the unit are:

- a. The unit's mission, vision and goals.
- b. The unit's performance.
- c. New technology.
- d. Changes in policies and roles within the unit.

Sharing information can be achieved through regular meetings, formal presentations, periodical reports and formal letters.

2. Involving Employees in Planning Processes and Decision Making

Involving employees in the planning process and decision making increases their commitment toward their work and establishes a sense of ownership among employees. Moreover, this practice uniquely utilizes each employee's competence. Leaders and management at all levels should involve employees in the planning process and decision making that is related to their work.

3. Delegating Authority

Delegating authority is another empowering practice in this model. It is the process where leaders transfer authority to their subordinates. It allows subordinates to make decisions without returning to their leaders. This practice will do the following:

- a. Provide time for leaders to focus on more difficult tasks and policy matters.
- b. Increase the productivity of the unit.
- c. Instill confidence in the employees.
- d. Prepare employees for leadership.

Before delegation is effective, leaders should consider the following:

- a. They should know the abilities of their subordinates.
- b. They should know which employee is willing to take responsibility.
- c. They should know which task is appropriate for delegation and which is not.
- d. They should know the result expected through delegation.

4. Rewarding Performance within the Unit

Rewarding unit performance is a good tool to motivate employee performance. Employees like to hear they have done a good job and that management appreciates it. Leaders and management should recognize performance through:

- a. Awards ceremonies.
- b. Appreciation letters.
- c. Verbal complements.
- d. Rewards that are valued by employees.

5. Performance Feedback

Feedback is another critical management practice that supports empowerment. It is used by management for the following purposes:

- a. Aids employees in improving weak performance.
- b. Helps to highlight employees' weaknesses.
- c. Highlights employees' strengths and abilities.
- d. Provides an encouragement tool.

It is also important for managers to collect their employees' feedback, because two-way communications will increase the opportunity for employees' involvement.

C. EMPOWERED INDIVIDUALS

This dimension of the model focuses on the individual perception of empowerment. As emphasized by many experts of empowerment, the empowering management practices will be worthless and ineffective if the individual is not empowered. In this model, three elements are identified for empowered individuals:

1. Feeling of Competency

To implement empowerment, individuals should feel competent in their jobs. Competent individuals will have self-confidence to make decisions and suggestions in their work without hesitation or fear of failure. Moreover, the sense of competence will increase the individuals' creativity and innovation.

A sense of competence can be developed through the following:

- a. Education.
- b. Continuous training.
- c. Updating individuals about innovations related to their work.
- d. Insuring Leaders show they believe that their employees can do a good job.
- e. Positive feedback.

2. Feeling of Autonomy

Autonomy is the feeling of having greater control over how to carry out the job. This feeling motivates the individual to take risks and be innovative in their job rather than blindly following regulations. To instill autonomy within the individual, micro management and close supervision should be replaced by a clear work boundary in which the individual can act autonomously.

3. Feeling Valued

Feeling valued is another element that empowers the individual. It involves being recognized as a major contributor and an important element in the organization. This feeling can be instilled in the individual through:

- a. Being assigned challenging and interesting tasks.
- b. Getting positive feedback about work contributions.
- c. Being rewarded.
- d. Being allowed to participate in work-related decision making.

D. EMPOWERING WORK ENVIRONMENT

The third dimension in the model represents the type of work environment required for empowerment. An empowered work environment is characterized by the following:

1. Mutual Trust

Trust is an essential element for empowerment. When trust is a part of the working environment, leaders allow their employees freedom to utilize their capabilities for the organization's benefit, and in turn employees tend to be more creative with no fear of failure.

Building mutual trust can be attained through:

- a. Honesty.
- b. Open Communication.
- c. Keeping promises.

2. Supportive and Encouraging

Working in a supportive and encouraging environment inspires and empowers the organization's members to take challenges and be more creative in their tasks. Moreover, it inhibits the fear of punishment.

3. Team Orientation

Team orientation facilitates discussion and problem solving techniques. Moreover, working as a team helps the members of the organization better understand each other and work toward one goal.

E. EMPOWERED ORGANIZATION

Once all elements of the three previous dimensions are fulfilled, the organization becomes empowered. As an empowered organization, it will carry the following features:

1. More productivity.
2. Quick responses
3. Flexibility and innovation
4. Sharing knowledge
5. More job satisfaction
6. More creativity
7. Employee effectiveness

F. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a three-dimensional empowerment model is developed for the BDF. The model has three dimensions: Empowering management practices, empowered individuals, and empowering working environment. These three dimensions interact with one another to form an empowered organization.

The model combines concepts from all of the models reviewed, including, Conger and Konungo (1988) Thomas and Velthouse (1990), Altizer (1993), Thomas and Tymon (1993) and Spritzer (1995). However; the model proposed

is more inclusive than any of the reviewed models. It captures the concept of empowerment through simultaneous and mutual interaction between the main components of the organization, namely, the human resources (individuals), the work structures (management practices) and the work environment. On the other hand, each of the reviewed models considers only some parts of the organization's components.

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. SUMMARY

In order to survive and to be efficient in today's environment, which is characterized by continuous fluctuation, changing technologies, intense competition and the lack of resources, today's leaders from all sectors are trying to implement empowerment to enhance the creative potential of their workforce to overcome such challenges.

This project has reviewed the empowerment literature, including the concept's roots, definitions, notions, elements and different models developed by empowerment experts. Moreover, an empowerment model has been developed for the Bahrain Defense Force. The model includes three dimensions, namely, empowering management practices, empowering working environment, and empowered individuals. Each dimension consists of several required elements. The proposed model provides suggestions for transferring the concept into operational guidelines.

B. CONCLUSIONS

1. Several models have been developed on empowerment. Some models focus on relational elements, while others focus on psychological.

2. Empowerment will not happen naturally in organizations. The main components of organizations must go through major reforms and changes to push empowerment forward.

3. Concentrating on one of the organization's components will not create an empowered organization. Only when a multidimensional approach is taken will the organization become empowered.

4. The model presented in this project is intended to serve as a roadmap for the BDF to implement the concept of empowerment. This model combines different aspects found in literature in a manner considered to be

appropriate for BDF because it considers to simultaneously and mutually developing all the organization's components in attempt to capture the empowerment concept.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Two recommendations for future research are identified. First, the model proposed for the BDF should be validated using field research to better determine the link between the three dimensions and their elements with the empowerment concept and motivation of the workforce. The validation would involve developing questionnaires for the model and collecting responses from t BDF personnel.

The second recommendation for future research is to analyze the BDF culture and examine what changes are necessary to successfully implement empowerment in a bureaucratic organization such as the BDF.

APPENDIX – BUILDING BLOCKS (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990)

BUILDING FEELINGS OF CHOICE

BUILDING BLOCKS	TEAM ACTIONS	PERSONAL ACTIONS
<i>AUTHORITY</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving members the right to make decisions on matters affecting their task, including the spending of money and other resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiating for the right to make your own decisions on matters that are important to your task.
<i>TRUST</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trusting members' judgment; giving them space to exercise it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening for and trusting your own judgment.
<i>SECURITY</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting members' experimentation; no blame or punishment for honest mistakes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having the courage to try things you believe will work; not yielding to your own fears.
<i>PURPOSE</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deciding upon a clear team objective or direction to guide decision making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifying and negotiating a clear purpose for your task activities.
<i>INFORMATION</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing with members all the information they need to make informed decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacting people to request any information you need.

BUILDING FEELINGS OF COMPETENCE

BUILDING BLOCKS	TEAM ACTIONS	PERSONAL ACTIONS
<i>MODELS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing models of how to perform tasks through training, role modeling, mentoring, and shared learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking and researching to find models, mentors and training opportunities.
<i>POSITIVE FEEDBACK</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving members feedback that is more “appreciative” (positive) than “deficiency-focused” (negative). Helping them build on what they do well rather than highlighting mistakes and shortcomings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciating your own success; limiting any deficiency focusing tendencies that you may have; asking for positive feedback from others.
<i>SKILL RECOGNITION</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving members credit for what is going well; attributing it to skill (rather than to luck, others, or an easy task). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing the role of your own competencies in what is going well.
<i>GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing members to “stretch” by gradually taking on more demanding or challenging tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying tasks that require you to use new skills or further develop old ones.
<i>NON-COMPARATIVE STANDARDS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not putting members in competition for credit, so that recognizing one member’s competence is not a threat to others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding self-defeating comparisons of yourself to teammates; learning from their success without feeling threatened.

BUILDING FEELINGS OF MEANINGFULNESS

BUILDING BLOCKS	TEAM ACTIONS	PERSONAL ACTIONS
<i>NON-CYNICAL CLIMATE</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a non-cynical climate that encourages idealism and caring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking out supportive teammates who help you nurture your ideals; controlling your own cynicism.
<i>CLEAR VALUES</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a shared value system for the team that identifies what is important. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding your own values and passions; seeking teams that share them; stating your values to teammates.
<i>AN EXCITING VISION</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an exciting vision of the future that the team wants to create, and how it would add value to the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buying into the vision to make it your own; negotiating any changes needed to fit your passions; proposing a vision if none exists.
<i>RELEVANT TASK PURPOSE</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting task purposes that are clearly related to the vision; protecting members from busy work tasks that have little value. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sure your task purposes contribute to the vision: “what can be done here that is meaningful?” negotiating to eliminate or subcontract tasks that have little value.
<i>WHOLE TASK</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When possible, giving members tasks that are whole projects or at least major, identifiable portions of a project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiating responsibility for whole, identifiable tasks

BUILDING FEELINGS OF PROGRESS

BUILDING BLOCKS	TEAM ACTIONS	PERSONAL ACTIONS
<i>COLLABORATION</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating with team members when coordination and support are needed-working together to find solutions that meet everyone's needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building collaborative relationships with others involved in your tasks.
<i>MILESTONES</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On longer tasks, providing a clear picture of the key events (milestones) that will occur in achieving the task purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing your own picture of the milestones you will reach in achieving your task purposes.
<i>CELEBRATIONS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing attention to member's task progress by celebrating important milestones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping track of your own task milestones; taking time to stop and celebrate them.
<i>CUSTOMER APPRETIATION</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing feedback from customers on their satisfaction (a measure of task success). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making contact with customer to solicit feedback on your tasks.
<i>CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On recurring task, using customer feedback and other information to help members continuously improve their task performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking for ways to continuously improve your own task performance.

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